

# Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 6 June 2024

## Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

## Members present

Cr Andrew Fullagar (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Graeme George (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Peter Martin (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Bec Brannigan (member), David Keil (member), Jared Wake (member), Jasmyn Hills (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Rowan Barr (member)

## Apologies

Monika Winston (YRC), Tom Meek (YRC), Graham Brew (YRC), Peter Morgan (member)

## Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 4 April 2024

Moved: Graeme George

Seconded: Peter Martin

## Declaration of interest

None

## Actions

No previous action items.

## New Actions

ACTION	Set biodiversity subcommittee meeting	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Add Nature Plan to the SEAC page of the Sustainability report	Suzanne Burville
ACTION	Share DEECA response to logging in YR National Park	Cr Johanna Skelton
ACTION	Review correspondence from DEECA on the activities in the Dandenong Ranges National Park (DRNP) and consider the preparation of a Council position.	Sarah Bond Amanda Smith

## 1. Shared Agreements

Agreement 7 – 'Community Principles: Uphold community values and respect all members' can be interpreted in many ways according to individual values. Suggest amending to 'Community Principles: Consider and respect broader community interests and perspectives.'

## 2. Council Plan

Council's key strategic document for the four-year electoral term that describes the goals and objectives that guide the work we do to deliver on the Community Vision for the municipality.

- More information/input via <https://shaping.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/yarra-ranges-shape-your-future>
- Members were encouraged to consider joining the community panel.
- Questions from SEAC could be given to the deliberative panel.

Comment: The biggest challenge for Council is finding funds; need to look beyond state/federal/rates.

### 3. Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy Update

The Upper Yarra Valley Local Development Strategy (LDS) project will identify and develop ideas for innovation and diversification that support local growth and bring long-term economic, environmental and social benefits to the Upper Yarra. The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) has partnered with RMIT University and are supported by Council to deliver the project.

- Currently recruiting for innovation working groups
- 2 million available for pilot/seed programs.

### 4. Sustainability Report

[View sustainability report](#) »

A look at the Yarra Ranges Council Sustainability Report 2022-23

Q: How was 530kgs of Nitrogen was removed from stormwater, how this was measured and where it went. (page 22)

A: This is the annual nitrogen removal achieved by all the WSUD assets we maintain, as modelled in MUSIC (standard software used to calculate water quality treatment performance of assets). The nitrogen is taken up by the soil and plants in these systems, which act as a filter for nutrients and other contaminants in stormwater. Clean water leaving these systems is then returned to waterways.

Comment: The Nature Plan wasn't listed under SEAC (page 30).

Q: Does the Biodiversity Offset Program generate income?

A: Not in addition to the needs of the program

Q: The report took a long time to be released; has there been changes to the way report information is collated?

A: The next edition should be out quicker. Some information is easily generated, some is manual.

Q: How is it communicated to the public? Could we try additional avenues and a way to reach young people looking for hope?

A: The report is on the website and was released via website news, email newsletters and social media.

Examples of videos used to communicate Council's work includes that which captured the rope bridge in storm damaged areas. View this video here: [https://youtu.be/t\\_Yc\\_nqLrdg](https://youtu.be/t_Yc_nqLrdg)

ACTION

Add Nature Plan to the SEAC page of the Sustainability report

Suzanne

### 5. Climate Adaption Game

The Adaptation Game (TAG) is a climate education and planning tool to support local community resilience. Game based play where participants craft their stories on how to prepare and respond to climate related crises in their local community. It is specific to the Yarra Ranges.

Comments:

- Will there be an online version?
- Would be good to share this resource with other Councils.
- What happens after the game? Do we have a duty of care? Would other Council's consider a shared resource to support
- Will Council support schools to deliver the game?

Thursday October 3 SEAC meeting will offer the opportunity for SEAC members to participate in TAG.

## 6. Open Floor

- a) SEAC Committee Recruitment  
The current committee runs to the end of 2024. Due to October Council elections in October (and an extended caretaker period) we will begin recruiting for the 2025-28 committee in August. The SEAC Terms of Reference 2025-2028 will be on the next agenda for input and to ensure inclusion as part of recruitment.
- b) Meeting date flexibility  
Mel has asked if the committee will reconsider moving the December 5 meeting date.
- c) Graeme Lorimer's audit of the 2020-21 Biodiversity Surveys  
Deficiencies were identified in sites sampled from the 2020/2021 biodiversity surveys. Will checks to be done?  
Answer: Currently waiting on endorsement of the Nature Plan year 1 budget to determine funds. Once we have resources special interest group can have input on next steps.
- d) Environmental Weeds Booklet  
A request to assess the messaging Council shares about environmental weeds has been made. This will be discussed at a special interest group meeting on weeds.
- e) Request for Council's response to the death of a Greater Glider in the Yarra Ranges National Park. Will DEECA be doing this in future? Under what conditions, reason and practise standards? Can Council question this on community's behalf, as it does not seem supported by current fire/ ecology knowledge?  
Answer: Councillor Johanna Skelton contacted DEECA and raised it at the Fire Management Committee.
- f) Cardinia Biolinks  
Peter Martin and Amanda Smith met with Cardinia Council to discuss their biolinks plan.
- g) Meeting review  
Request for a member to provide a 5-minute meeting review at the end of each meeting.

ACTION	Set special interest group meeting on weeds	Amanda Smith
ACTION	Share DEECA response to logging in YR National Park	Cr Johanna Skelton
ACTION	Review correspondence from DEECA on the activities in the Dandenong Ranges National Park (DRNP) and consider the preparation of a Council position.	Sarah Bond Amanda Smith

Meeting closed: 8:00pm

Upcoming meetings:

Thursday August 1

Thursday October 3 (Council caretaker period)

November 28 TBC

Submitted topics:

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