



Yarra Ranges Environment Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday 3rd October 2019
Conference Room
Anderson Street Office Lilydale
5.30 – 8.00 pm

Meeting Open	5.32pm	Chairperson: Cr Mike Clarke
Attendees		Graeme George (member), Jeff Barlow (member), Laurence Gaffney (member), Lauren Dwyer (member), Darcy Duggan (member), Luke Boontjes (member), Michelle Masterson (member), Benjamin Viola (member), Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water), Joanne Antrobus (Parks Victoria), Cr. Mike Clarke, David Harper (YRC), Sarah Bond (YRC), Kym Saunders (YRC), Mark Varmalis (YRC), Cr. Len Cox, Steve Jones (YRC)
Apologies		Jessica Fettell (member), Julian Hill (member), Ron Sawyer (member), Melanie Birtchnell (member), Leah Wheatley (DELWP), Corinne Mays (PPWCMA), Simon Woodland (YRC), Jess Rae (YRC)
Welcome	5.32	<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 22nd August 2019 (published on YRC website)</p> <p>Moved: Benjamin Viola</p> <p>Seconded: Steve Hosking</p>
Welcome	5.38	<p>Declaration of Interest</p> <p>Any members with interest in matters to be discussed to declare.</p>
Item 1	5.40 – 6.00	<p>Terms of Reference (ToR)</p> <p>Steve Jones, Governance Coordinator, will give a briefing on the Terms of Reference that underpin all Council Advisory Committees.</p>
Item 1		<p>Presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance are looking to standardise Council's five Advisory Committees to ensure a consistent approach in management and meeting processes. • The purpose of Advisory Committees is to provide advice to Council or to relevant officers. • Committees have no formal delegated powers to act on Councils behalf and motions don't have legal standing unless they are adopted by Council.

- With confidentiality, Advisory Committees operate in the same way as other committees. I.e. Section 77 of the local government act, not to disclose confidential information.
- Conflicts of interest must be transparent and can be disclosed at any point during a meeting.
- Considering reporting on Advisory Committee meetings to Council at regular intervals, potentially quarterly.

Discussion

- A bi-monthly report would be more suitable with meeting frequency.
- Secretariat to write minutes in a way that they can be made public without conflicting confidentiality.
- Terms of Reference (ToR) agreed upon in April will be updated and open for comment. Need clarification on the process for raising items for discussion.
- Set timeframes would not necessarily be placed on completing items, particularly for complicated matters.
- The ToR should clearly detail the expectations of agency representatives.
- There were some areas of concern from the last minutes. There was a conflict of interest with a post to social media and information was requested that is confidential.
- There should be a better mechanism for providing feedback and responses to presenters.
- The environmental forums are being restored to offer another mechanism for environmental groups to express their views.

6.12 – 6.30

Matters Arising/ Actions

- ACTION:** Kelly Delaney to organise field trip detailed in email before next meeting **Withdrawn**
- ACTION:** allocate agenda time at the next YREAC meeting for discussion of Central Highlands National Park (Cr Len Cox put forward). **Completed**
- ACTION:** David Harper to respond to Darcy regarding the Melbourne Water data incorporation. **Completed**
- ACTION:** Melanie to draft motion for next meeting on actions to declare a biodiversity emergency. **Pending**
- ACTION:** YR Staff to 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. **Completed**
- ACTION:** Briefing with Lincoln Kern at Practical Ecology to be organised for a Wednesday/Thursday in the next month. Invite all YREAC members. **Withdrawn**
- ACTION:** Jo to bring information to next meeting about how deer culls are having an impact. **Completed – Agency Report**
- ACTION:** Jo to check on seed stock that was used for stonefly plantings at Mt Donna Buang. **Completed – Agency Report**
- ACTION:** Sarah to include the Cool Temperate Mixed Forest Presentation from Laurence with the minutes. **Completed**

		<p>ACTION: Provide presentation on Cool Temperate Mixed Forest to Lincoln Kern from Practical Ecology in the next 4 weeks. Completed</p> <p>ACTION: Include link to video by Dr Melanie Birtchnell in the minutes. Completed</p> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darcy was concerned that his original item had not been fully addressed regarding the incorporation of updated MW data into the consolidated model as it would offset key concerns. • ACTION: David to address concerns about first and second order streams with stat planning and follow up on the inclusion of the updated data. • ACTION: David to send through a copy of the brief detailing the extra work Ecology Australia has been asked to provide.
Item 2	6.30 – 6.53	<p>Central Highlands National Park Discussions</p> <p>Per Cr Len Cox's request, discussion of a Central Highlands NP</p>
		<p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key threat to Central Highlands is logging. There are pockets with protection, but not enough. • There is some private conservation land but not much. • State government need prompting. • There is no firm agreement on the borders and the process has started to agree on the area and set the boundaries. <p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing attitudes at state government – regional forest agreements up for review and there is the current law suit by Friends of Leadbeater's Possum against Vic Forests. • A recent review has shown that tourism value in the area is high, more valuable than the timber industry. DELWP have data on public interest in this area that is publicly available. • Interested persons could form a working group. Councillors need to be mindful of the impact on other groups, e.g. timber. • ACTION: Include Jeff's information with minutes.
Item 3	6.53 – 7.48	<p>Biodiversity Asset Strategy</p> <p>Presentation on Biodiversity Asset Strategy and update on the peer review consultations undertaken.</p>
		<p>Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations from the brief <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compile existing data sets ○ Engage a senior ecologist to guide methodology ○ Engage field technician for field data collection ○ Write strategy • Next steps – summarise peer council interviews, develop recommendations, present to ELT, and then present to Council

		<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting with DELWP to assess Local Council position and how it sits within the State Biodiversity Strategy. Information should be transferrable between the two. • Currently still aspirational as it will require a lot of investment and it will be a long term project. Reasonable to ask the State Government to be a funding partner. Great value for all agency partners that are significant landholders in the area. • The State Government's using LIDAR mapping. It's great information but it requires another investment to analyse the data. • Council are well positioned to partner with the community and complete ground data collection. • The output will allow Council to identify where money is best spent. Science/evidence basis behind investment outcomes. • Investigate the new system DELWP and Melbourne Water are using for data collection. • Could more than one ecologist be engaged? Plant ecologist is very different to a fauna ecologist. • Potential for partnerships with universities for honours students, PhD students, particularly with the long timeframes. Is there the potential to grant research permits? Can advertise the area for research opportunities. • There are PhD students who do projects within Yarra Ranges with great data but there's currently no system to capture it. • Look into existing citizen science datasets, e.g. eBird allows you to download the entire species list for an area. • Regarding climate change, the EAGA methodology to track climate variation could be included. • Real value from programs such as Ribbons of Green, particularly in changing people's attitudes. • ACTION: include Ribbons of Green evaluation with minutes.
Item 4	7.48 – 8.08	<p>Agency Reports</p> <p>Agency representatives to report.</p>
		<p>Discussion</p> <p>Parks Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of the sad passing of Dr David Blair. He did his PhD work on Central Highlands. He was also the co-author of the Yarra Ranges Weed Strategy. • Jo an apology for next meeting. Will have another PV member attend. <p>Melbourne Water:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yarra Blitz - Raising profile of litter in strategy and raising an action plan. Pollution instances – areas in Bayswater that are being monitored to track a few recalcitrant polluters. • 20kms of river near Healesville with a large willow infestation.

		<p>Due to a change in land ownership, land is no accessible. Capital funding for 5 year project to do weed removal and some fencing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been filming of high flow events in local billabongs. Great frog monitoring opportunity at the moment. • ACTION: Steve to make high flow footage available to YREAC. • With the \$150 million road funding, Melbourne Water are looking to do WSUD engagement with Council.
Item 5	8.08 – 8.19	<p>Sustainability and Environment Team Updates</p> <p>Sustainability and Biodiversity Coordinators to report.</p>
		<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric car fleet - need to have spare tyres. • Following up on the Tree Strategy, a consultant has recently been appointed. Unfortunately it was delayed. • ACTION: Schedule time in next agenda for Tree Strategy update. • ACTION: check if Graeme's comments have been passed on to Tree Strategy Team. • Feedback on road surface with inclusion of recycled material. It's currently part of the discussions for the new Climate plan. • Feasibility of biochar production on landfill sites is also being looked into as part of the solar landfill study. Currently there are only a few sites in Victoria that produce biochar. The cost would be around \$130,000 to develop. Need to balance with composting needs.
Item 6	8.19 – 8.27	<p>Committee Discussions</p> <p>A call for any other business to be discussed.</p>
		<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation and Open Space Strategy – Consultation in process – survey on website • Networking event for YREAC and environment groups to meet. Collaborate with members in YREAC to ascertain the groups to approach are all on the list. • This would open the opportunity for environment groups to contact YREAC members to bring forward issues to the council on their behalf. • Council delegate report has been discussed to direct what happens in advisory committee to council. • ACTION: Schedule 15 minutes in the next agenda for Laurence to present on the planned burn at Launching Place. • ACTION: Subcommittee meeting – in next 3 weeks. Open to full YREAC. Wednesday 5:30-7:30.
Next Meeting		Thursday 12 th December
Meeting Close	8.27	