



# MEETING MINUTES

## Environment and Sustainability Reference Group

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

**Meeting Start:** 5:30pm

**Meeting End:** 6:45pm

**Venue:** Whitehorse Civic Centre

**Minutes recorded by:** Cassie Lukies

---

**Attendance:** Cr. Cutts, Cr. Massoud (chair), Anne Payne (OAM), Glenys Grant (OAM), Kushal Singhal, Petrina Adams (proxy for John Malvestuto), Shaun Scallan, Jeff Green, Steven White, Allison Egan, Cassie Lukies, Dale Belmore, Miho Kagawa

---

**Apologies:** John White, Thomas White

---

## Contents

Item 1. Welcome .....	2
Item 2. Making the Urban Forest Strategy a Planning Scheme reference document .....	2
Item 3. Climate Response Strategy.....	3
Item 4. Council's view and position on Waste to Energy (WtE).....	5
Item 5. Exit Strategies for Landfill usage.....	6
Item 6. Stormwater Quality Improvement Strategies and Plans .....	7
Item 7. ESRG Recruitment estimated timelines for advertisement.....	8

Agenda Items:

---

## **Item 1. Welcome**

---

Welcome to Country

---

## **Item 2. Making the Urban Forest Strategy a Planning Scheme reference document**

---

### **Anne Payne (OAM)**

Anne requested a continuance of this agenda item from the previous meeting, to fulfil action item 1 from 25/10/23 meeting minutes.

### **Allison Egan – Coordinator Strategic Planning**

Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) was adopted in 2021. The document is a parallel of the work Council has been doing for some time in regard to canopy, tree protection and replanting. In the UFS Action Plan 16 of the total 48 actions are in relation to the Strategic Planning unit and 14 of the 16 aren't relevant to the Planning Scheme. 30% tree canopy target is one of the targets relevant to the Planning Scheme. Council is currently midway through a planning scheme translation process in order to make the planning scheme more precise and directive. The canopy target will be included in structure plans and directions given to consultants to take into consideration. The UFS is not written in a way that it can be used as an incorporated document in the Planning Scheme as it doesn't have enough detail. The canopy target has been included in the Planning Scheme as part of the translation process among a few others such as climate action, neighbourhood characteristics etc.

---

### **Key discussion points:**

- It has not been made clear previously that the document isn't suitable as an incorporated document. This has been communicated to CROWAG in the past however the information has not filtered down to the Community.
  - **Question:** What is it from an objectives and strategies point of view that the group feels isn't already covered in the Planning Scheme?
  - Other strategies and actions to rely on for compliance to tree protection are needed i.e., such as new planning arborists
    - Update on new planning arborists: currently appointed is a team leader (commence Jan 2024) and senior arborist (commence Feb 2024). There are 2 roles left to recruit.
-

---

## Item 3. Climate Response Strategy

---

Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plans – **Shaun Scallan**  
Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction using offsets – **Shaun Scallan**

### **Miho Kagawa**

The Climate Response Strategy 2023 – 2030 was endorsed at the end of November.

Climate Response Strategy key priorities:

**Key priority 5.1:** Take a leadership role in tackling climate change.

**Key priority 5.2:** Focus on the environment whilst also balancing the social and economic needs of Whitehorse.

**Key priority 5.3:** Consider our natural environment when making decisions including creeks, wetlands, lakes, bushlands, flora and fauna.

**Key priority 5.4:** Enable the community to reduce, reuse, recycle using circular waste principles.

Targets:

Maintain carbon neutral status and:

- Source 100% renewable electricity for Council operations by 2025
- Achieve net zero corporate emissions by 2032
- Aspire for net zero community emissions by 2040

Two phases of community consultation for the Strategy with a total of 931 Your Say page visits, 300+ community members providing feedback, and 180 online surveys completed.

### **Common themes for Council consideration:**

- Credible carbon neutrality claims – Purchase of carbon offsets; Self-certification vs Climate Active.
- Target timeframes - Cost implications of action vs inaction; level of ambition.
- Targets and anticipated trajectory to achieve these targets.

### **Council Meetings:**

**25 July 2022** – Energy Management Fund and Carbon Neutrality

**17 April 2023** – Independent Chubb Review of Australian Carbon Credit Units

**23 October 2023** – Provision of Electricity for Council Operations

**27 November 2023** – Endorsement of Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030

---

---

## 11 December 2023 – Review of Climate Active 2023 – Carbon Neutral

To become carbon neutral, Council will:

- Identify and reduce Council's annual corporate emissions (follow the Carbon Management Hierarchy – avoid carbon emission intensive activities, increase energy efficiency of assets, generate onsite renewable energy or purchase renewable electricity)
- Measure Council's annual corporate emissions (Comply with Climate Active Reporting Framework)
- Purchase and retire carbon offsets (Purchase carbon offsets to 'cancel out' remaining emissions. These offsets are generated from activities that prevent, reduce, or remove emissions from being released into the atmosphere)

Carbon offset purchasing principles.

1. Compliance with the Climate Active Carbon Neutral Standard
2. Compliance with the Whitehorse Procurement Policy
3. Prioritise offsets that deliver a high level of confidence in carbon emissions reductions, integrity and additionally.
4. Prioritise offsets from projects that deliver non-carbon benefits and avoidance of harm, in particular:
  - a. Improve social and health outcomes.
  - b. Improve biodiversity and ecosystem services.
  - c. Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and businesses
  - d. Supporting local (Australian) communities and businesses.
5. Prioritise offsets that are cost-effective, achieving the most significant emissions reductions at the lowest cost.

Current work:

- Finalising emissions boundary and reporting for 2022/23
- Purchase of carbon offsets, including retiring equivalent offsets required.
- Third-party verification of CA report incl Public Disclosure Statement.
- Submission to CA for final certification.
- Preparation for 2023/24 reporting.

Focus for 2024/25

- Program of community events (previously SLW).
-

- 
- Energy advice program or alike.
  - Develop a business case to transition Council buildings and assets off gas to electric.
  - Develop a business case to transition Council's fleet to zero emissions.
  - Continue to embed the Strategy and supporting policies across the organisation.
  - Strategic planning – Next Council Plan/Health and Wellbeing Plan.

#### Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) Act 2021

Climate Response Strategy highlights the Circular Economy and the Response Plan includes an action to support local businesses in this area. Also shared by the Innovation and EcoDev Strategy that is currently in play, there will be consultation for this draft strategy in the new year. As we implement the new Response Plan, we'll work closely with the Waste Reduction and Recycling team and incorporate the Environmental Sustainable Design Policy.

The Plan documents the action to: Engage local businesses in low carbon and circular economy opportunities, such as accessing sustainability incentives and programs delivered by other levels of government, and understanding climate risk. This has been fed into the current development of the Innovation and Economic Development Strategy.

Waste Management Strategy 2018-2028 – Currently reviewing the existing Plan and developing the next Plan to 2028.

Therefore, community consultation to take place next calendar year for the development of the Plan and 4-bin transition.

As the consultation progresses, if the group is interested we can have a rep from Waste Reduction and Recycling team attend.

---

#### **Key discussion points:**

- Council made the decision on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to become Climate Active

---

## **Item 4. Council's view and position on Waste to Energy (WtE)**

---

### **Shan Scallan**

Requested Council's current position in terms of Waste to Energy

### **Steven White**

---

---

Since 2019 Council have been working with other councils to find an alternative to waste to energy. DEECA has a project team that is working on the procurement with Council. We are looking to enter into a contract for long term disposal to landfill. Focused on curb side bins and some transfer station waste. Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges, Knox, Casey, Cardinia, Kingston, Bayside and Frankston are all involved. Council is looking for a solution that is environmentally sound and best practice for the cost.

---

**Key discussion points**

- Prospect Solutions (Dandenong) have just gotten their approval.
  - Council does not produce hazardous waste, but needs to remove dumped asbestos etc.
- 

**Item 5. Exit Strategies for Landfill usage.**

---

**Shaun Scallan**

Answered in discussion of Item 4: Waste to Energy

---

**Key discussion points**

- N/A
-

---

## **Item 6. Stormwater Quality Improvement Strategies and Plans**

---

### **Shaun Scallan**

Requested information on Council's current stormwater quality improvement strategies and plans.

### **Steven White**

Council's strategies and plans relating to stormwater quality improvement:

- Integrated Water Management plan – 15 actions. There is funding for this year and Council is seeking funding for next years budget.
- KooyongKoot Alliance
- State Government Integrated Water Management Forum
- Sustainable infrastructure policy – rain gardens etc.

---

### **Key discussion points**

- Blackburn Lake Sanctuary will be holding an expo with the EPA etc. to provide the community with information on our catchments and how we can reduce pollution in Feb 2024.
  - Council does not currently have a response plan to contamination events i.e. spills, but do test when undertaking works etc.
-

---

## Item 7. ESRG Recruitment estimated timelines for advertisement.

---

### Anne Payne (OAM)

Requested an update on the timeline and actions involved for member recruitment.

### Steve Day

A report needs to go up to Council in the early new year in order to make changes to the structure.

The group will expand to 12 Community Representatives.

---

### Key discussion points

- There is no restriction on members re-nominating for further terms.
- The link for applications will be distributed to the group when recruitment is open.

---

### Other business

- Previous minutes accepted. Seconded by Petrina Adams and Glenys Grant.
- Previous minutes actions
  - **Action Item 1: Jeff Green to invite relevant officers to next meeting re. making the UFS a reference document in the planning scheme. Complete.**
  - **Action item 2: Send out NELP consultation link. Complete.**
  - **Action item 3: Members send through additional feedback on TOR and recruitment information. Complete.**
  - Action item 4: Miho Kagawa to consider incorporating event similar to elements of Electrifying Boroondara as part of the Sustainable Living Week program. **Complete.**

---

### Meeting dates for 2024:

- Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024
  - Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024
  - Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024
  - Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024
  - Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024
  - Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024
-