

Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee MINUTES



Thursday 1 August 2024

Chairperson

Cr Johanna Skelton

Members present

Tammi Rose (YRC CEO), Cr Andrew Fullagar (YRC), Corinne Bowen (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Kim O'Connor (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Suzanne Burville (YRC), Bumeke Jayasinghe (YRC), Paul Mechelen (YRC), Graeme George (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Peter Martin (member), David Keil (member), , Rowan Barr (member), Jared Wake (member), Jasmyn Hills (member), Laurence Gaffney (member).

Apologies

Monika Winston (YRC), Tom Meek (YRC), Graham Brew (YRC), Peter Morgan (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Bec Brannigan (member), Peter Morgan (member).

Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 6 June 2024

Moved: Peter Martin

Seconded: David Keil

Declaration of interest

None

Previous Actions

ACTION	Set weeds special interest group meeting	Amanda Smith
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

New Actions

ACTION	Provide state government changes on environmental sustainable design	Sarah Bond
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1. CEO

CEO Tammi Rose acknowledged the critical role the members of the Sustainable Environment Advisory Committee play in informing Council about environmental issues.

2. Stormwater Management

- Feedback from SEAC was valuable, especially advice on agencies that should be consulted with.
- Melbourne Water had provided over \$150k for water quality testing.
- The new mapping will include climate change modelling.
- Next steps are for a round of internal consultation then the plan should be endorsed by Council August 27.

Question: Will stormwater modelling be available publicly i.e. insurance companies?

A: Yes. It's likely insurance companies are already ahead of us due to recent flooding events.

Question: Is Melbourne Water doing adjacent mapping?

Answer: Yes, by 2026.

Question: Is the modelling static or iterative?

Question: It will include up-to-date rainfall and climate change factors. Flood mapping can be updated after large-scale flood mitigate works take place.

Question: Can the flood mapping be used as a pre-planning tool?

Answer: Yes

3. Tree Canopy Strategy

- The strategy was endorsed by Council on May 28.
- It's a 20-year strategy that will be reviewed every 5 years.
- There was division in community with some wanting more trees and others concerned about fire risk, falling limbs etc.
- Whilst the strategy is important, the implementation/actions have the detail.
- There will be a program manager and working groups who will consult with community/SEAC.

Comment: There was no noticeable changes between the draft and the final document. It appears none of SEAC's suggestions were incorporated.

Response: There were some wording changes between documents.

Comment: The reference 'spirits in the trees' should not have been included as it's not scientific.

Response: Council's Indigenous Advisory Committee was consulted, and it has been included in reference to Wurundjeri beliefs. It doesn't affect the actions.

Question: How will you tackle division in the community?

Answer: The strategy provides us with the written position of Council regarding the value of trees in our environment. This along with the Nature Plan will help us with community engagement.

Question: How has this strategy changed since its original inception?

Answer: The original idea was to ask community to help write the plan, however it wasn't supported by the Councillors at the time.

Question: Regarding 'right tree, right place', is there guidance on which plants and where?

Response: This has been accounted for in actions 2.1 and 4.1.

4. Terms of Reference

Note: Recruitment for the next sustainable environment advisory committee will commence on 16th August and will remain open for 4 weeks. Required changes to the Terms of Reference will take place during recruitment and will be presented to Councillors along with preferred applicants in time for a new committee to commence in 2025.

The SEAC Terms of Reference are being updated to align with Council's other advisory committees. The main changes include length of term, confidentiality and code of conduct, consecutive term limit introduced and inclusion and diversity considerations.

Comment: It's important to describe the way in which the committee should engage with Council Officers and the organisation along with how SEAC can add value on significant works before they go public.

Comment: The time and expertise of the committee can be underestimated and undervalued.

Comment: There needs to be stronger guidelines on Council closing the loop.

Comment: A flowchart or 'cheat sheet' for presenters regarding process of consulting SEAC would be useful.

Comment: It sounds like the committee would benefit from a Statement of Intent being included in the Terms of Reference.

Question: In regard to the requirement of having young people/indigenous positions etc, is there another aspect where range of skills are considered because if those members don't have expertise can the committee be of value?

Answer: Yes. Refer 5.5b of the Terms of Reference.

Question: When do the Terms of Reference begin?

Answer: At the conclusion of the current committee which is the end of 2024.

Comment: It would be good to have an intro document or bio for each new committee member.

Comment: There is no mention of sustainability in the Terms of Reference introduction.

Comment: Ideally Council would keep a list of unsuccessful applicants so they can be offered positions if any become vacant.

5. Open Floor

- Thank you to Councillor Johanna Skelton and Councillor Andrew Fullagar for chairing SEAC. They have been amazing councillors who care deeply about environmental issues and their contributions to the committee have been invaluable.
- Narre Warren East Reserve will soon be planted with approximately 6000 plants.
- Graeme George would like to contribute to the weed strategy before his term finishes.
- Stormwater management: the lowering of the (unmade) roads in the landscape is a huge environmental issue. Drainage to roads needs to be addressed before it gets worse, and the roads become waterways. During heavy rainfall silt and crushed rock gets washed away. Unnecessary grading contributes to the problem. GPS mapping of road culverts needs to happen so graders know where they are.
- Would like to hear from the building standards department on how they tackle environmental sustainable design.
- Jared Wake has secured a 12-week placement in Council's environment department.

ACTION	Provide state government changes on environmental sustainable design	Sarah Bond
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Meeting closed: 8:00pm

Upcoming meetings:

Thursday October 3 (Council caretaker period)

Thursday November 28 (TBC)

Submitted topics:

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