



Yarra Ranges Environment Advisory Committee

Minutes

Thursday 7th May 2020

Online Zoom Meeting

5.30pm – 7.00 pm

Meeting Open	5.40pm	Chairperson: Cr Mike Clarke
Members Present		Graeme George (member), Jeff Barlow (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Michelle Masterson (member), Ron Sawyer (member), , Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Victoria), Corinne Mays (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Cr. Mike Clarke, David Harper (YRC), Simon Woodland (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Mark Varmalis (YRC), Jess Rae (YRC)
Apologies		Benjamin Viola (member), Leah Wheatley (DELWP), Luke Boontjes (member), Darcy Duggan (member), Julian Hill (member)
Welcome	5.45pm	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Acknowledgement of Country</p> <p><i>We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri People as the Custodians of this land. We also pay respects to all Aboriginal Community Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the history of this region.</i></p> <p>Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on Thursday 13th February (published on YRC website)</p> <p>Moved: Graeme George Seconded: Ron Sawyer</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YREAC's thoughts are with YREAC member Darcy Duggan. Darcy was recently diagnosed with leukaemia and is undergoing treatment. For those wanting to convey thoughts or contribute to a fundraising campaign, please contact Cr Mike Clarke for further detail. • Mel commented on the lack of detail in the minutes as per an email in February. It was noted by YRC staff that the aim of the minutes, per YREAC Terms of Reference, is to maintain minutes as an action and agreement record where key points and ideas are summarised. It was recommended for those requiring specific details minuted to identify these during the meeting and YRC staff will work to capture these.
	5.50pm	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Any members with interest in matters to be discussed to declare.</p>
		None Declared
	5.55pm	<p>Matters Arising/ Actions</p> <p>ACTION: Melanie to draft motion for next meeting on actions to declare a biodiversity emergency. Pending</p> <p>ACTION: David to supply a response to Darcy on the timing of data received when the review of the ESO was conducted by Statutory Planning. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Add the Warburton Mountain Bike Trail to the next agenda. Deferred</p> <p>ACTION: Add the Tree Strategy to the next agenda. Deferred</p>

ACTION: Laurence to provide information to Jo from Parks Victoria on the Bunyip State Park to be addressed by Jo at the next meeting. **Completed**

ACTION: schedule another biodiversity subcommittee meeting for a time in the next 4 – 6 weeks. **Pending**

ACTION: Darcy to provide Jo the information sent to Victoria Purdue about WSUD needed to reduce erosion in parks. **Pending**

ACTION: Laurence requires the burn plan before he can present on the planned burns at Launching Place. David to follow up with David Carr about the burn plan. **Pending**

ACTION: Defer Planned Burns presentation from Laurence Gaffney to next meeting. **Deferred**

ACTION: Simon to organise the project group from Yarra Strategic Plan to present at YREAC. **Pending**

ACTION: Steve to coordinate / organise the Environmental Flow Program to be presented at YREAC. **Pending**

ACTION: Sarah to create a MW Poll for the tour dates – if people want a +1, this must be nominated. **Completed**

ACTION: organise a time for the PPWCMA Coranderk Restoration Plan to be presented at an YREAC meeting. **Pending**

ACTION: Jo to report back on the plan for the bird feeding site at Grants Picnic Ground to bring back to the next meeting. **Completed**

ACTION: Sarah to send documents from Jeff before next meeting. **Pending**

ACTION: Council Team to return revised website information by next meeting. **Completed**

Discussion:

- Cr Mike Clarke offered to assist Mel draft the motion for a biodiversity emergency to be tabled at the next council meeting on Tuesday 26th May. Above action superseded by:

ACTION: motion for biodiversity emergency to be drafted by Cr Mike Clarke and circulated to YREAC members for comment. The outcome is to be reported at the next YREAC meeting.

- David responded to Darcy's request for further information via email with the full YREAC committee CC'd. This addressed the dataset information that Ecology Australia used. It was noted that there was a typo in the email and that the last paragraph should have read '*it has now been forwarded to the Minister for Planning for approval*'.
- In further discussion on the ESO, Kym highlighted that the current ESO is better than what was there before and that focussing on the Biodiversity Asset Strategy, through the Biodiversity subcommittee, will help to improve the ESO.
- The topics of the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination and Tree Strategy were deferred given the online meeting format.
- Mark provided a short update on the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination project. He detailed that the Minister for Planning is currently deciding if a full EES is required.
- Given the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Biodiversity Subcommittee Meeting was cancelled. An online meeting will be scheduled within the next few weeks.
- Jo will follow up with Darcy at an appropriate time about WSUD info, understanding that there may be a delay.
- David will follow up on the burn plan as requested by Laurence.
- Simon reported that the Yarra Strategic Plan is due to be approved in September, a presentation can be scheduled if, and when, there is space on the agenda.
- Steve reported the environmental flow program presentation can be scheduled if and when there is space on the agenda.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Yarra Dam tour has been delayed and won't be possible until COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. • Corinne noted that a presentation on the Coranderk Restoration can be scheduled if and when there is space on the agenda. <p>ACTION: Table noted presentations into the 'deferred topics' section until space becomes available on the agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Grants Picnic Ground was included in the Parks Victoria update. There was interest also in the forest clearing next to Kalinda Primary School. Jo will follow up. • Jeff to provide information on the Great Forest National Park at the next meeting.
	6.35pm	<p>Committee Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Forest National Park (also referenced as Central Highlands National Park) • YREAC website information • Jess Fettell resignation
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff to discuss GFNP at the next meeting before presenting to Council. • YREAC information circulated was accepted and moved to publish on the website. • Simon to assess previous applicants and select a candidate for Council to consider. Concurrent to recruitment to the Indigenous position.
Item 1	6.40pm	<p>Liveable Climate Plan</p> <p>Jess Rae, Sustainability Coordinator, presented on the draft Liveable Climate Plan.</p>
		<p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final draft will be at Council to be endorsed for community consultation in May. • Target addition of 'Zero energy operational costs by 2040'. <p>Key Actions from the plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar farm and biomass to energy – capital investment projects • Operational/maintenance projects • Resilient Communities Program (funded by solar farm) <p>Community Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging under the current situation • Series of webinars with Q&A • Youth engagement, including schools <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious and commendable plan • Graeme highlighted that instead of just 'plants and animals' it would be more accurate to use the word biodiversity. • It was highlighted by Graeme that there seems to be no plan for the rural landscape in the living landscape actions, only for the urban and industrial environments. Simon identified that this was deliberate and that the rural landscapes were referenced under food security. • Overall, there was support for the simplification of the language for the general public. Suggestions were made to review what language is currently used as there are still quite technical words. • A number of members highlighted that there was no specific action or reference to biodiversity, emphasising that there are significant impacts climate change will have. Simon and Jess responded that this would be reviewed to include a stronger reference to biodiversity.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michelle highlighted that it was a very positive plan and commented that the actions could be identified as visions when doing the community consultation. Using these types of statements would be useful to draw in the unconverted. For example, the solar farm will create new businesses and jobs. Would also be useful to include the paybacks already achieved with the solar initiatives at Council.
Item 3	7.10pm	Agency Reports (circulated Monday 27th April) Follow up for Agency Representatives.
		Parks Victoria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadbeaters Possum translocated to Mt Donna Buang. They were from the Toorong plateau (highland genetics). Laurence thanked Jo for providing the mapping of the Bunyip Park fires. He was interested if there had been any matching of the multiple burn areas with their EVC's. Jo isn't from that region but said that it could be investigated. Port Phillip and Westernport CMA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Great He Ho Escape Project has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with a community event cancelled. There are upcoming forums that members can sign up to. The link is under the Regional Agriculture Facilitator Update. Melbourne Water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 has presented challenges for the agency when engaging with landholders Upper Yarra Dam tour postponed until current restrictions lifted. Sarah Gaskill current point of contact for the Upper Yarra, possibly through to July. Steve will continue to participate in YREAC. Planning started for a walking Trail near Launching Place to link with the rail trail. The trail will enable people to access the river. The trail is for walkers and cyclists, not horses. The plan long term is a circular loop.
Item 2	7.20pm	Sustainability and Environment Team Updates (circulated Monday 27th April) Follow up for Sustainability and Biodiversity Coordinators.
		Sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healesville CoRE successfully secured a Federal grant to upgrade three sites with solar power, with one site to include a battery system. Community Development Grant Funding – Solar and battery upgrade to three existing sites. EASL tendered for the State Government ResourceSmart Schools Program for the Eastern Region. Solar Savers has been very successful this year and will continue next financial year. Power Purchasing Agreement; 40 councils pooling electricity to contract renewable power. An unforeseeable procurement delay will see the project commence within 12 months. Biodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There have been some disruptions due to COVID-19 and with some staff redeployed across the organisation. Ribbons of Green has been busy with lots of seedlings going out. Staff are also supporting local nurseries given the volunteer workforce aren't able to attend.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is commencing on the new Biodiversity Plan. <p>ACTION: Organise a Biodiversity Subcommittee Meeting to occur before the next YREAC meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda Smith is returning from maternity leave on Monday 11th May. Returning 3 days a week. • Mel Carmody is leaving Yarra Ranges Council after 18 years. She is moving to Melbourne Water working in the middle Yarra region. • The Biodiversity Offset Program was mentioned, further detail was requested. <p>ACTION: Include detailed information on the Biodiversity Offset Program in the next Biodiversity Update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Volunteer Officers organised a webinar on connecting to nature with Clare Dunn.
Next Meeting		Thursday 9 th July
Meeting Close	7.50pm	
Tabled Topics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Burns at Launching Place by Laurence Gaffney • Warburton Mountain Bike Strategy • Tree Strategy • Yarra Strategic Plan • Environmental Flow Program (Melbourne Water) • Coranderrk Restoration (PPWCMA)