



# MEETING MINUTES

## Environment and Sustainability Reference Group

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

**Meeting Start:** 4:00pm

**Meeting End:** 5:40pm

**Venue:** Strathdon House and Orchard Precinct

**Minutes  
recorded by:** Cassie Lukies

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**Attendance:** Cr. Cutts, Cr. Massoud, Anne Payne (OAM), Glenys Grant (OAM), Shaun Scallan, Peter Whittle, Thomas White, Jeff Green, Steven White, Steve Day, Belinda Moody, Callan Walker, Cassie Lukies, Eric Sun, Miho Kagawa

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**Apologies:** John Malvestuto, John White

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## Agenda Items:

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### **Item 1: Welcome**

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### **Item 2: Member Introductions**

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Thomas White: Has had a long interest in environmental sustainability and has been involved in multiple student organisation groups, is the ESG youth representative.

Peter Whittle: Worked for the City of Yarra for 12 years with a focus in carbon accounting. Specific interest in climate change and a resident of Whitehorse City Council for 32 years.

Shaun Scallan: Lived in Whitehorse City Council since 1991. Has a background in electrical and chemical engineering in water and waste water, then worked with Planet Ark. Had several businesses and is technically orientated. Great experience in behaviour change and advocacy experience with Planet Ark, and learning how to engage with stakeholders. Currently working for ewaste co-reg, ANZ recycling platform. Passion is using the resources we have - 'circular economy'.

Anne Payne OAM: Member of a few community groups such as the Blackburn and District Tree Preservation Society. Undertakes work in Bushland parks and is the Chairperson of the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Advisory Committee.

Glenys Grant OAM: Member of various groups such as Rotary, Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Parkland Advisory Committee. Has been writing for Eastside News for the last six months and is trying to focus on environmental topics.

Cr Massoud: Councillor who has spent 11 years on Council, has spent time advocating for the environment and tree canopy. In the past was a member of the Blackburn Lake Sanctuary Parkland Advisory Committee.

Steve Day: Manager Parks and Natural Environment, looks after operations for open space. Responsible for 70 in house staff and contractors and been in the role for 1 year, has worked for Whitehorse City Council for 30 years.

Steven white: Director Infrastructure, portfolio contains Parks and Natural Environment, City Services, infrastructure maintenance, waste, recycling, environment and sustainability, project delivery assets, major projects.

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Callan walker: Coordinator of Arbor, has been with Whitehorse City Council for 4 years and at City of Casey before as a Vegetation Compliance Officer. Has been an arborist for over a decade.

Miho Kagawa: Coordinator for Environmental Sustainability. Worked for Whitehorse City Council for 13 years. Currently developing our next strategy that will take us over the next 8 years, sustainability is shared across the organisation and required lots of internal collaboration.

Belinda Moody: Tree Education Officer, has a background in horticulture and education. Started with Whitehorse in 2019 and role is community engagement based.

Eric Sun: Major Projects, delivered the Strathdon project. Has worked for Whitehorse City Council for 5 years

Jeff Green: Director City Development, portfolio includes planning and planning enforcement. Has worked for Whitehorse for 15 years in a few different roles. Originally was a town planner.

Cassie Lukies: Environmental Volunteer Support Officer, responsible for environmental volunteers in our parkland spaces such as the Parkland Advisory Committees. Also responsible for the Community Nurseries, Community Gardens and convening the Environment and Sustainability Reference Group.

Cr Cutts: Deputy Mayor of Whitehorse City Council, currently in their 2<sup>nd</sup> term council. Ward covers Mitcham and Vermont. In the past was the Chair of the Heatherdale Creek Parklands Advisory Committee which initiated the interest in becoming a Councillor. Very passionate about the environment and the area, and has some magnificent areas within the ward.

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## **Questions and Comments**

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### Item 3: Trish McGee – Monash Environmental Advisory Committee

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Presenter: Belinda Moody & Trish McGee

Trish undertakes the secretarial duties for the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) which is led by a Councillor. The Advisory Committee has been running since 2008 with membership lasting 2 years. There are 15 members currently from the community. Monash Council has no Parkland Advisory Committees like Whitehorse, so the EAC covers the entire municipality.

Monash Environmental Advisory Committee:

Start date	2008
Membership	<p>15 Community Members (originally 12 then increased due to interest)</p> <p>1 – 3 Councillors depending on interest</p> <p>Trish undertakes secretarial duties</p> <p>Council officers are not part of the group, but Trish invites her team. Usually 4 -5 attend. Officers from Horticulture or Asset Management team attend as needed.</p> <p>2 year membership term, but when term ends members can opt to continue for another term.</p>
Meetings	<p>Originally met every 2<sup>nd</sup> month for 2-2.5 hours.</p> <p>Then increased to monthly and online due to COVID but with reduced time of 1.5 hours.</p> <p>Going forward they chose to continue to meet monthly for 1.5 hours, with alternating in person and online meetings.</p> <p>Meeting day and time is Monday at 6pm sometimes 6:30PM. If meeting is face to face a meal is provided. 8pm meeting finish. No meetings are run in January, and December meeting is a social meeting.</p>

	<p>Meetings are run as a workshop that is led by the Community Representatives. The Sustainability team provide an update at the beginning of the meeting.</p> <p>Agenda is driven by the Community Reps and kept small so there isn't an overload of information and it can all be absorbed.</p>
EAC Role	<p>Advise on various sustainability aspects i.e. new strategies before they are shown to the public for feedback. EAC were involved in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy development and were instrumental on the actions put forward in the strategy.</p> <p>EAC put forward the zero net carbon action plan and were involved earlier on at the time of the consultant brief.</p> <p>Topics are based on EAC member areas of interest and knowledge. Over the years they have looked at areas that are of interest to the members and have created sub-groups that work outside of the EAC to make it easier to manage. Trish checks in on why they are part of the group to ensure it aligns with their interests, and defines what they will work on going forward.</p>
Reporting	<p>An annual report is put forward each year that talks about the activities where the EAC was involved in terms of the advisory role. They are unable to make decisions due to being an Advisory Committee.</p>
Recruitment	<p>Advertise in bulletin paper, online, website and e-news.</p> <p>When recruiting the focus is not really diversity of knowledge, but rather those who are connected to the community. Members use the EAC as a learning experience and their passions guide the agenda items.</p> <p>Applications vary, there are not usually more applications than membership spots available. Some members decide to stay on for another membership term. A mandatory maximum membership term in order to encourage turnover was reviewed and was not popular. The Terms of Reference was updated to allow for</p>
Challenges & Solutions	<p>Members would come in as an individual with personal focuses. This was addressed by looking to create an environmental network to cover more of the communities focuses. Environmental networking events were ran that were very</p>

	<p>successful and included Rotary, Lions, Monash University student groups. This allowed for issues and solutions to be identified.</p> <p>After ensuring members are closely engaged with their networks, they created a “communicate” paragraph is sent out with the minutes where community members can share with their networks and the community.</p> <p>Aging members struggled to engage new people and varying demographics. ‘Collaborative bombing’ was used where everyone pitches in and helps.</p>
Achievements	<p>Support in delivery of the zero net carbon action plan</p> <p>Fossil fuel free investments</p> <p>Support in developing environmental network</p>

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### Questions and Comments

Glenys Grant (OAM): Do you continue to send info to past members?

Trish McGee: Not officially, Monash news covers EAC info and if they are on mailing list they will be up to date

Cr Massoud: How is Monash going with tree canopy targets?

Trish McGee: Monash have done LIDAR mapping, trees are a big issue in Monash. We have high value bushland spaces that people don't really know about. There is a total of 40 bushland spaces, and then also pre-colonial remnant areas. Trees are challenge in residential and council space. Would love Tree Education Officer.

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## **Item 4: Environment and Sustainability Reference Group Future Direction**

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Presenter: All

Cr Cutts provided a brief description of issues raised by the Community Representatives of the ESG and also the general community, they can be summarised below and in Item 5: Environment and Sustainability Reference Group Terms of Reference Review.

- Public availability of ESG information and actions
- Community Representatives connection to the community
- Relevancy of Council Officers in Reference Group
- Meaningful contributions by the community and actions or outcomes

Cassie Lukies provided all meeting attendees with a detailed table that covered the issues raised by the Community Representatives and general community, which included a range of questions to consider and potential changes to address and improve the ESG based on the feedback received.

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### **Questions and Comments**

Steven White: We are looking to have the ESG on the Council website and potentially include the Community Representatives details so they can be better accessed by the community.

Glenys Grant OAM: How do we engage with people under 40?

Thomas White: Social media services are more accessible to young people, however there is limited engagement with local government. University newsletters are relatively well read. We should focus on local students from Box Hill Institute and Deakin and engage through their channels.

Cr Cutts: The times of the meetings should be included in the recruitment advertising as that may be a barrier for potential applicants.

Cr Massoud: There should be a list of topics for the ESG to focus on and priorities identified. Break up the agenda items by department so officers need to attend less meetings.

Cassie Lukies: The table provided proposes the use of a shared Google Drive/Document where Community Representatives can upload agenda items at any time and there can be a 12 month plan of upcoming agenda items separated

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into topics (i.e. Biodiversity topics for one meeting, Sustainability topics for another meeting)

Belinda Moody: Do all new applicants need to go through Council? Can Simon approve in between recruitment times?

Cr Cutts: Can internal Council information be told to the ESG before going up to Council? Community Representatives could then make more meaningful contributions before things are open for consultation

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## **Item 5: Environment and Sustainability Reference Group Terms of Reference Review**

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Presenter: Cr Cutts

Cr Cutts ran a poll with all ESG members present to determine meeting changes that will be reflected in the review of the Terms of Reference. Final changes and approval has been left with Steven White and Jeff Green.

**Meeting Length:** Majority agreed to increase meeting length from 1.5 hours to 2 hours

**Meeting Frequency:** Majority agreed to increase meeting frequency from quarterly to every 2 months.

**Meeting Time:** Majority agreed the meeting should begin later to allow for those who work to attend. Meeting time has been changed from 4:00pm – 5:30pm to 5:30pm – 7:30pm. It was also noted that food will need to be provided as the meeting runs over dinner time.

**Meeting venue:** Majority agreed that one venue should be used for consistency. The Civic Centre was the selected venue and allows for hybrid attendance if required.

**Community Representative membership numbers:** Cr Cutts asked if there is a need currently to increase membership. Majority agreed to leave numbers for now and assess later on.

**Council Officer presence at meetings:** Majority agreed that all ESG Council Officers are not required to attend every meeting. They can attend on an as needed basis, and any questions raised in the meeting can be answered by the relevant officer outside of the meeting if not present.

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## Questions and Comments

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### Item 6: Other Business

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- Dogs in parks Your Say consultation opportunity – Cr Cutts. Consultation closes on 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 2023. There are variety of parks and ovals where there have been proposed changes in regards to dogs on and off lead. There have been 800 responses already. Link to survey will be provided with meeting minutes.
- Urban Forest Strategy – Peter Whittle. In the next meeting Peter would like to discuss the issues and challenges of the Strategy with council officers so they can discuss their foreseen challenges and plans to achieve targets.
- Banyule State of the Environment Report – Cr Cutts. Request for all ESRG members to read the report and could Whitehorse offer something similar? Report will be provided with meeting minutes.  
Steven White: We are looking to provide this information in a more dynamic and flexible format, which allows us to update information more frequently rather than providing a quarterly report.
- Kingsley Garden QR Code Tree Trail – Glenys Grant OAM. Provided high praise for the QR code tree trail and its accessibility. Glenys would like to thank Council, and especially Belinda Moody for the work done.

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## Questions and Comments

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**Meeting Close** 5:40pm

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**Next Meeting** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023, 5:30pm. Whitehorse Civic centre.

**Topic** Urban Forest Strategy topic then ESRG Google Drive

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