

# Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023

## Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

## Members present

Monika Winston (YRC), Jess Rae (YRC), Joerg Werdin (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Brian Davey (YRC), Graeme George (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Peter Martin (member), Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water)

## Apologies

Cr Tim Heenan, Kym Saunders (YRC), Tom Meek (YRC), Graham Brew (YRC), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Lucy Gilchrist (member), Clinton Muller (member), Bec Brannigan (member), Jonathan Gay (member), Merryn Kelly (DEECA)

## Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Moved: Graeme George

Seconded: Laurence Gaffney

## Declaration of interest

None

Outstanding Actions		
ACTION	Schedule Biodiversity subcommittee meeting for the Draft Nature Plan <i>Pending as date change required.</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Check biochar and carbon drawdown references in the Sustainability Report 2021 and Council website. <i>Completed – update the website as indicated in the attached response.</i>	Joerg Werdin
ACTION	Urban Tree Canopy Strategy update <i>Completed - the strategy is on hold due to operational issues. Will keep on deferred topics list for an update at a future SEAC meeting.</i>	Jess Rae
ACTION	Provide update on Preparing Australian Communities funding, regarding Fuel Management Officer <i>Completed - The funding will be used to look at fire management planning in Healesville, Monbulk and Yarra Junction and include an education aspect.</i>	Jess Rae
ACTION	Provide update on private property audit by Graeme Lorimer <i>Ongoing- Graeme has been away; we are expecting his recommendations by the end of financial year.</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Investigate replacements for members who have resigned. <i>Ongoing - The replacement suggested by Jeff Barlow has declined. We could consider inviting guest members from the Youth Advisory Group.</i>	Jess Rae

New Actions		
ACTION	Watts River Strategy to be placed on future topics list, following confirmation from Melbourne Water.	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Supply copy of SEAC Terms of Reference	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Melbourne Water to determine if deer control data is available to provide to SEAC along with data on aquatic species in waterway surveys.	Ross Bleazby

1. Biochar – Joerg Werdin		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change of Biochar wording on the website as supplied by Graeme George was accepted.</li> <li>• Lifecycle energy in/energy out discussion</li> <li>• Smoke wood (wood vinegar) uses have not yet been proven.</li> <li>• Council owns the plant; Earth Systems owns the moving parts.</li> </ul>		
ACTION	Update website	Suzanne Burville

2. Agency Updates		
Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water)		
<p>Melbourne Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liveable communities, liveable waterways incentive projects</li> <li>• Blackberry control</li> <li>• Water for the environment</li> <li>• Maintenance and operations</li> <li>• Collaboration with Yarra Ranges Council</li> </ul> <p>Q: Are Australian Grayling populations being monitored in the Birrarung? A: Yes, in the Upper Yarra area.</p> <p>Q: Does Melbourne Water have reports on other data that would reflect the health of the waterways? A: I can look into it.</p> <p>Q: How did Melbourne Water communicate with the public in regard to the post-storm tree work at Silvan Reservoir? A: Community bulletin and the comms team have been addressing public concerns.</p> <p>Comment: YRC worked with Melbourne Water to find the best solution for this site (Silvan Reservoir). Comment: 50kg seeds were collected from the (Silvan Reservoir) site to replant back into the catchment.</p> <p>Q. Why so much disturbance? Was the clean up necessary? Was Vic Timber removing timber from the site? A. Cannot comment if Vic Timber was involved, assumed involvement given large machinery and equipment. (TBC)</p> <p>Q. Can the Watts River Strategy be presented at a future meeting? A. Yes, will confirm with Corinne Mays.</p>		
ACTION	Investigate if Melbourne Water can provide reporting to indicate the overall health of the waterways	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Watts River Strategy to be placed on future topics list, following confirmation from Melbourne Water.	Suzanne Burville

2. Biodiversity Update: Deer Program		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$28,500 is allocated to control works in Yellingbo and Macclesfield</li> <li>• Monbulk Landcare group will use a grant for deer control on private land adjacent to Emerald Creek</li> <li>• Professional controllers will be funded then volunteer shooters will fill the gaps (align volunteer shooters with landowners)</li> </ul>		

- Consultation with BehaviourWorks Australia will help us communicate the program with the community.

Q: What happens with the carcasses?

A: We're recovering as many as possible for pet food. Program expansion will require further discussion on how to manage this with existing businesses in the Yarra Ranges.

Q: What percentage is being recovered?

A: 90 to 95 percent.

Q: Does Melbourne Water have data on deer control?

A: Some data has been captured and we can follow up on any data that may be shared.

ACTION	Investigate if Melbourne Water has deer control data that can be supplied to SEAC.	Ross Bleazby
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### 3. Open Floor

a) Copy of SEAC Terms of Reference requested.

b) Biolinks Plan: Seeing Cardinia's biolinks plan and methodology could help Yarra Ranges expedite their own.

Response:

- Should Melbourne Water (as the catchment management authority) be leading the biolinks plan with Council and DEECA contributing?
- Streamside shouldn't be the only focus of the biolinks plan, look at other logical links through the landscape
- Can we leverage off the Healesville to Phillip Island Nature Link project?  
<https://portphillipwesternport.rcs.vic.gov.au/prospectus/healesville-to-phillip-island-nature-link/>
- Can the committee assist by gathering data to support the building of the biolinks project prior to approval of it through the Nature Plan?
- Noted that the biodiversity sub-committee can discuss this topic in more detail at an upcoming meeting

c) The food provided at the meetings isn't satisfactory.

Response:

- Yarra Ranges Council catering policy states catering can be requested for meetings that run for more than three hours. As this meeting is two hours we provide light refreshments, tea, coffee and water.

d) Hybrid meetings are making it difficult for the committee to connect and perform their function; everyone should make an effort to meet in person. Perhaps the meetings should be during the daytime.

Responses/comments:

- This committee began with virtual meetings because COVID lockdown was in place and thus continue to offer a hybrid model.
- An occasional weekend meeting could be considered.
- Day time meetings are not suitable for committee members who work.
- Some members are unable to attend in person.

e) What is happening with electric vehicle charging? Are there planning rules in place to ensure commercial premises are providing EV chargers?

Response: There are 3 public chargers about to be installed – Healesville, Belgrave and Yarra Junction. State Government are the body responsible for planning controls.

f) Parks Vic seems to be no longer attending.

Response: That is correct.

g) Has anyone read Regenesiis: Feeding the World Without Devouring the Planet by George Monbiot?

ACTION

Supply copy of SEAC Terms of Reference

Suzanne Burville

Meeting closed: 7:40pm

Next meeting Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

Deferred topics

- Urban Tree Canopy Strategy
- Amendment C148 – Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme
- Firestick program
- Progress data set from DEECA