



Yarra Ranges Environment Advisory Committee Minutes

Thursday 10th September 2020

Online Zoom Meeting

5.30pm – 7.00 pm

<https://yarraranges-vic.zoom.us/j/2131050969>

Meeting Open	5.35pm	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), Benjamin Viola (member), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Victoria), Corinne Mays (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Cr. Mike Clarke, Cr Tim Heenan, David Harper (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Amanda Smith (YRC), Mark Varmalis (YRC), Will Sowersby (YRC), Beth Wallis (YRC)
Apologies		Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water), Jess Rae (YRC), Leah Wheatley (DELWP), Darcy Duggan (member), Julian Hill (member)
Welcome	5.35	<p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Meeting etiquettes:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remain on mute and 'raise your hand' using the zoom functions if you want to speak. The Chair will invite you to speak in turn. 2. Raise questions, where possible, using the 'Chat function' 3. Try to limit distractions, either in the physical background or notifications from other applications. <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 7th May 2020 (published on YRC website)</p> <p>Moved: Graeme George Seconded: Michelle Masterson</p> <p>Confirmation of minutes of meeting held on 7th July 2020 (published on YRC website)</p> <p>Moved: Ben Viola Seconded: Graeme George</p>
		<p>ACTION: Amend the minutes of 7th July meeting to reflect that Laurence has been contacted but the burn plan hasn't been sent through due to CFA requirements.</p>
	5.37	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Any members with interest in matters to be discussed to declare.</p>
	5.37 – 5.40	<p>Matters Arising/ Actions</p> <p>ACTION: Amanda to send through information on Will Sowersby, Coordinator Biodiversity Investigations, to the committee. Complete</p> <p>ACTION: Jo to follow up information on PV response to information on the state deer strategy and include in next report. Complete</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redundant action as Will Sowersby is presenting at the meeting. • Jo detailed that DELWP is the responsible agency for the state deer strategy and that it is in the final stages prior to release.
Item 1	5.40– 6.15	<p>YRC Integrated Water Management Plan</p> <p>Beth Wallis will present on the Integrated Water Management Plan</p>
		<p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is now a regional plan being developed with a number of Councils, including Yarra Ranges. • Most IWM actions have dual purpose, e.g. using rain water increases water efficiency and reduces stormwater run-off. • A world first trial of Smart Tank technology is in the early stages for Monbulk Creek. Preliminary work shows that it would be possible to boost flows if enough tanks are installed. There would also be linkages with Belgrave Lake and Birdsland lakes which could become ‘smart lakes’. A component of the project may involve tanks being installed on private property. The very early stage is looking to find pilot sites using Council buildings. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graeme expressed concern, in reference to the Smart Tanks research, on the use of the lakes to top up flows in summer having detrimental effects on water birds. • Mel made the suggestion for Beth to review Margaret Brock’s (and Michelle Casanova’s) research into Water Plant Functional Groups. The Smart Tanks research team might find this useful to monitor changes to the fringe vegetation of the lakes if it is established which birds use which plant functional group. • Benjamin also expressed concern in the changing water levels in the lakes impacting on existing Platypus populations at those sites, particularly Birdsland where a platypus conservation effort is in effect. He recommended that existing Platypus burrows be considered as part of the research. • Councillor Mike Clarke also highlighted that water downstream in the Monbulk Creek is being used by farmers. It might be worth the project team investigating the water use rights and how these interact with the project.. • Members were interested in the integration of stormwater projects within normal Council processes. Beth explained that Council has dedicated Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) roles and there are triggers in the permit process, particularly within the priority catchment areas, to include stormwater treatment component/s into projects. • Beth clarified the use of the stormwater arches at Sassafras was introduced to reduce erosion. A concentrated flow of stormwater from the Mount Dandenong Tourist Road and the township was causing significant damage to a gully. The

		<p>installed tanks capture this stormwater and release it at a more natural rate, also trapping sedimentation in a filter. The capacity of the installation at Sassafras is 450kL.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beth detailed that the regional water management plans in development will be beneficial for the area as they will look at systems at the 'catchment' scale. Those for the Yarra and Dandenong Creek systems are quite progressed. • David highlighted that 80% of Yarra Ranges Council fits into Melbourne Water's priority catchments and Melbourne Water are very supportive of the IWM projects undertaken at Council, often providing direct funding for projects, and assist with innovation and research in the area.
Item 2	6.15 – 7.00	<p>WFV Biodiversity Investigations Team</p> <p>An introduction from Will Sowersby, Coordinator of the Biodiversity Investigations Team, to their project and its scope.</p>
		<p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project aims: Collate, collect and analyse biodiversity information from existing data and community sources. • Funded by the Working for Victoria Initiative • Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning Permit Data ○ Offset Sites data ○ Plant and Animal records from Council archives and publically available databases ○ Volunteer/Community Groups ○ Government Partners ○ Fieldwork <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was great support and positive responses from the committee on the project. • There was interest in the use of the baseline dataset for assessing change over time (e.g. for use in monitoring climate change). Will indicated that this is expected to be part of the project scope. • Amanda clarified that Graeme Lorimer is continuing to be consulted on this project as an expert scientist. His surveying datasheets and approaches are being closely referenced throughout the development of the project methodology. • David reflected on the support from the biodiversity subcommittee in creating a well-developed brief which was used when the Working for Victoria initiative was announced to create the Biodiversity Investigations Team. • There was interest from members in the longevity of the project and if Council will be able to maintain data collection into the future. Will responded that long term data management is being considered as part of the project scope

		<p>so that contractors and teams can adopt the methodology as part of their ongoing work into the future. Amanda added the outputs from the investigations project should provide insights into the investment needed in future to maintain the dataset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members were appreciative that their concerns had been heard and considered when the project brief was developed. <p>ACTION: Organise a biodiversity subcommittee meeting.</p>
Item 5	7.00 – 7.20	<p>Agency Reports</p> <p>Follow up for Agency Representatives.</p>
		<p>Parks Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bunyip State Park – Deer control program has been put on hold due to COVID-19. Wingless Stonefly surveys at Mt Donna Buang as part of the Warburton Mountain Bike Project confirmed the presence of the wingless stonefly and other stonefly species. Jo acknowledged the contributions made by Cr Mike Clarke to local area during his six years as ward Councillor and wished him all the best. <p>ACTION: Jo to provide further details of the wingless stonefly and other species from the survey work at Mt Donna Buang.</p> <p>PPWCMA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yarra 4 Life – Yering Gorge to Woori Yallock project is having the final touches added before submission to DELWP. Working 4 Victoria – currently recruiting for works crews. Hopefully will start at the end of September. Farm2Schools program –Due to Stage 4 restrictions, all of incursions are virtual. Regional Catchment Strategy Renewal which lasts for seven years has just finished. There was interest if a review was available from the last renewal period. Corinne detailed that there's no formal review but could follow up. There was the suggestion made that it would be useful to have a review or summary of the RCS as it would highlight the positive changes happening at regional level, showing the collective efforts of the different groups involved over the 7 years. <p>ACTION: Corinne to follow up on the Regional Catchment Strategy Renewal and explore what reviews have been undertaken and whether a review will be conducted.</p>
Item 3	7.20 – 7.22	<p>Committee Discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> YRC Staff changes Luke Boontjes Resignation Council Plan
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simon Woodland has resigned and moved to Bass Coast Shire. Jess Rae has stepped in as acting EO. Julian Guess has stepped up as acting Sustainability Coordinator. Luke Boontjes has resigned his position as Youth Rep Individuals/groups can nominate to be part of the Council Plan engagement: yrc.vic.gov.au/councilplan

Item 4	7.22 – 7.56	Sustainability and Environment Team Updates Follow up for Sustainability and Biodiversity Coordinators.
		Biodiversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amanda reflected that due to the pandemic and changed work conditions, none of the new team members have been met in person. • Amanda also informed the committee that the Yarra Ranges Flora Directory is being updated which is nearly completion. Once it is ready for public access a link will be shared. ACTION: Amanda to circulate Flora Directory link when available. Sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeff gave an update on Healesville CoRE and detailed that they're working to transition Healesville to net zero energy consumption by 2027. They have transitioned their events to webinars. He commended the support offered by Julian Guess from the Sustainability Team in their ongoing projects. Running lots of community events. A revolving fund generated by the energy savings from solar installations is being investigated to continue investment into renewable energy. • Julian was pleased to report that the Liveable Climate Plan endorsed was endorsed in August. • Funding has been confirmed for a Biochar plant at the Coldstream Transfer Station. • There was interest on the status of the Power Partnership Agreement. Julian detailed that one of the new Working for Victoria staff, Sarah James, is working on it but that there is no new updates at this stage.
Next Meeting		10 th December 2020
Meeting Close	7.56PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Clarke expressed his thanks to the committee for their commitment and for being part of the committee. • Tim Heenan recognized that the meeting was on the anniversary of the climate declaration made by Council. He thanked Mike for all of his work on Council and as part of YREAC.
Deferred Topics		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Burns at Launching Place by Laurence Gaffney • Warburton Mountain Bike Strategy • Yarra Strategic Plan • Environmental Flow Program (Melbourne Water) • Coranderrk Restoration (PPWCMA) • Great Forest National Park (Jeff Barlow)