



Yarra Ranges Environment Advisory Committee  
**Minutes**  
**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019**  
**Conference Room**  
**Anderson Street Office Lilydale**  
**5.30 – 8.00 pm**

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| Meeting Open | 5.30pm      | Chairperson: Cr Mike Clarke  |
| Present      |             | Graeme George (member), Jeff Barlow (member), Julian Hill (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Michelle Masterson (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Benjamin Viola (member), Jessica Fettell (member), Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Victoria), Corinne Mays (Port Phillip and Westernport CMA), Merryn Kelly (DELWP), Cr. Mike Clarke, David Harper (YRC), Simon Woodland (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Karen O’Gorman (YRC), Hayley Coviello (DELWP), Mark Varmalis (YRC)  |
| Apologies    |             | Darcy Duggan, Luke Boontjes, Katherine Selwood (resigned), Jess Rae (YRC)  |
| Welcome      | 5.50        | <p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><b>Acknowledgement of Country</b></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 and present, 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 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (published on YRC website)</p> <p><b>Moved:</b> Graeme George</p> <p><b>Seconded:</b> Benjamin Viola</p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was noted that in the previous meeting, the presentation on the Warburton Mountain Bike Destination had made reference to experts engaged as part of the project. A number of these experts, known by YREAC members, were concerned that their name has been used as an endorsement for the project given they have been part of only a single consultation meeting.</li> <li>Mark invited YREAC members to attend a briefing with Lincoln Kern from Practical Ecology regarding the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Provide feedback to the WMBD project team - they may need to clarify the role of experts and check if they agree with their name being associated with the project.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Set up a briefing time with Lincoln Kern, Practical Ecology for a Wednesday/Thursday in the next month. Invite YREAC members.</p> |
|              | 5.55        | <p><b>Declaration of Interest</b></p> <p>Any members with interest in matters to be discussed to declare.<br/> <i>None declared</i></p>  |
|              | 6.00 – 6.05 | <p><b>Matters Arising/ Actions</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Kelly Delaney to organise field trip detailed in email before next meeting <b>Pending</b></p>   |

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|        |             | <p><b>ACTION:</b> allocate agenda time at the next YREAC meeting for discussion of Central Highlands National Park (Cr Len Cox put forward). <b>Pending - October Meeting</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> List Biodiversity Sub-committee report as an agenda item at YREAC future meetings. <b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Schedule a second sub-committee meeting in next 4 weeks to continue discussions. <b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> David Harper to respond to Darcy regarding the Melbourne Water data incorporation. <b>Pending</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Consolidate responses to tree strategy and present as an attachment to the minutes. <b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Joanne (PV) to provide further feedback on Wingless Stone Fly. <b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Joanne to update YREAC on the Indigenous and heritage findings at Bunyip State Park. <b>Completed – Agency Report</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Melanie to provide Laurence with a CFA contact regarding burn mapping at Bunyip State Park. <b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Melanie to draft motion for next meeting on actions to declare a biodiversity emergency. <b>Pending</b></p> <p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <p>Laurence noted that he appreciated the maps sent through by Parks Victoria and DELWP for the Bunyip State Park fire. He was interested in having additional mapping information that would show the regime burns that Bunyip SP has been exposed to over time.</p> |
| Item 1 | 6.06 – 6.47 | <p><b>Integrated Transport Strategy</b></p> <p>Karen O’Gorman presented on the Integrated Transport Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main mode of transport in the shire is private vehicle with 76% of trips between 0-5km in length</li> <li>• Focus will be on changing the choices people make for their short trips</li> <li>• Quick wins: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Enhance pedestrian and cycle pathways</li> <li>○ Better integration between trains and buses</li> <li>○ E-bike awareness campaign</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
|        |             | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would there be the possibility of extending the train to Coldstream and have extra parking there?</li> <li>• Mark noted that there will be extensions to parking planned for Belgrave (added 300 spaces) and Mooroolbark (added 400 spaces) as part of the crossing removal program.</li> <li>• Comments were made regarding the buses in Upwey - timetables don’t accommodate commuters and they are often empty during the day. Karen acknowledged this as a common problem of many train feeder routes. Work is being done with Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to improve this within Yarra Ranges.</li> <li>• Include electric car recharge points at stations</li> <li>• Can council facilitate more carpooling options? It was noted that there were many websites available for this already that could be promoted.</li> </ul>  |

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|        |             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestions were made about improving secure bike storage at stations, particularly if encouraging the use of E-Bikes.</li> <li>• Can YR use more environmentally friendly products in roads? For example, using recycled plastic in road surfaces. Cranbourne council has made this shift and found the final product is more durable than current surfaces. Another example was given with City of Casey having a buy-back scheme with Replas where they buy products made with recycled plastic, equal to the amount they supply.</li> <li>• Inclusion of school buses into the transport arrangements, for example Hoddle Creek has a school bus but no other public transport.</li> <li>• Building transport with a future focus. Karen confirmed the first stage of the analysis assessed population increases over a 30 year period and transport is being planned accordingly.</li> <li>• There was discussion regarding how the next consultation phase in November will be communicated, suggestions were made to use multiple headline types to capture different audiences.</li> <li>• Cr Mike Clarke noted that it would be worth circulating the consultation opportunity through the council advisory committees.</li> </ul>  |
| Item 2 | 6.48 – 7.39 | <p><b>Regional Forest Reform Project</b></p> <p>Hayley Coviello from DELWP presented on this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reform has been triggered by the expiry of the regional forest agreements (5 expired in 2018)</li> <li>• Minor Timber Production Code of Practice Review – Aug to Sep 2019</li> <li>• Major Scientific Review for Timber – Dec 2019 to Dec 2021</li> <li>• DELWP forest values and systems – review of existing forest management plans (9 in place across the state currently)</li> <li>• Legal recognition of traditional owner rights to partner in land management. DELWP working to understand their aspirations for forest management.</li> <li>• Landscape scale surveys for threatened species. There's a lot of investment at this stage - 486 surveys in 2018 used to inform species models and movement across the landscape.</li> <li>• LIDAR (drone footage) – 65 strikes per metre. This technology has been used for forest mapping and it can show old growth, biomass, and where the oldest trees are in the landscape. It has been used to update ecological vegetation maps. Currently it is mapping the central highlands and east Gippsland. The output can help with disturbance modelling.</li> <li>• Pre-harvest survey information is available online; it shows what was surveyed and what was found for each coupe.</li> <li>• Review of the Code of Practice for Timber Production: species protection and mitigation measures – how have species distribution changed.</li> <li>• Phase 1 Engagement – responses are available online.</li> <li>• Review looks at where some of the changes are happening – rainforests changing with climate change, species are moving past previous known locations or distributions etc.</li> <li>• All information is added to the Biodiversity Atlas, freely accessible online <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> |

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|        |             | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was noted that the reported numbers were low for the coupe surveys (e.g. only 15 flora species discovered). Hayley detailed that 75 species were targeted as part of the EPBC listing (e.g. greater glider, leadbeaters etc). Those conducting the survey do record all species they come across, even if they're not on the targeted list.</li> <li>• Participation online had a strong focus on conservation, climate change and forest management.</li> <li>• Melanie questioned if the bilateral agreement would continue in the new arrangements and if so, would they still have the compensation clause if yields aren't met. Hayley indicated there may be some renewal depending on the review.</li> <li>• Councillor Mike Clark asked about joining the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) with respect to the timber harvesting code of practice. Hayley responded that there has been two applications already made (both knocked back) and that a third attempt is currently underway. There is increasing pressure to be FSC certified as Bunnings and Mitre 10 have made a blanket policy not to accept non-FSC accredited wood by 2020.</li> <li>• Julian asked if the end use had been considered when planning the redevelopment of the harvesting protocols. Hayley responded that there is currently no control over end use particularly given there are different situations that occur during the harvest process that mean logs may no longer be useful for their intended use but this is also being reviewed.</li> <li>• It was noted the Forest Fire Management App 'More to Explore' is really valuable and has great data available. This can be found <a href="#">here</a> when looking on your smart device. Hayley noted that DELWP want to start collecting data through it, e.g. when people see blackberry out hiking or deer etc it can be recorded. It was asked whether there could also be the component to get information on plants or animals that people have seen but don't know what they are.</li> <li>• There was interest in what the program for the RSA will look like post engagement and when information will become available. Hayley responded that the information is due imminently and that there will be further consultation in February about the draft. The timeline is still unconfirmed as negotiations are ongoing.</li> </ul> |
| Item 3 | 7.39 – 7.45 | <p><b>Biodiversity Sub-Committee Report</b></p> <p>Update on progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group putting together a brief to take to council. It will require some resource effort. The final output will be information that can direct Yarra Ranges Council strategic efforts. It would also supply better quality data to underpin the ESO at next review.</li> <li>• Draft brief compiled by different departments and supplied to sub-committee.</li> <li>• Currently YRC are working towards a final draft and will start to talk about what some costs might be.</li> </ul>   |

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|        |             | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening the group if there are others in YREAC who want to sit on the subcommittee.</li> <li>• Set the next date with current subcommittee and invite the entire committee.</li> <li>• Melanie also mentioned that she had put forward the recommendation to pull the current ESO until the methodologies underpinning it are better understood.</li> </ul>   |
| Item 4 | 7.45 – 7.55 | <p><b>Agency Reports</b><br/>Agency representatives to report – reports supplied prior to meeting.</p> <p><b>Parks Victoria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haining Farm</li> <li>• Mt Donna Buang Stone Fly</li> <li>• Golf Course and Playscape</li> <li>• Bunyip State Park – heritage surveys</li> <li>• Deer management – another prof. cull – ongoing private property culls.</li> <li>• Bell Minor control at Yellingbo</li> </ul> <p><b>PPWCMA:</b></p> <p><b>Yarra4Life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of restoration plans – Yellingbo to Butterfields and Coranderrk</li> <li>• Yellingbo to Butterfields - good quality habitat for release of helmeted honeyeater, not so much with Coranderrk currently</li> </ul> <p><b>DELWP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yellingbo conservation area –current governance arrangements have created excellent partnerships and synergies for the plan</li> <li>• North East Link – going through enquiry/advisory committee – happening in Bulleen for those interested</li> <li>• Appointment of the YCA Community Reference Group members has been delayed</li> </ul> <p><b>Melbourne Water</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woori Yallock – Sarah Gaskill permanent contact now</li> <li>• Monbulk Creek crossing – talking to council</li> <li>• Secured funding in advance for watt’s river catchment – cestrum weed removal/control</li> </ul> |
|        |             | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was asked whether there is data to support the impacts made by deer culls.</li> <li>• Comments were made about the plantings conducted at Mt Donna Buang and whether these had come from reputable seed stock.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Jo to bring information to next meeting about how deer culls are having an impact.</p>   |

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|               |                    | <b>ACTION:</b> Jo to check on seed stock that was used for stonefly plantings at Mt Donna Buang.  |
| <b>Item 5</b> | <b>7.55 – 8.10</b> | <p><b>Sustainability and Environment Team Updates</b></p> <p>Sustainability and Biodiversity Coordinators to report – reports supplied prior to meeting.</p>  |
|               |                    | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was great interest and support for the power purchase agreement that council has recently collaborated with neighbouring councils to secure.</li> <li>• Graeme commented on the gardens for harvest seedlings planting guide, specifying that the timings for would not be suitable for many areas in Yarra Ranges and that people might be put off growing plants if their crops fail. He suggested that it would be worthwhile encouraging people to focus on a few highly productive plants rather than a range.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Item 6</b> | <b>8.10 – 8.50</b> | <p><b>Committee Discussions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to participate in stakeholder workshop facilitated by the Australian Energy Foundation in relation to the Solar on Landfill Feasibility Study. This is scheduled for Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September at Council Offices.</li> <li>• Update on building works and decant process – Change of venue will be from 2020 onwards</li> <li>• Local Law Review</li> <li>• Cool Temperate Mixed Forest –Laurence Gaffney (presentation attached with minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Listed under the FFG act – very limited distribution</li> <li>○ Largest recognised area is in the Central Highlands in the Yarra Ranges National Park (1998)</li> <li>○ Once listed under the FFG Act – action statement is to be prepared as soon as possible – still waiting as it was listed in 2013.</li> <li>○ Definable/distinguished community – the intermediate community between rainforest and eucalypt forest</li> <li>○ Threatened by logging/extinction – less of it around than cool temperate rainforest, and given it's connection this could have severe flow on effects for cool temperate rainforest.</li> <li>○ This hasn't been addressed in the WMBD reports – assessment is needed as it is a listed community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• WMBD – Significance of Mt Donna Buang Southern Slopes – Dr Melanie Birtchnell</li> </ul> |
|               |                    | <p><b>Discussion/Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm if YREAC members are attending the Sola Farm Feasibility Workshop.</li> <li>• Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September – Climate Emergency Councillor Motion will be presented</li> <li>• Myrtle Rust master class at BH Tafe in Lilydale – 24<sup>th</sup> September</li> </ul>  |

- GovDex has closed down – GovTeam is the rebrand, administrator rights will be reinstated, information will be sent around when this transition occurs.

**Cool Temperate Mixed Forest Presentation**

**ACTION:** include presentation with the minutes

**MOTION:** *It was motioned that the following recommendations are pursued:*

1. *Mt Donna Buang South side be mapped for cool temperate mixed forest (CTMF) – delineated from cool temperate rainforest (CTR)*
2. *Conservation status from CTMF & CTR be considered in relation to each other*
3. *Ecological impact of the Mt Bike trails be considered in relation to the above*

*Motion was supported unanimously*

**Moved:** Graeme George

**Seconded:** Dr Melanie Birtchnell

**ACTION:** Provide presentation on Cool Temperate Mixed Forest to Lincoln Kern from Practical Ecology in the next 4 weeks.

**Discussion:**

- There could be funding through WMBD to complete surveys as part of point 1.

**WMBD – Significance of Mt Donna Buang Southern Slopes**

- Dr Melanie Birtchnell shared a video that detailed the importance of the southern slopes of Mt Donna Buang as habitat for species such as the Wingless Stonefly.
- The video can be viewed [here](#).

**ACTION:** include link in minutes for PV and DELWP to access

- Melanie has asked PV to provide maps of the new routes on the south summit. These two additional routes have been added to provide economic viability to the shuttle bus service.

**MOTION:** *Seek that the tracks related to the Warburton Mountain Bike Track within Yarra Ranges National Park be removed from the south face of Mt Donna Buang due to the ecological significance of the south face and the long term impacts from the proposed tracks.*

*Motion was carried with 7 votes for (2 abstained).*

**Moved:** Laurence Gaffney

**Seconded:** Michelle Masterson

- Comments were made that there are other areas to create bike tracks – those proposed are not necessary.
- Melanie noted that the protocols appear to be adjusted as the project goes along because the south side is so fraught with environmental issues. Dropping the south face tracks would remove the environmental sensitive concerns.

Next Meeting

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

Meeting Close

8.51pm