



## Sustainable Environmental Advisory Committee

# 2021 Terms of Reference

### Purpose

To provide Yarra Ranges Council with informed and constructive advice, input and support, to help guide the Council on environmental sustainability issues and initiatives relevant to the management and stewardship of the natural environment within the municipality.

### Relationship of Committee to Council

The Committee has been established as an Advisory Committee for the purpose described above.

The Committee does not have the authority to make decisions on behalf of Council and nor does it have delegated authority to act or to incur expenditure on behalf of Council.

While comprising diverse interests and representatives, the Committee will not be seen as the only means for the Council to engage and consult within the municipality on environmental issues. The Council will continue to engage with the broader Yarra Ranges community on important matters warranting consultation.

### Roles and Tasks

The Committee will:

- Represent a range of sectors and opinions relating to or impacting the natural environment, including community, agency, industry, etc.
- Provide local knowledge and expertise about the Yarra Ranges natural environment and impacts on it.
- Provide informed and constructive advice in regard to a wide range of environmental issues and the management of the local natural environment.
- Identify emerging issues of concern to the health of the Yarra Ranges natural environment.
- Provide specific and targeted feedback on a range of Council policies, strategies, and key environmental stewardship initiatives.
- Assist in determining Council priorities in regard to environmental management and industry best practice.
- Support and assist the Council's efforts to consult with and advocate to the broader Yarra Ranges community on environmental sustainability issues.

- Support the Council's efforts to maintain strong and close networks between individuals, groups, organisations, businesses and government agencies in pursuit of environmental stewardship outcomes.
- Submit an annual report to a meeting of the Council setting out the nature of its work during the preceding year.

## Chairperson

Meetings will be chaired by a Yarra Ranges Councillor, appointed by Council on an annual basis.

A Deputy Chairperson should also be nominated by the Committee and will perform the duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent or unable to perform their duties.

## Membership

The Committee will consist of twenty three (23) members, to be appointed by the Council. The specific membership will include:

- Thirteen (13) voting community members, to include:
  - Ten (10) general community representatives,
  - One (1) community representative with links to the indigenous community, and
  - Two (2) or more positions for young people with an interest in developing knowledge and networks within the environment sector.
- Ten (10) non-voting members, to include:
  - Two (2) Councillors, appointed by Council on an annual basis (1 as Chair).
  - Four (4) agency representatives, to include a representative from:
    - Parks Victoria,
    - Sustainability Victoria,
    - Melbourne Water, and
    - DELWP.
  - Four (4) Yarra Ranges Council staff including:
    - Director, Environment and Engineering (or delegate),
    - Manager, Sustainable Environment and Facilities (or delegate), and
    - Manager, Recreation, Projects & Parks (or delegate), and
    - An "Executive Officer" for the Committee, to be nominated by the Manager, Sustainable Environment and Facilities.

Members of the Committee will be appointed by Council for a

fixed term of 3 years and are required to commit to attending meetings during this term. Members may apply for to be re-appointed to the Committee for a second or subsequent term.

Relevant agencies will be responsible for nominating a suitable representative and a delegate. Agency representatives are subject to approval by Council.

If members are unable to attend 3 consecutive meetings at any point during the 3-year appointment they may be contacted by a council staff member to review their position on the committee. Members with low attendance rates may be asked to retire from the committee to allow new members an opportunity to contribute. Council reserves the right to seek a replacement member to ensure a quorum can be maintained.

## Community Membership Criteria

Council seeks to appoint a diverse committee that is that is representative of the key stakeholder's interest in environment related topics within the Yarra Ranges Council community.

Community members will be appointed as individuals based on their qualifications and experience and will be sought through expressions of interest. The following membership criteria will guide the selection of community, members to the Committee:

- Demonstrated interest of diverse environmental issues pertaining to the Yarra Ranges, including but not limited to biodiversity, water management, sustainability, climate change, waste recovery and resource management and sustainable development.
- Basic understanding of the role of local government in relation to environmental management.
- Basic understanding of the broader role of the committee and the financial constraints of Council.
- Preference for skills, qualifications, and experience in environmental management and related fields.
- Preference for relevant experience in committees and / or demonstrated ability to participate in, and constructively contribute to a group, committee or organisation.
- Ability to regularly attend and participate in meetings as scheduled.
- Live and / or work within the municipality, or have a demonstrated connection to the municipality through professional, technical, industry or volunteer alliances.
- Demonstrated commitment to work in a collaborative way with all members of the Committee.
- Ability to communicate with, understand and reflect the opinions of others from the broader community. This may be as a result of association with related or relevant

	<p>community organisations or employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preference for individuals that add a diversity of skills, experience or background to the Committee relevant to any aspect of environmental management including but not limited to; water management, biodiversity conservation, energy and climate change, sustainable development, waste recovery and resource management, and environmental planning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Code of conduct for Committee members</b></p>	<p>When acting in their capacity as a member of the Committee, all Committee members will be respectful of others and will refrain from discriminating, harassing or bullying other people and using offensive language.</p> <p>Committee members will also have regard to the principles of health and safety and must ensure that they contribute to the notion of a healthy and safe workplace.</p>
<p><b>Vacancies</b></p>	<p>Council will seek to fill any vacancies to reflect the composition of the Committee as identified above as soon as appropriate to do so.</p> <p>Any member of the Committee who wishes resign prior to the end of their term of appointment should submit their resignation in writing, addressed to the Chairperson and the Committee's Executive Officer.</p>
<p><b>Co-opted members and specialist advice</b></p>	<p>The Committee may invite suitably skilled persons to join the Committee as a co-opted member for a specified purpose and period of time. A co-opted member would join the Committee in an advisory capacity only, is not entitled to vote and does not form part of the quorum.</p> <p>Individuals and groups may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee for the purpose of providing specialist advice. Any such individual or group must not be involved in decision making processes and must not vote on any matter.</p>
<p><b>Voting and decision making</b></p>	<p>A quorum of at least five (5) voting community members must be present if a vote or committee decision is to be made. No formal business shall be conducted by the Committee unless a quorum exists. If a quorum is not present, the Chairperson may decide that the Committee meet for discussion only.</p> <p>Only community members have voting rights to enable resolution of a committee position.</p> <p>Agency, Councillors and Council staff representatives are appointed to provide technical expertise and supporting information and will not have voting rights.</p>

<p><b>Working Groups</b></p>	<p>The Committee may auspice the establishment of special interest working groups as needed to progress specific initiatives for a defined period of time. These working groups may co-opt other members as required to address the specific issue at hand.</p> <p>Working groups can present opportunities and issues to the wider Committee, upon request to the Committee's Executive Officer.</p>
<p><b>Meetings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings will be held bimonthly, with 6 meetings held per year.</li> <li>• Apologies from appointed representatives are to be received at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled meeting time (where possible).</li> <li>• If apologies are received from 50% or more of the membership of the Committee, meetings will be cancelled and rescheduled (if feasible) for 4 weeks after the original scheduled meeting date.</li> <li>• Members are asked to check emails the morning of the meeting to receive any cancellation notices.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management and support to the Committee</b></p>	<p>The Council will provide the administrative support to assist the Committee to function effectively, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining contact details of members</li> <li>• Preparing and distributing agendas and prior reading material</li> <li>• Preparing and distributing meeting minutes</li> <li>• Reporting on actions and/or matters arising from previous meetings back to the committee</li> <li>• Circulating other material to Committee members as necessary</li> <li>• Managing all other administrative processes associated with the Committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Agenda</b></p>	<p>The Council will be responsible for setting the agenda for each meeting in consultation with the committee. Members or working groups may request policy / strategy discussion on a specific topic. Contributions to an upcoming agenda should be submitted to the Committee's Executive Officer no later than one month prior to the proposed meeting date, for consideration and / or inclusion. Discussion on operational issues should be directed to the appropriate Council Officer.</p> <p>Emergency items will be considered and should be submitted no later than 1 week prior to the meeting (where possible).</p>

Council staff will consider these and determine if they be listed or dealt with (investigated) as per normal business. For urgent responses (e.g. submissions to State / Federal etc.) the Council may call a special working group to work on the task.

Each meeting will include:

- Brief reports back on the use of the Committee's advice / actions and/or matters arising from items discussed at the previous meeting
- Council updates on current programs and initiatives
- Substantive discussion about major current issues and directions
- An opportunity to raise other business matters from the table.

The final agenda will be issued to Committee members one week prior to the scheduled meeting along with any background reading material.

## Minutes

Minutes of meetings will record the attendance of members, agenda items tabled, any declared conflicts of interest, key discussion points, actions and agreed outcomes only. Minutes will be recorded for each meeting by Council staff and distributed to each member of the Committee and relevant Council staff.

Draft minutes will be distributed within 5 working days of the meeting, with Committee members having 5 working days to provide comment on these. Draft minutes will then appear on Council's website for public viewing and will be formally moved at the following scheduled meeting.

## Confidentiality

Information discussed, received, used or created by the Committee may be confidential.

A Committee member must not disclose, discuss or otherwise make public any confidential information, unless authorised to do so by the Director, Environment and Engineering.

The Council may terminate the appointment of a member of the Committee if they have been found to have breached confidentiality requirements.

## Conflicts of Interest

A member of the Committee with a real or perceived conflict of interest in an item of business to be considered at a meeting must declare this before the item is considered. A member declaring a conflict of interest may be asked to leave the meeting while the identified item is being discussed and must not vote on the matter being considered.

A declaration of a conflict of interest that has been made at a meeting of the Committee must be recorded in the minutes of that meeting.

**Review**

A review of the role, function, membership and productivity of the Committee will be conducted every 2.5 to 3 years to ensure currency, effectiveness and stakeholder engagement. While membership may change at this time, it is considered value-adding to maintain continuity of some members beyond 3 years. Membership extensions beyond this timeframe will be tabled for consideration and agreement of Council.

Adopted by Council: TBC

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