

**YARRA ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2020, 6.00PM-8.00PM**



**Attendees:** Jenny Backholer, Chris Currie, Andrew Vance, Katherine Morgan, Chris Williams, Lucy Derum, Michael Oke, Samantha Green, Euan Williamson

**Apologies:** Adeline Stuart-Watt, Paul O’Shea, Geoffrey Golden, Miranda Sharp, Gary Shadforth

**Chair:** Michael Oke

**Minutes:** Samantha Green

Item	Presenter	Discussion
<p><b>Reflections on the impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on our environment-related community activities, what might be possible as restrictions are lifting, and how Council can support this.</b></p>	<p>All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General recognition of the personal/emotional toll that the restrictions have had on people.</li> <li>• Restrictions have also provided an opportunity for people to come together/reach out in ways they had not before. There has been an increase in feelings and demonstrations of ‘neighbourhood togetherness’.</li> <li>• Clear demonstrations of the capacity of people to change behaviours in the interests of community/the common good.</li> <li>• There has been increased value of public open spaces and an increased in gardening, particularly food gardening.</li> <li>• General acknowledgement that people want to connect with nature more, and that Collingwood Children’s Farm is a great way to do this.</li> <li>• How might Council support and help to maintain this increase in community activity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Facilitate relationships/communications between groups – for example, MUD’s residents to learn from others doing/wanting to do similar projects</li> <li>○ Provide support/resources to MUD’s and others interested in urban agriculture.</li> <li>○ Some groups have the resources but not people to do the planning - facilitate relationships between groups so that they may support and provide what is needed to each other.</li> <li>○ Connect with neighbouring councils/groups to undertake work on both sides of the river</li> <li>○ Support groups to coordinate volunteers to do maintenance work – via online tools and resources.</li> <li>○ A reminder that university/TAFE interns often available for placements which could help with volunteers to do planting.</li> <li>○ Also Working for Victoria program likely to have various iterations over next few years and this may also be a source of volunteers/paid labour for planting.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MGC keen to make pedal-powered cinema more open to the broader community (beyond school community) but to do this in a COVID safe way they are interested in a bigger space, for example, Burnley Oval.</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIONS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Sam to share details on how she manages volunteers for her own Co-op.</b></li> <li><b>Sam to find out who MGC/Andrew should approach re use of Burnley Oval.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Urban Agriculture - education and engagement approach and feedback on My Smart Garden</b> See attachment to the email from 9 Nov, and see: <a href="https://mysmartgarden.org.au/">https://mysmartgarden.org.au/</a> for more info</p>	Lucy Derum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Huge interest in urban gardening during COVID-19 restrictions, but engagement has been reactive (reacting to interest) rather than strategic.</li> <li>One workshop held (how to participate in/receive a planter box from council session – compulsory if receiving planter box from council) - 80 people registered/60 attended – huge increase on previous session in March.</li> <li>The focus of the urban agriculture program for a long time has been on facilitating access to council land, but want to do more than this to support the community – so this is where the new <a href="#">My Smart Garden</a> program comes in.</li> <li>There is an opportunity to shape the Yarra version of this program to suit the community’s interests, needs, demographics, housing stock, renters vs owners, space etc. Stonnington also joining the program – this municipality has similar housing stock, space etc so there is an opportunity to collaborate in shaping the program and driving content relevant to context and audience.</li> <li>Program ideas from group include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing the basics of food growing – an agricultural extension service</li> <li>Providing opportunities to learn from others/experienced gardeners – a buddy system with new and experienced gardeners paired.</li> <li>Pairing people with land with people who want to grow food - see <a href="#">Growing Farmers</a> project in Moreland.</li> <li>Working with MUDs – connecting people growing food in MUDs with others in similar context.</li> <li>Using urban agriculture as a gateway to other climate action – but equally encouraging young people already engaged in climate action to take an interest in urban agriculture.</li> <li>How do we use the program to support innovation in urban agriculture?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Yarra climate action grants</b> (see attached slides)</p>	Sam Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yarra has expanded and elevated the Sustainability grants stream of the Annual Grants into a new Yarra climate action grants stream. There are two tiers to allow for large and small projects. It is imperative we get the word out to the community, and we get strong projects in. See</li> </ul>

		<p><a href="https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/services/take-climate-action/climate-action-grants-stream">https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/services/take-climate-action/climate-action-grants-stream</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant applications due by <b>29 November 2020</b>.</li> <li>• MGC interest in applying for projects which support more schools in Yarra to work collaboratively on projects such as school conferences. Also an interest in Paved Gen – electric micro-generators which measure small amounts of electricity generated (for eg from foot traffic) – used to engage people in energy conversation/build literacy. Could use for walkathon activity.</li> <li>• Three-year grant may be appropriate for a project which considers teacher’s needs in progressing climate agenda in schools across Yarra.</li> <li>• Support for local arts groups interested in using arts to progress climate agenda. Information about grants has been sent to arts groups which registered for climate dinner in March.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION Follow up Sam or Kelly if keen or have leads</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Active Consultations:</b> (see: Your Say Yarra - <a href="https://www.yoursayyarra.com.au/">https://www.yoursayyarra.com.au/</a> )</p>	Euan Williamson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yarra’s Planning Scheme currently being updated. The scheme includes our local policies related to Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and Biodiversity.</li> <li>• The ESD local policy (local policy 22.17) has been included in the planning scheme for 5 years. Our ESD local policy is the same as 17 other councils across the state.</li> <li>• The state government is currently reformatting our local policies. Our ESD local policy is now number 15.02 – and it is this which is now out for consultation.</li> <li>• This local policy is one of the tools council uses to negotiate with developers for better sustainability outcomes.</li> <li>• Council is doing other things to improve sustainability outcomes in relation to development but this is an important component of this – for eg developing zero-carbon standards for developments.</li> <li>• Consultation on amendments to the Yarra Planning Scheme is open until <b>20 November 2020</b>. This is our local policy – and it is for local groups and individuals to add their voice and shape development in Yarra.</li> <li>• In looking specifically at the local policy 15.02, you can look to the previous 22.17 to see how it has changed. For reference it was also suggested that you could look to differences between this and the proposed City of Melbourne Amendment C376: Sustainable Building Design <a href="https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/amendment-c376/amendment-overview">https://participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/amendment-c376/amendment-overview</a></li> </ul>
Other business	Council Plan/Future Vision process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The future vision project will take a 15 year view of Yarra.</li> <li>• This project soon to be rolled out across the municipality.</li> <li>• Strong engagement to support this process will be needed from this group.</li> </ul>
Future agenda items		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on Council Plan/ Future vision process</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Upping the ante on restoration of the Yarra River Riparian Corridor, and how this can be coordinated and delivered</li><li>• Deliberative engagement with the community? What is Yarra doing in this space?</li></ul>
Next meeting date		To be confirmed.