

Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 5 October 2023

Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

Members present

Cr Andrew Fullagar (YRC), Monika Winston (YRC), Julian Guess (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Graeme George (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Ross Bleazby (Melbourne Water),

Apologies

Cr Tim Heenan (YRC), Kath McClusky (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Tom Meek (YRC), Graham Brew (YRC), Peter Martin (member), Bec Brannigan (member), Merryn Kelly (YRC)

Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 3rd August 2023

Moved: Graeme George

Seconded: Melanie Birtchnell

Declaration of interest

None

Outstanding Actions		
ACTION	Provide update on private property audit by Graeme Lorimer <i>Completed. Report is complete and will be circulated after the meeting.</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Investigate replacements for members who have resigned. <i>Ongoing. An expression of interest for new members including 2 general, 2 youth and 1 indigenous person/s will be released soon.</i>	Monika Winston
ACTION	Find out if there is a brief on the Wonga Vine removal <i>Ongoing</i>	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Find out if there is a brief or project outline on Silvan Reservoir tree removal <i>Completed. There is no project outline, Melbourne Water website has information about works taking place</i>	Ross Bleazby
ACTION	Contact Parks Vic about attendance at future meetings <i>Completed. Parks Victoria advised if there is a specific topic or issue SEAC/YRC would like PV to present to they are happy to be in attendance but in lieu of specific agenda items they will not attend.</i>	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Update on the pest, plant and animal strategy <i>Completed. This is a foundation action in the Nature Plan. When the plan is released we'll begin work on the Pest, Plant and Animal Strategy.</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Update on the Biodiversity Offset Program <i>Completed.</i>	Joanna Lebbink
ACTION	Update on the deer control program. <i>Ongoing. Committee interested in available data relating to deer population density and if control measures are having intended effect.</i>	Internal officer to provide update

ACTION	Respond to cancellation of Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act presentation. <i>Completed. DEECA stated policy documents still in development so it's not a good time to present.</i>	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Provide organisation chart for the Resilient Environment department <i>Ongoing. Chart provided is not satisfactory. Committee would like to see key positions, names, contact details, position descriptions and team numbers.</i>	Monika Winston

New Actions		
ACTION	Amanda and Graeme to discuss additional feedback before ELT	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Seek governance advice around reappointment to advisory committees	Sarah Bond
ACTION	Check SEAC page on website	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Investigate best method of forming description notes for future meetings	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Provide opportunity summary regarding collaboration with DEECA to Biodiversity Team around more broadly promoting offsets on private land.	Sarah Bond

1. Agency Updates

Melbourne Water – Ross Bleazby

- Water for the environment: top up delivery of Yering Backswamp
- Liveable Communities Liveable Waterways

Parks Vic

- National Volunteers Week celebrations
- Dandenong Ranges Gardens working bee
- Spotted Tail Quoll Release in Yarra Ranges National Park
- Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda
- Redwood Forest draft designs released
- Corrections Victoria four week program
- The Olinda Green drainage and rectification works
- Dee Rd Slip Bridge - Yarra Ranges National Park
- Operation Columbus – Bunyip State Park and Kurth Kiln Regional Park
- Lyrebird Survey Group Event
- Looking for the secretive Swamp Antechinus and Broad-toothed Rat
- Kokoda service Dandenong Ranges National Park
- Australian Cloud Forest Collection (DRBG) tender announcement
- Dandenong Ranges June 2021 Storm Recovery update
- Student Volunteering at Haining Farm
- Japanese Consul-General visit to Dandenong Ranges Botanic Garden

2. Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy: Regional Context Analysis Summary – Julian Guess

- What the project is about
- The Upper Yarra Smart Specialisation Journey
- Strengths and assets

- The Challenges
- Potential opportunities and discussions

Comment: there is an opportunity for guided tours of the forest i.e. the Ada Tree. People could get the train, then e-bus to a coffee shop then go on a forest tour.

Q: Are the mills going to be as impacted as we believe? Can they use timber from private land?

A: They have existing stock to work with and some are sourcing timber from out of state.

Q: How involved will Council be in what happens next?

A: Working groups will be established, Council will play a part, however, it will be primarily community driven.

Q: Will anyone else take on the mills?

A: Unknown

Comment: A lot of people rely on the offcuts from the mill for cooking and heating. There is opportunity for commercial providers to fill the gap.

Q: What is the value of the (mill) equipment?

A: Value will be low if there's no use for it.

3. Biodiversity Sub Committee

YRC Update

Amanda has been working on feedback from different sources therefore there is no update for the committee at this time.

SEAC response

- The committee has had no correspondence about their nature plan feedback.
- Time ran out at the last biodiversity sub committee and full feedback was not provided. Graeme requested a one-on-one which has not been scheduled.
- The plan is not a "quality document", it has too much repetition, an overuse of vision statements, has typos and features misconceptions.
- The Mayor's foreword is inappropriate.
- The current foreword by the Indigenous Team should be in the plan as a perspective.
- Many submissions have been made that haven't been taken on board – would like to see them acknowledged and an adjustment to the plan made.
- Advised there should be an executive summary in the plan
- Recommend another opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Nature Plan.
- The policy should be shaped by strategy not politics.

ACTION

Amanda and Graeme to discuss additional feedback before ELT

Amanda Smith

4. Open Floor

Lucy Gilchrist and Clinton Muller have resigned from the committee.

SEAC page on web page not reflecting minutes since February 2023

Would like more detailed notes from SEAC meetings provided (they don't need to be made public).

Q. How do the community know they can get a smaller FOGO bin?

A. Our website explains that bin sizes can currently be changed in person, on the phone or via our website. We are encouraging all resident to first try the service before making any changes.

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Environment/Waste/Change-your-bin-size>

Re YRC Update: Pre-fauna clearing survey

Q. Is this part of the process or was it a trial?

A. Hollow inspection is now a standard permit condition.

Q. Fire as a management tool was being reviewed, where is it at?

A. This will be presented at the December meeting.

Comment: Would like each meeting to have 2 agenda items as there have been many deferred topics and with the impending release of the Nature Plan there will be many things SEAC can advise on i.e weeds

Seek governance advice around reappointment to advisory committees.

The Chair of SEAC is on the upcoming agenda for Council, members can advise Suzanne if they have a preference as to which councillors they prefer.

Private landholders can engage as an offset site, great opportunities with the Beyond Yellingbo program properties. Council well positioned to run an event bringing landholders together with DEECA.

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Meeting closed: 8:30pm

Next meeting Thursday 14th December

Deferred topics

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