

# MAROONDAH ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Minutes

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018

Meeting Room 4, Council Offices, Braeside Avenue, Ringwood

7:00 - 8:30 pm

1. *Attendance:* Cr Marijke Graham (Chair)  
Cr Paul Macdonald  
Cr Samantha Mazzuchelli  
Dr Graeme Lorimer, Community Representative  
Fiona Ede, Community Representative  
Liz Sanzaro, Community Representative  
Grant Meyer, Manager Integrated Planning (MCC)  
Dale Bristow, Team Leader Strategic Planning & Sustainability (MCC)

Moya Brown, Community Representative  
Patricia Donati, Community Representative  
Ken Whitney, Community Representative

*Guests:* Anthony Bigelow, Friends of Dandenong Creek  
Scott McKenry, Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)

*Apologies:* Pam Yarra, Ellen Mitchell, Moya Brown, Ken Mitchell & Patricia Donati

2. *Conflict of Interest:*  
There were no conflicts of interest declared
3. *Minutes and Matters Arising from Previous Meeting*  
The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed

4. *Swamp & Glossy Grass Skink (Anthony Bigelow, Friends of Dandenong Creek)*

Anthony presented on the habitat needs and population of the Swamp and Glossy Grass Skink along the Dandenong Creek and explained about the crowdfunding initiative to raise funds to increase awareness, undertake surveying and habitat enhancement.

Currently working with Knox Council on the southern side of the Dandenong Creek.

Graeme warned about the danger of drying out the Skink habitat through revegetating the creek corridor.

Cr Mazzuchelli asked about whether there had been involvement from Healesville Sanctuary on the project and Anthony advised that they had been approached.

Cr Graham asked about the crowdfunding and was advised that stickers, t-shirts artist drawings would be made available to supporters. She suggested Council's social media could share information about crowd funding activities.

Cr Macdonald asked Graeme about Maroondah's Skink population and was advised that Swamp Skink had a healthy population at Bungalook, but it was unknown at Liverpool Road. Glossy Grass would be rarer. Feral cats, foxes and birds of prey identified as predators for the Skinks.

On behalf of the Committee Cr Graham commended Anthony on his presentation and thanked him for his work on the initiative.

**5. Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA) Scott McKenry**

Scott provided an update on EAGA's work program, in particular:

- 1) Energy Performance Contract which as installed 768 solar panels, 34 LED lights at Aquahub basketball court, 77 LED lights at Aquahub pool, 78 LED lights at Aquanation. Such measures have saved the Councils participating in the EPC on average \$200k per year and 1,500 tonnes of emissions.

Fiona asked about the installation of solar panels at Council's Aquanation facility. Scott provided a summary and indicated that John Richardson, Energy Performance Contract Officer, could attend and provide further details at a subsequent meeting at the Committee's request.

- 2) Solar Savers Project involves 36 Maroondah households participating in the scheme via direct loans/rate rebates. There are 25 councils in the partnership and Maroondah is the host Council.

Working with Solar Victoria within the State Government to try to ensure compatibility with the Solar Savers Program following the recent Government solar rebate announcement.

Fiona asked about community interest to date. Scot confirmed there are positive testimonials, with the average household realising a \$290 year saving.

- 3) Renewable Energy Procurement Performance Agreement. Of available roof space, only 2% is under solar PV yet there is an anticipated increase in energy costs from \$1m to \$1.5m. Looking to create a more diversified energy procurement for the next 10 years from 2020 using wind and/or solar sources within Victoria.

Cr Graham asked about Yarra Ranges Solar Farm Project. Scott advised that Yarra Ranges Council have engaged with AusNet regarding network connection - costs for connection of over 1.5MW requires laying fibre optic to central communications terminal which could be 40km away, some sites are therefore not likely to meet this initial hurdle criteria, meaning there may be ~6MW of potential generation in the mix.

Graeme asked about wider community energy projects, Scott informed how other councils have considered becoming energy generators.

Graeme asked about risks involved in contractual arrangements with such fast changing technologies. Scott responded that energy market experts identified that long term contract agreements had reduced risks compared to shorter term contracts.

Cr Macdonald asked about hydrogen fuel as a future energy source. Scott responded that the long-term vision for the gas network is far less clear than the “Integrated System plan” developed by AEMO for the electricity supply system.

**6. Sustainable Transport - Dale Bristow (MCC)**

Dale presented an overview of actions being undertaken to implement the sustainable transport directions of the Maroondah Sustainability Strategy. Discussion followed on the availability of bus transport, the benefits of car share and fixing missing links across the pedestrian and bike networks. Committee members were encouraged to provide feedback on the Draft Bus Policy and Draft Car Share Policy.

**7. Information Only Items**

No items were raised

**8. Other Business**

Following the last meeting’s discussion about Whitehorse Council’s community publication; Cr Graham advised that she has been informed that this publication was the last such edition to be printed in the current format with Maroondah’s equivalent proving good value for money.

Discussion followed relating to building trust and social licence and making greater efforts in communicating Council’s and the communities’ activities relating to sustainability.

The Committee were advised that consultation is currently underway by Melbourne Water on the Tarralla Creek Connects Project. A Tarralla Creek Community Advisory Committee has now been established involving 19 community members. Further information can be found at: <https://yoursay.melbournewater.com.au/reimagining-tarralla-creek>

Liz Sanzaro advised that the Croydon Conservation Society had written to Council seeking that the Pittosporum species be removed from the weed list. Graeme suggested this needs to be carefully considered as there may be some unintended consequences. The matter to be the subject of further discussions by Council / the Committee.

Croydon Conservation Society wish to see more previous materials used in developments. It was suggested a report back on this could be provided at a future Committee meeting.

Liz advised that the Croydon Conservation Society were successful in obtaining an Art Grant from Council to promote the idea of ‘Love Where You Live’. A decorated tree will be the centre piece of a display at Croydon Central, Main Street, Croydon Library and Realm.

**9. Next Meeting**

27 November 2018

Meeting closed at 9:20pm.