



Yarra Ranges Environment Advisory Committee
Minutes
Thursday 13th February 2020
Community Room
Montrose Town Centre
5.30 – 8.00 pm

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Meeting Open | 5.36pm | Chairperson: Cr Mike Clarke |
| Members Present | | Graeme George (member), Jeff Barlow (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Darcy Duggan (member), Luke Boontjes (member), Michelle Masterson (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Benjamin Viola (member), Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Victoria), Corinne Mays (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Cr. Mike Clarke, Cr. Tim Heenan, David Harper (YRC), Simon Woodland (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC) |
| Apologies | | Jessica Fettell (member), Julian Hill (member), Leah Wheatley (DELWP), Jess Rae (YRC), Mark Varmalis (YRC) |
| Welcome | 5.36pm | <p>Welcome</p> <p><i>Reminder to put phones to silent unless essential.</i></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 11th December 2019 (published on YRC website)</p> <p>Moved: Graeme George</p> <p>Seconded: ?</p> |
| | | <p>Discussion and Actions:</p> <p>Concerns were raised by Darcy that previous minutes did not provide an adequate response to enquiries from members of the committee.</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.</p> <p>Minutes confirmed upon amendment of title from 'Agenda' to 'Minutes'</p> |
| | 5.37 | <p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Any members with interest in matters to be discussed to declare.</p> |
| | 5.37 – 6.30 | <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: Steve to make high flow footage available to YREAC. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Incorporate Tree Strategy as an agenda item after February. Pending</p> |

| | | |
|--------|-------------|---|
| | | <p>ACTION: Reattach the agency reports with the minutes as they didn't open. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Clearer summary on the website of what YREAC is and what it does. Pending</p> <p>ACTION: Point for committee discussion at next meeting about having committee names on the website. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Remove the contact form from the website. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Re-add members to Gov Teams. Completed</p> |
| | | <p>Discussion and Actions:</p> <p>The ESS for the Warburton Mountain Bike Trail has gone before the minister and it would be worthwhile to have an update on the progress of the project.</p> <p>ACTION: Add the Warburton Mountain Bike Trail to the next agenda.</p> <p>The Tree Strategy is about to go before ELT. After this the team is planning to re-engage and consult with key advisory groups including YREAC.</p> <p>ACTION: Add the Tree Strategy to the next agenda.</p> <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.</p> <p>ACTION: schedule another biodiversity subcommittee meeting for a time in the next 4 – 6 weeks.</p> |
| Item 1 | 6.30 – 7.20 | <p>Biomass to Energy</p> <p>Julian Guess from the sustainability team presented on the Biomass to Energy project work that is being conducted as part of the new Livable Climate Plan.</p> |
| | | <p>Presentation Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Project Drawdown, Biomass to Energy is discussed as one of the actions that can reduce the impact of climate change. • A Biomass to Energy project was considered across a number of the sites identified in Yarra Ranges. Coldstream was the most suitable site to commence a trial. • Potential for a multiple of sources of feedstock for the biomass. • Biochar can enrich the soil and enhance its ability to improve water retention, and some producers have been feeding it to cattle. • Great potential already demonstrated overseas, for example in the Stockholm Project. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the payback include the current cost of the drop off charge to the transfer station? No, it is largely looking at sales of the product and energy produced. • Green Waste bins – where does this go? Does this equation include this? Currently go to the western suburbs and this estimate doesn't include this waste. |

| | | |
|--------|-------------|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a degree of sorting that needs to happen? Sort out plastics? Not necessarily, except to remove contamination. • Good way to use waste woody materials, some materials (food waste, green waste) might be better as compost. • Large amount of biomass from orchards that can't be transported. If there was a mobile biomass to energy facility, this would help this industry deal with their waste. • Cost of disposal at the transfer station is expensive. Such technology would help residents reduce expenditure. • The packaging says burning Biochar will create carbon monoxide (contributes to smog). Is there a scrubbing mechanism? The process has to go through EPA approval and will likely include a scrubbing mechanism for emissions. • Gap with current green waste processes – those with large properties who aren't eligible for a green bin. Particularly valuable to reduce burn-offs. • The feasibility study isn't available for public viewing yet. It's very high level and more work is needed. The consultant's report will likely be available after it has been seen by the councillors (with business elements excluded). • The cost estimates are conservative. Food grade Biochar has huge earning potential. There is a huge market for Biochar. • Solar Farm – ELT will be reviewing mid Feb. |
| Item 2 | 7.20 – 7.50 | <p>Integrated Water Management and our Road upgrades</p> <p>Grant McCarthy will present on the Roads for Community Initiative.</p> |
| | | <p>Presentation Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is focusing on secondary and tertiary roads across the municipality (not main roads). • Initially 24 roads (4.9km of roads) are being sealed around schools / preschools and other community facilities. • There is a Special Charge Scheme in place. Previously, the contribution has been \$15,000 from landowners. In this project, it's \$7,000 for a standard property. • The team are doing a questionnaire with residents two years in advance to get support. Design phase takes quite a while. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are footpaths going to be in the mix? There's no mention of bicycle traffic, is this being incorporated? Each will be done on a case by case; it's why the design can take two years. • Would there be consideration given to alternatives to side-entry pits for drainage? These get blocked by the large volume of leaves and bark and so can't perform their function. Grant noted that investigation could be made into alternative designs. • Was this a federal election promise? Is it under threat at the next election? Both parties did agree to it. |

| | | |
|--------|-------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable roads – Hume council did the trial with plastic. This is being investigated given Cardinia council also received a funding allocation and both councils combined might be able to get a better price for this product. • Concerns around the treatment of root systems with the construction of roads. Structural root zones are often compromised in road construction. Can there be greater consideration made to the tree protection zone? Grant noted that this is being picked up in the design stage with the intention to keep away from trees as a matter of priority. • Kym identified that the Biodiversity team is working very closely with the roads team to manage the impact on trees as part of this project. Darcy supported this statement, having been out on site with Grant and his team, commending their knowledge and openness to water sensitive urban design. • Grant explained that they want to start planning for each road two years in advance because of the tricky projects that will be coming in, particularly with consideration to water design and tree protection. • Consider innovative technologies to help protect trees, e.g. hydrovac has been used when inserting pipes between roots. • There's been great collaboration from Melbourne Water as part of the project. • Has there been consideration given to collaborate with other agencies, e.g. Parks Victoria? This would be beneficial for developing long term solutions for water management in reserves (e.g. zig zag reserve inundated with road run-off). • ACTION: Darcy to provide Jo the information sent to Victoria Purdue about WSUD needed to reduce erosion in parks. |
| Item 3 | 7.50 – 8.20 | <p>Planned Burns at Launching Place</p> <p>Laurence Gaffney to present.</p> |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laurence stated that he requires further information before presenting on the planned burns. • The information that David Carr had previously provided indicated that the burn plan is set-up by the CFA. <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments were made, questioning the value of burning and the effects on vegetation. • Luke shared that he had been part of the team conducting surveys, before and after a planned burn at Birdsland reserve. Council requires that surveys are conducted but it was unclear whether abundance is measured. • All burns are required to go through the municipal burns committee and are undertaken by the CFA with permission from Council, who work in partnership with DELWP. |

| | | |
|--------|-------------|--|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned burns are a very small component of vegetation management conducted by the Bushlands team at Council. They prioritise slashing and weed reduction. Slashing was noted as beneficial to environmental management. <p>ACTION: Defer Planned Burns presentation to next meeting.</p> |
| Item 4 | 8.20 – 8.45 | <p>Agency Reports Agency representatives to report.</p> |
| | | <p>Melbourne Water Yarra Strategic Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community pop up sessions Important to have the feedback on this document Consultation period closes 23rd March <p>ACTION: Simon to organise the project group to present at YREAC.</p> <p>Environmental Flows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficacy and efficiency of releases. The focus has been trying to replicate natural conditions Not used plant science – using plants to measure the efficacy and efficiency of water release. <p>ACTION: Simon to coordinate / organise the Environmental Flow Program to be presented at YREAC.</p> <p>Upper Yarra Dam Works - Tour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Few dates in the report if people want to go onsite and see the works. Have PV in the area been invited? <p>ACTION: Sarah to create a Poll for the tour dates – if people want a +1, this must be nominated.</p> <p>PPWCMA Yarra4Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yarra4Life Committee Meeting today. Yarra4Life will coordinate a submission to the Yarra Strategic Plan. Second habitat restoration forum – February 26th at Healesville Sanctuary – 10am to 4pm. Restoration plans done recently across Yarra Ranges and Cardinia and release sites. If interested in attending, let Corinne know. Hydrology plan around Macclesfield – how to improve hydrology to encourage growth of Eucalyptus. Coranderrk restoration plan – restoring habitat over a long period of time. <p>ACTION: organise a time for the Coranderrk Restoration Plan to be presented at an YREAC meeting.</p> <p>Parks Victoria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Season – parks affected – 6 fires no longer expanding, 2 fires still ongoing (Snowy and Tambo) No more birds feeding permitted at Grants Picnic Ground Sherbrooke Picnic ground – patrolling to stop bird feeding <p>ACTION: Jo to report back on the plan for the bird feeding site at Grants Picnic Ground to bring back to the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warburton Mountain Bike Trails – not aware of any removal of plans for trails on the southern face. |

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| Item 5 | 8.45 – 8.50 | Sustainability and Environment Team Updates Sustainability and Biodiversity Coordinators to report. |
| | | Sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has been supporting community groups inc. Yarraglenergy who are looking to install solar at: Yarra Glen Bowling Club & Yarra Glen Football Club. • The Climate Plan is progressing well and will be presented to Council in March to request release for community consultation. • We are also offering two special screenings of the film 2040 on Saturday 29th February. Damon Gameau, will provide insights into the documentary through a Q & A session. Biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of fencing has made a profound amount of difference to reserves and habitat health • Biodiversity Extension Officer – able to offer advice or point people in the right direction for what they can do on their property. Extension advice. • Three private land offset sites in Yarra Ranges – under permanent protection. |
| Item 6 | 8.50 – 9.04 | Committee Discussions A call for any other business to be discussed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GFNP • Committee information on the website |
| | | GFNP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a submission to Council for a supportive motion to the State Government for the GFNP. Would like to put forward a motion for vote at the next YREAC meeting. ACTION: Sarah to send documents from Jeff before next meeting. Website information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update information to reflect role of YREAC ACTION: Council Team to return revised version by next meeting. Further Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed strategy working group - subsumed into the Biodiversity Asset Strategy. • As actioned earlier – Warburton Mountain Bike Strategy. Presentation to cover how following have been met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Municipal Strategic Statement ○ Environment strategy ○ Draft Yarra strategy ○ Threatened species recovery plan ○ Code of environmental practice ○ FFG advisory information for wingless stonefly ○ Yarra National Park management plan from Parks Victoria |
| Next Meeting | | Thursday 23 rd April |
| Meeting Close | 9.04pm | |