



Yarra Environment Advisory Committee (YEAC)

Monday 24 July 2023, 6.00-8.00pm

Richmond Town Hall, Meeting Room 3

Minutes

Attendees: Chris Currie, Rachel McConville, Lin Oke, Fiona Bowie, Jack Clancy, Michalis Hadjikakau, Cr Amanda Stone, Cr Sophie Wade, Michael Oke, Lisa Coffa, Kate Simnett, Craig Lupton

Apologies: Chris Williams, Jo Lane, Miranda Sharp, Shane Delphine, Ai Tam Do (Tam), Pierre Dao, Sally Mangan, Gabrielle Murphy, Caitlyn Socwell (no longer part of the group), Sam Green,

Chair: Cr Wade

1. **Acknowledgement of Country – 6.00pm:** (Cr Wade/Cr Stone)
2. **Review of actions still pending from March meeting – 6.05pm:** (Cr Wade/Cr Stone)
 - **YEAC Seeking Update on work to support sustainability retrofits in town houses and apartments in Yarra.**

Yarra Council partnered with Merri-bek Council last financial year to develop new guides to support sustainability retrofits in apartments and townhouses given that 87.5% of dwellings in Yarra are medium to high density.

The 'Unlocking Sustainable Strata' project and the subsequent 'Guide to Electrifying your Apartment Building or Townhouse' contains tailored advice to help apartment residents and owners' corporations improve building sustainability including installing solar and going all-electric.

Council also hosted a series of solar for apartments events as part of Sustainable House Day 2023, and developed case studies.

Work to support sustainability retrofits in medium and high density dwellings will continue this financial year.

Download the 'Guide to Electrifying your Apartment Building or Townhouse', Yarra Energy Foundation's 'Guide to Solar for Apartments', and view recordings of the online events at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/solarapartments

Action Outstanding:

YEAC would like to keep this as a future discussion topic as there is interest in ensuring that future work considers renters, noting that these sections of the community have little scope to take action, and many would lack finance resources to do so.

Also consider how Council can support solar installation on apartments to be made easier.

- **YEAC Seeking Update on work to deliver municipal wide green waste collection**

The Victorian Government has mandated the roll out of a 4-bin kerbside waste and recycling service, comprising of glass (by 2027), comingled recycling, FOGO (BY 2030) and residual waste. There are several factors that need to be considered by Yarra City Council as part of the decision of when to roll out a municipal wide FOGO Service to ensure it provides the best outcome and value for money.

One consideration has been the ability of local processors to accept the FOGO material. Whilst in the past six months there have been improvements in the capacity of industry to accept and processes FOGO material from the kerbside household collection service, there are still some issues to be resolved to ensure that it can be collected and processed to a standard that can be reused within the community (to ensure a truly circular economy model). Until this standard is met, there will be a risk that FOGO will not be able to be used and as a result may need to be diverted to landfill. This would clearly not meet the principles of the circular economy and would add cost and complexity without any benefit; as such it is something we clearly need to avoid.

After considering all these changes Council has included budget this financial year for the infrastructure and community education required to rollout the service. We have not finalised the exact timelines for rollout.

Action complete.

- **Can we have name cards for all YEAC participants to know who is in the room each meeting?**

Action outstanding.

- **Is there potential for Hybrid YEAC meetings which are run both online and in-person?**

Action outstanding.

No other actions outstanding.

3. Review of previous minutes and conflicts of Interest

- Adoption of previous minutes - adopted noting that the action to have name cards was not included in the previous agenda.
- Are there any conflicts of interest with any of tonight's topics? No

4. **Councillor update on general council matters relevant to this Committee– 6.10pm** (Cr Wade/Cr Stone)

- **Council adopted to [Ban Fossil Fuel Advertising](#) on Council properties.** Supported by Comms Declare and Footy for Climate.
- **Council adopted to develop Street Garden Guidelines** for community members who wish to contribute to gardening with non-edible plants in public places.
- **Council has developed a [Liveable Local Streets](#) program** to support liveability upgrades.
- **Council received a Nature Strategy Update** highlighting significant action. See attached.
- **Council passed the 2023/2024 budget.** This included funding for accelerated tree planting, new parks open space, bicycle improvements, zero carbon business and household programs.

5. **Reducing contamination in the recycling stream – 6:15pm** (Lisa Coffa and Kate Simnett – Waste Minimisation team)

Council has undertaken a recent contamination report which has shown a 17% contamination rate of the recycling stream.

Council has tried various initiatives to reduce the contamination rate including bin stickering, data collection on contamination stickers, hot spot letterbox drops, door knocks, broader social media campaigns, targeted SMS messaging including 'live data' prompting, pop ups at community places, community tours of the recycling facility, videos in different styles, regular information in council-community newsletters, and the production of specific kits for multi-unit development, businesses and schools. Despite these initiatives, contamination has not been significantly reduced.

Council asked YEAC for input/feedback specifically on the following:

- Language used to describe common plastic items.
- What would motivate you and your community to get recycling right?
- What have you seen work /successful programs in your 'community'?

6. **Climate Emergency Plan development update and feedback – 7:00pm** (Michael Oke, Sustainability team)

In 2023/24, a key piece of work being undertaken is the development of a new Climate Emergency Plan.

These activities have included two key stakeholder workshops which YEAC members were invited and encouraged to attend.

In this session YEAC members were on the key insights and themes coming from these pre-engagement activities with a view to understanding if we have missed key ideas from the community, as well as a sense of which insights/themes need further exploration in subsequent engagement activities.

- Reflections on the Key Insights collected so far:
 - Build on community support to create a plan and direction which influences beyond Yarra
 - Council could consider increased collaboration with other Councils in order to maximise impact
 - Ensure that non-homeowners and those without financial resources can be seen/heard in the plan and supported to take climate action
 - Incubating, testing new ideas is an important part of Councils climate leadership role
 - We should apply the same 'circular' thinking about consuming less to energy and other topics – not just waste
 - How can we raise the priority of the climate emergency and respond in a way which is commensurate with the scale and urgency of the issue?
 - Focus strongly on adaptation – not just emission reduction. Climate change is upon us and we need to be prepared and support those most at risk of experiencing impacts
 - Future proofing buildings – they should be zero carbon and climate resilient
 - The term sustainable transport – does that also mean accessible and active transport?
 - How can we leverage scalable projects? Use these to showcase and lead the state into action? (ie. Develop a way to get the pools off gas, then other can use the tech even if the Yarra contribution is a small one)

- Review of the Insights which stand out most strongly to you:
 - Ensure nature and biodiversity are at the heart of the plan
 - Centre justice, equity and inclusion in the development and implementation of the plan
 - Respond to climate emergency as an emergency (that is, commensurate with the scale and urgency of the issue)
 - Council should be a bold leader, and focus on the actions with most benefit. Yarra's bold leadership can influence far beyond our municipal boundary
 - Strong partnerships are needed to develop and deliver the plan. There is a role for everyone to take action; the issue requires everyone to take action
 - Could we define 'social price for carbon' including why this has a good return on investment (that is, disaster preparedness will cost \$XX per tonne or per person in the future)

7. **Active Consultations – 7:40 (Your Say Yarra <https://www.yoursayyarra.com.au/>)**

YEAC members may wish to individually input into these consultations but do not warrant a broader group discussion at the meeting.

- **Council Order review (<https://yoursayyarra.com.au/councilorderreview>) due 9am Mon 7 Aug.**

We are reviewing the Council Order which outlines the requirements for people owning domestic cats and dogs within Yarra and proposing the introduction of a cat curfew. A night-time cat curfew would require cats to stay within their owner's premises between 7pm and 7am.

- **Fast-tracking Neighbourhood Batteries (yoursayyarra.com.au/neighbourhoodbatteries) due 9am Mon 7 Aug.**

Council is working with the Cities of Melbourne and Port Phillip to support the rollout of neighbourhood batteries (funded by the Victorian Government). Earlier this year, we asked for views about neighbourhood batteries, and we heard from over 800 people across the three council areas.

We also worked with the Yarra Energy Foundation to identify a number of areas in each municipality with high technical potential for neighbourhood batteries.

With these inputs in mind, we are now seeking feedback about the potential of neighbourhood battery in these specific area areas and the kinds of benefits they want to see.

There is an online survey as well as pop-up events at Bargoonga Nganjin North Fitzroy Library on Wednesday 26 July from 5.30pm to 7.30pm, and Kathleen Syme Library in Carlton on Friday 28 July from 11am to 2pm.

- **Keeping Yarra Flood Resistant ([Keeping Yarra flood resilient | Your Say Yarra](#)) due 9am Mon 21 Aug**

We want to understand more about our community's experience with flooding and rising water levels. Information including dates, frequency of weather events and any pictures of incidents are helpful to understanding a specific location's risk.

- **Safer streets – Alphington (<https://yoursayyarra.com.au/safer-streets-alphington>) due 9am Mon 14 August.**

If you drive, walk or cycle within the Alphington study area we want to hear from you. Tell us what would make your travels safer!

8. **Are there any emerging issues or opportunities which the committee would like to raise, and that Council should be aware of? Any other business? (Cr Wade/Cr Stone) – 7.50pm**
Please email Sam and Cr's if there are issues/topics which you would like to discuss.

9. **Future agenda items (Cr Wade/Cr Stone) – 7.55pm**

Suggestions from the previous meetings include:

- **Tree canopy cover, tree planting, and the Urban Forest Strategy** (Possibly 18 September meeting)
- **Plant-based treaty – What is the plant-based treaty? How is it related to or how might it support Yarra’s climate emergency work?** (Possibly 18 September meeting. Sam to discuss with Share Delphine how to progress this item and provide advice to Council)
- **Carbon offsets – Council's use of offsets, the benefits and cost of this.** (Possibly 18 September meeting.)
- **Discussion ways Council can additionally support sustainability retrofits in town houses and apartments in Yarra, with a particular focus on renters.** (Possibly 18 September meeting.)

10. Close – no later than 8.00pm

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YEAC meeting dates for 2023

- Monday 18 September
- Monday 27 November

A meeting invitation for each of these dates has been sent to all committee members.