



MEETING MINUTES

Environment and Sustainability Reference Group

Date: 25th October, 2023

Meeting Start: 5:30pm **Meeting End:** 7:29pm

Venue: Whitehorse Civic Centre

**Minutes
recorded by:** Cassie Lukies

Attendance: Cr. Cutts, Cr. Massoud, Anne Payne (OAM), Glenys Grant (OAM),
Petrina Adams (proxy for John Malvestuto), Thomas White, Jeff
Green, Steven White, Cassie Lukies, Dale Belmore, Jacqui
Hanson.

Apologies: Kushal Singhal, Shaun Scallan, Belinda Moody, Miho Kagawa,
Steve Day.

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Agenda Items:

Item 1. Welcome

Item 2. Community Net Zero Technical Analysis (EAGA Project)

Scott McKenny

Scott presented on 2 Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) projects:

- Community Net Zero Analysis
- Adaptive Community Assets

Summary/recommendations of projects

Community Net Zero Analysis

- The largest emissions source in the region is commercial and industrial electricity (2020/21). Emissions are forecast to decline to 7.9M tonnes in 2023 under business as usual.
- The region can transition to net zero by 2030 and save money. The region can capture \$3-5B in savings through the transition to net zero emissions.
- Councils can unlock 7-15% of the 7.9M tonnes of the emissions reduction required through targeted interventions.
- All sectors of the economy have a role to play and councils can assist these opportunity owners through advocacy
- Many interventions are already being implemented (e.g. planning) and/or not monitored (i.e. FOGO)
- The interventions are being included into EAGA's annual planning process and select number have recently been initiated.

Adaptive Community Assets

- Under the Local Government Act 2020 and Climate Change Act 2017, councils have a 'duty of care' to manage foreseeable risks. The Victorian Government's legal review of the obligations of councils identified that failure to act on known risks may leave councils open to claims of negligence.
 - Councils are required to develop Assets Management plans and are seeking to address legal obligations and risks.
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- Melbourne councils are dealing with climate impacts on and risks to their assets now.
 - For Greater Melbourne present day average annual damages are in the range of \$90-\$120 million, with damages increasing to between \$210-\$300 in the nearer future (~2050) and to between \$400-\$540 in the more distant future (~2100)
 - Recommendations:
 - Refine base case estimates of damage and update results when new information becomes available.
 - Expand the scope of the base case assessment to include indirect tangible and intangible impacts.
 - Undertake cost-benefit analysis of adaptation options.
 - Begin integrating a climate change response into long term financial plans and asset management.
 - Advocate for external funding support.
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Key discussion points:

- Growth in electric vehicles. 7% of sales this year were electric vehicles, and it is forecast to be 18% next year.
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Item 3. CROWAG Mandatory Tree Canopy Briefing

Cr. Cutts

The Environment and Sustainability Reference Group thanked CROWAG for their discussion and provision of the Mandatory Tree Canopy Briefing document.

Consideration of making the Urban Forest Strategy a reference document to the Whitehorse Planning Scheme was undertaken by the ESG.

Key discussion points:

- Relevant officers will be invited to the next meeting to discuss their views on adopting the UFS as a reference document **Action Item 1**
 - It would be a recommendation to the next budget and requires a lot of work to undertake a planning scheme amendment.
 - The UFS was not written as a reference document for the planning scheme.
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- North East Link – consultation currently open in regards to Urban Design and Landscape Plan. ESRG Members are encouraged to complete the survey. **Action Item 2**
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Item 4. Bush Environment Neighbourhood Character Zones

John White

As an ecologist John is concerned that Whitehorse City Council won't meet new canopy targets.

Whitehorse Maps characterises zones that can lead to protection including a minimum 650m² block size. There is an inconsistency as this does not match the planning documents.

The minimum block size does not get reflected in the Significant Landscape Overlays (SLO's). Block size is the biggest driver of canopy cover, and allowing smaller blocks creates greater canopy loss.

Key discussion points:

- Land use is controlled by overlays (highest level of control is SLO1). Whitehorse City Council has robust overlays in regards to SLO's. 650m² block size is a point of contention for community and VCAT, as it has no statutory weight to be mandated. It is not written into overlay as minimum lot size.
- Smaller block sizes mean smaller houses so the same character attributes can be achieved. Planners have tried with Tribunal to push min lot size and have not won a single case based alone on lot size.
- Community groups can advocate to State Government – can Whitehorse City Council statutory planners give talking points that groups can take to State Government? Jeff Green and Jacqui Hanson to discuss.
- ESRG Members discussed the Community Representatives creating a working group to develop what they want re. advocacy

Item 5. ESRG Recruitment and Terms of Reference

All Attendees

The ESRG reviewed the Terms of Reference, Volunteer Position Description and Selection Criteria.

All suggested changes have been documented and will be implemented in the upcoming recruitment period.

Changes included:

- Increase community representative members from 8 to 12.
- Consideration for increasing ESRG membership term from 2 years to 3 years.
- Change to allow for Directors on the ESRG in consultation with ESRG Councillors to update Terms of Reference and membership.
- Quorum is changed from 2 community members to 4.
- Revise the way the detailed compliance training information is written in Position Description
- Include frequency and duration of meetings in Position Description.

Key discussion points:

- Absent ESRG members have the opportunity to provide feedback using the Google Drive **Action Item 3**

Item 6: Other Business

- Update on motion passed at August Council Meeting: overview of enforcement action from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023 regarding illegal tree removal. (Anne Payne OAM)
 - Jeff Green –Information will be brought to Council soon.
 - Council response to safer rodenticide use (Anne Payne OAM)
 - Anne Payne OAM- Council's response on actions?
 - Suggestion to post a motion similar to other Council's actions?
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- Steven White: Whitehorse doesn't do broadscale outside baiting like other councils. The larger issue is domestic use, broader advocacy is required with the community.
 - Anne Payne OAM – Gardens for Wildlife report includes note re. rodenticides.
 - Steven White acknowledged the emailed letter from John White and will prepare a response and inform the ESG.
 - Electrifying Boroondara (Anne Payne OAM)
 - Could Whitehorse run something similar? Pass along to Miho Kagawa to consider **Action Item 4**
 - New park development at Scott Grove, Burwood (delayed to next meeting)

Action Items from meeting:

- **Action Item 1:** Jeff Green to invite relevant officers to next meeting re. making the UFS a reference document in the planning scheme.
- **Action item 2:** Send out NELP consultation link (complete 26/10/23)
- **Action item 3:** Members send through additional feedback on TOR and recruitment information.
- **Action item 4:** Miho Kagawa to consider incorporating event similar to elements of Electrifying Boroondara as part of the Sustainable Living Week program.

Next Meeting: Wednesday 13th of December 2023, 5:30pm
Location: Nunawading Meeting Room 2, Whitehorse Civic Centre
Casual meeting to celebrate the ESG and their efforts.
