

# Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023

## Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

## Members present

Cr Andrew Fullagar (YRC), Monika Winston (YRC), Graham Brew (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Lucy Gilchrist (member), Graeme George (member), Bec Brannigan (member), Jonathan Gay (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Peter Martin (member), Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water), Justin Foster (DEECA)

## Guests present

Helen Cumming (guest), Allora Cumming (guest)

## Apologies

Cr Tim Heenan (YRC), Jess Rae (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Tom Meek (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Clinton Muller (member), Ron Sawyer (member)

## Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023

Moved: Graeme George

Seconded: Laurence Gaffney

## Declaration of interest

None

Outstanding Actions		
ACTION	Provide update on private property audit by Graeme Lorimer <i>Ongoing</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Investigate replacements for members who have resigned. <i>Ongoing</i>	Monika Winston

New Actions		
ACTION	Find out if there is a brief on the Wonga Vine removal	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Find out if there is a brief or project outline on Silvan Reservoir tree removal	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Contact Parks Vic about attendance at future meetings	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Supply YRC catering policy	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Update on the pest, plant and animal strategy	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Update on the Biodiversity Offset Program	Joanna Lebbink
ACTION	Update on the deer control program	Brian Davey
ACTION	Respond to cancellation of Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act presentation	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Upper Regional Development Strategy presentation	Julian Guess

ACTION	Provide organisation chart for the Resilient Environment department	Monika Winston
--------	---	----------------

## 1. Agency Updates

### Melbourne Water – Ross Bleazby

- Water for environment
- Maintenance and operations
- 2024/25 capital, maintenance, and incentives planning
- Regenerative agricultural workshop was held at ECOSS.

Q. In a previous meeting the removal of Wonga Vine was discussed. Is there a brief about the project?

Q. Is there a brief or project outline on Silvan Reservoir tree removal?

Q. Has Melbourne Water developed a strategy for logs/timber extraction from Silvan Reservoir?

A. The logs/timber are left in situ unless they are deemed hazardous.

Q. Water meter pumping system upgrade that prevents water theft and monitors water use could be used to warn users in advance when they are nearing usage limit.

A. This has been discussed but at this time is not viable.

### Department of Energy Environment and Climate Action – Justin Foster

- Liwik Barring landscape conservation area
- Helmeted Honeyeater

Q. Is there feedback on the Safer Together community engagement?

A. There is a draft 10-year plan on Engage Vic website. **It is open for feedback now.**

C. DEECA could do better when it comes to Liwik Barring engagement.

A. Four engagement officers are out communicating about the project.

### Parks Vic

Q. Parks Vic have been noticeably absent and no longer provide reports. What is happening with them?

A. They are still invited to each meeting and asked to contribute a report.

ACTION	Find out if there is a brief on the Wonga Vine removal	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Find out if there is a brief or project outline on Silvan Reservoir tree removal	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Contact Parks Vic about attendance at future meetings	Suzanne Burville

## 2. Resource Recovery – Graham Brew

- How we got here
- Household waste audit
- Changes to rubbish bin lids
- What happens from here?
- What goes in FOGO bin from October
- Collection frequency changes
- What goes in the recycling bin
- More information at <https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/whywasteit/Home>

Q. A bottle deposit scheme is needed.

A. The Victorian State Government has announced one will begin on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023. Bottles can be dropped in at reverse vending machines where a ticket is given redeemable at Woolworths and Coles.

Q. Can compostable nappies be placed in the FOGO bin?

A. Not at this time as the compost facility isn't able to sort them. It's difficult to tell the difference between compostable and non-compostable nappies. There is a company in Lilydale that recycles nappies for a cost.

<https://www.facebook.com/DiaperRecycle>

Q. Can people get a cost-reduction if they discard less waste? i.e. Don't put their bin out each week.

A. Residents can opt to get the smaller 80L bin, however, waiving cost is not feasible as the main cost is in providing the service, the truck still needs to travel past that property, employees are still needed to drive the trucks etc.

Q. What if you don't have a green waste bin because you compost? Do you have to pay for one?

A. Providing a FOGO bin is compulsory as per State Gov requirements. The cost of the service is the same even if some people want to opt out, therefore, if Council made it optional the cost would be too high. There are two sized FOGO bins – 120L and 240L. Costs can be minimised by choosing a smaller bin.

Q. Do you have to use the Council-provided FOGO bags? Do you have to use a bag at all?

A. No, you don't have to use a bag, however, if you do you must use the Council-provided one. To ensure minimum contamination, the staff at the processing plant will pull out any bags that aren't Council-provided ones.

Q. What happens with the compost from the FOGO bins?

A. Biogro buy the compost and onsell it through retailers such as Bunnings.

Q. Do they screen for microplastics?

A. They remove plastic items by hand and machine but some plastics will remain.

Q. Can compostable coffee cups be put in the FOGO bin?

A. Not at this time because many cups contain plastic and it can be difficult to tell which is which. Allowing coffee cups will contribute to contamination.

Q. What happens with the bones in FOGO?

A. The bones go through a shredding process, they are crushed and remain in the compost.

Q. Could pathogens be a problem to the workers sorting if waste bins are only collected every 2 weeks?

A. No, high temperatures in compost heap will kill the pathogens. It will be at 50 – 70 'c for at least 5 days.

Q. How do we stop people from dumping their rubbish in FOGO because of the change from weekly waste collection to fortnightly?

A. Bin audits will increase after the transition with notices placed on bins to help educate residents.

Q. Have you thought about developing an app to assist residents with information about bin collection days and what to put out?

A. We will look into it, for now we have a micro website that people can access, and our main website has an address lookup for bin collection dates/information.

Q. With Redcycle soft plastics going out of business the key to getting soft plastic recycling up and running will be advocacy. What's going on with it?

A. A new Melbourne-based company has begun working with some councils on this problem. It is on YRC's agenda to work with other councils to advocate to the State Government for soft plastics collections/recycling and the Federal Government for changes to production.

Q. What is the life space of the bins?

A. 15-20 years. All parts of the bin are recycled when they reach end of life.

C. It would be good to hear from Bec Brannigan and community around this topic and the changes.

C. (Graham Brew) We will be running community workshops and programs to help residents make the transition.

### 3. Open Floor

- a) The food provided at the meetings isn't satisfactory, a proper dinner meal was provided in the past. A few lines have been cherry-picked from the catering policy in response to this issue; can we see the full policy.  
Response:
- o 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. The full catering policy can be provided.
- b) What is happening with the Pest, Plant and Animal strategy? It was supposed to be a large part of the Nature Plan.
- c) Can we get an update on the new BOP site mentioned in this month's YRC report and what has taken place since SEAC were asked for input on the Biodiversity Offset Program.
- d) In this month's YRC report the deer update states 'early positive results'. Can that be explained. What numbers have been culled and from what total? Concerns about hyperfertility caused by harvesting.
- e) The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act presentation by DEECA was cancelled with no explanation and has been removed from the deferred topics. Why?
- f) Can Julian Guess attend the committee to present on the Upper Regional Development Strategy?
- g) Jessica Rae has resigned from YRC. The committee thanks Jess for her contribution to SEAC over the past six years.
- h) A new study at the Botanic Gardens may inform our tree canopy strategy.
- i) Department organisation chart request.
- j) Ivy and other weed plants on McNicol Road and the rail trail behind Tecoma Primary School needs work as it harbours rats.
- k) SEAC membership – can multiple members of the same family be on the committee?

ACTION	Supply YRC catering policy	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Update on the pest, plant and animal strategy	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Update on the Biodiversity Offset Program	Joanna Lebbink
ACTION	Update on the deer control program	Brian Davey
ACTION	Respond to cancellation of Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act presentation	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Provide organisation chart for the Resilient Environment department	Monika Winston

Meeting closed: 8:30pm

Next meeting Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October

Deferred topics

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