

Yarra Environment Advisory Committee

MINUTES – Thur 10 March 2022, 6:00-7:30pm



Attendees: Chris Williams, Chris Currie, Jenny Backholer, Paul O’Shea, Andrew Vance (6-7pm), Cr Amanda Stone, Sam Green

Apologies: Geoffrey Golden, Michael Oke, Gary Shadforth, Adeline Stuart-Watt, Katherine Morgan, Miranda Sharp, Cr Sophie Wade (Mayor), Kelly Heffer, Craig Lupton, Kieran Dickson, Lisa Coffa

Chair: Cr Amanda Stone

1. Acknowledgement of Country

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the Traditional Owners of this country, pays tribute to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Yarra and gives respect to Elders past and present

2. Review of previous minutes and actions, and review of this agenda – confirm if any ‘Other Business Items to add?’ (6:05-6:10)

Actions outstanding:

ACTION: Moke to share Yarra response gas substitution roadmap with YEAC. **Done.** See bottom of [Getting of Gas](#) Council Page.

ACTION: Sam to share the full list of the 22 Community Skills for Climate Action initiatives that have come out of the group. **Done** sent previously

ACTION: Review of membership of YEAC when timing and way forward is confirmed. **Done – on this agenda**

Minutes from the previous meeting were adopted

3. Sustainable Business Projects in Yarra. (Aaron Gray - Sustainable Business Officer, and Erin Cummins – Small Business Energy Efficiency Officer) 6:10-6.40pm

Business Renewable Energy Buying Group (Aaron Gray)

Yarra is leading a cross-council project is designed to bring like-minded local businesses together to support them to scale up their buying power whilst also cutting complexity, time, and cost associated with going 100% renewable. Expressions of Interest will be open to any appropriately sized large energy consuming businesses across the participating Council regions who share a desire to transition towards 100% renewable electricity and a capacity to work collaboratively with others towards a desired outcome.

This is a key direction and project from our Climate Emergency Plan and is being delivered in partnership with Darebin, Melbourne, Moreland Councils as well as the [Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action](#) (EAGA), [Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Acton](#) (NAGA).

Council has just passed the very important and exciting milestone of engaging an external facilitator to support the business through the process, ending with a group renewable energy Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) for participants. We now need to recruit businesses, and are aiming to have completed this next step by 30 June 2022.

Key questions of YEAC:

- *Do you know of/have contacts at any large businesses who may be potential participants?*
- *Do you have suggestions for how best to reach out to these large businesses in Yarra?*

- *Do you have suggestions of messaging to cut through to get these businesses interested?*

YEAC Member Action: please share any other suggestions, questions, comments to Aaron Gray: aaron.gray@yarracity.vic.gov.au

Small Business Energy Saver Program (Erin Cummins)

Yarra has around 5,000-6000 physical ‘brick and mortar’ small businesses. Not only are these businesses part of Yarra’s unique and vibrant identity, they are also a significant audience to reach and to support to take climate action to support an all-electric and zero-carbon future.

We are really excited to have recently employed a temporary *Small Business Energy Efficiency Officer* until the end of this Financial Year to do just that! This has been made possible through funding from Sustainability Victoria to increase uptake of programs they offer, and is coming via the Yarra Energy Foundation who have a contract with SV and are supporting this deeper hands on work in Yarra whilst also delivering a broader more hands-off approach in some other municipalities.

We don’t have long to build the program up, get the word out, and get action occurring from local businesses before the funding dries up – so we are keen to really hit the ground running.

Key questions of YEAC:

- *Are you members of any relevant groups that could help us spread this information to small businesses?*
- *Do you have any other suggestions for good ways to reach out to small businesses in Yarra and a resource efficient way that could get stronger cut-through?*
- *Do you have suggestions of messaging to cut through to get these businesses interested?*

Action: Council to share presentations with YEAC

4. Arts Climate Action Program (Sam Green) 6:40-6:55.

Following YEAC consultation and feedback into the Yarra Arts and Culture Strategy in 2021, interaction and opportunities to support sustainability were strengthened and the adopted Strategy includes Action 11: *Cultivate arts practices that present us with ecologically sustainable futures.*

We are now in the early stages of developing a specific *Arts Climate Action Program* and will seek YEAC input into how we could design this to get most value. Council is keen to support local artists/arts organisations to create and share work in response to the climate emergency – art which elevates public discussion about the climate emergency, and inspires and engages people in climate action.

The sustainability and arts and culture teams, in partnership with local arts organisations are currently developing a program to support this goal. This program delivers on key actions in both the Climate Emergency Plan and Arts Strategy.

5. General Updates (Sam Green) 6:55-7:05.

A. *Roadmap to Zero Advisory Report* has been developed and presented to Councillors for consideration. It will be released publicly shortly.

- We engaged Ironbark Sustainability to provide external expert advice on priority actions needed for Council to help drive down our city’s emissions towards our objective to achieve zero-net emissions across the entire Yarra community by 2030 (this is a commitment in our Climate Emergency Plan).
- YEAC was consulted in September last year with Ironbark Sustainability; plus there was further targeted consultation with a range of experts and key organisations.

- The Advisory Report is not intended to become an endorsed Council plan or strategy, but rather informs current work planning and a future update to the Climate Emergency Plan.

Action: Inform YEAC when the report is made public in the coming weeks.

- **UPDATE:** The report is now available via: <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/about-us/council-taking-climate-action>

B. YEF Community battery in North Fitzroy proceeding well towards an anticipated launch on World Environment day (June 5)

- Battery location, earthing, connection agreement with CitiPower, Software testing by ANU & Acacia, hardware delivery from Pixii - all are progressing well as per the project schedule.
- Currently working through mural commissioning process.
- Currently, it is likely that the battery will be ready for launch/operation on World Environment Day, 5 June 2022.

C. Update on Yarra's new and coming community EV chargers.

- 2 x new electric vehicle chargers at the Collingwood library car park (supported by federal govt grant). Get around 50km of range after 10 mins charge.
- Council has received funding via the Vic Govt Destination Charging grants - **DCAV program** for 4 x 25kW EV chargers in Fitzroy and Richmond (at Council off-street car parks). We're currently finalising the funding agreement and project plan etc. with DELWP. Expecting the chargers to be installed in the second half of this year.
- Additional Yarra sites for chargers through YEF and partners planning for
 - Collingwood Children's Farm
 - Stolen Generations Marker, Napier St Fitzroy
 - Burnley Campus of Melb Uni.

D. Active Consultations: (see: Your Say Yarra <https://www.yoursayyarra.com.au/>)

- None currently of strong relevance to YEAC
- **NOTE:** The Yarra Council Draft Budget will likely be released mid-end April.

It was noted that the Draft [Transport Strategy](#) is available for public comment soon and YEAC keen to review this and potentially provide feedback.

- **YEAC Member Action:** [Transport Strategy](#) is now live and open for feedback

YEAC may be keen to see the *Local Liveable Streets* and the *Place Making in Yarra* documents - see: <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/the-area/local-liveable-streets>

6. Standing Item: Are there any emerging issues of concern or opportunities from the group that Council should be aware of? 7:05-7:15

- Climate adaptation: light coloured roofs, tree canopy and road/pavement materials. Cr Stone suggested that we could perhaps cover that in a future meeting.
- Melbourne Farmers Market now has two weekly markets in Yarra

7. Renewing YEAC Membership (Sam Green) 7:15-7:20.

This group current group of YEAC members were brought on in mid-2020. As part of the latest Council Plan and associated Council discussions it was agreed that YEAC should remain as is. As such it is now time to review and refresh the membership of YEAC for the next two years.

We will shortly be seeking expressions of interest from current committee members, and the wider community. We will be seeking up to sixteen community members being made up of a minimum of two members from each the following specific subject areas:

- Climate emergency
- Waste management
- Local food systems
- Biodiversity and nature
- Water

We will be selecting members as set out in the TOR, and a mix of new and existing committee members would be encouraged.

We will reach out to existing members to re-nominate, but also to share the nomination process with your networks. We will also communicate this opportunity to our community via the Yarra Environment Newsletter.

YEAC members were encouraged to re-nominate, and to share with others who might be interested and make a good contribution.

UPDATE: Recruitment forms are being finalised and expect to be sent to YEAC in week of 4 April

8. Other Business: 7:20 - 7:30

- Linear Park Masterplan – Blake Farmer-Bowers keen for YEAC representation at community consultation

9. Future Agenda Items to add?

- Update on progress of Yarra Rehabilitators, collaboration between Melbourne Girls and AC, and potentially Yarra water action/ Integrated Water Management Plan update
- update YEAC on CCF new design and creation of a new community asset (garden).
- The work along the Yarra River across Collins Bridge in Booroondara – and how to get some traction with Booroondara Council/Council support

Close 7:30pm

Next Meeting: 6-8pm 19 May, Richmond Town Hall