

Banyule Environment and Climate Action Advisory Committee (BECAAC) | Minutes



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| Date of meeting | Thursday, 14 December 2023 |
| Time | 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm |
| Venue | Ivanhoe Library and Community Hub – Clara Southern Room |
| Chair/Facilitator | Cr Alida McKern (Councillor) |
| Minutes | Damien Harrison – Environment Coordinator |
| Attendees | Cr. Alida McKern (Chair) |
| | Cr. Peter Castaldo (Councillor) |
| | Vicky Rowe – BECAAC Member |
| | Paul Gale Baker – BECAAC Member |
| | Michelle Giovas – BECAAC Member |
| | Lynne Siejka – BECAAC Member |
| | Denise Fernando – BECAAC Member |
| | Kellie Watson – BECAAC Member |
| | Paty Galan – Senior Urban Designer |
| | Damien Harrison – Environment Coordinator |
| | Rowena Cairns – Community Climate Action Lead / Contact Officer |
| | Abdul Ahad Mohammed Firoze – Corporate Emissions Reduction Lead |
| Apologies | Jonathan Risby - Manager Transport & Environment |
| | Sarah Bandey – BECAAC Member |
| | Trivess Moore – BECAAC Member |
| | Alex Tzikas – BECAAC Member |
| | Mayor Cr. Tom Melican (Councillor) |

| Time | Topic | Presenter |
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| 6:00 pm (30 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dinner | |
| Introduction | | |
| 6:30 pm (10 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of Country Diversity Statement Welcome Introduction of new members and guests | Chair |

Cr McKern noted that a variation on the Acknowledgement of Country was presented by Biodiversity Advisor Paul Davis at the Community Biodiversity Working Group meeting on Wednesday 13 December, which recognised the important stewardship role that First Nations people have played and continue to play in biodiversity conservation.

ACTION: a copy of this Acknowledgement of Country to be provided to BECAAC with the minutes.

New Business

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| 6:40 pm (15 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to Public Realm Strategy (PRS)• Public Realm Strategy / Survey• Shaping Banyule Survey link:• Public Realm Strategy Public Realm Strategy Shaping Banyule | Cr Alida McKern Paty Galan |
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BECAAC questions and feedback:

- Is there overlap or consideration for any adjacent private realm open space and how this influences the management of the public realm?
- How will the strategy support good outcomes that are being sought through other strategies and policies? Will it inform these strategies?
- The strategy will support more consistency and efficiency in the design and delivery of services in the public realm.
- How does the strategy intersect with the Transport Strategy?
- The strategy will provide an advocacy platform to State Government.
- Comment that this plan has missed some key developments over the past two years (i.e. Rosanna and Montmorency stations). Can it inform better design outcomes for Watsonia station and other future developments?
- PRS can still inform future negotiations for North-East Link Project.
- PRS must lead to good design decisions made from the outset.
- How can the strategy help people to live and travel more sustainably? For example, bike stations, access to potable water, edible gardens, rest and shade stops along walking / cycling routes to provide comfort along the journey.
- Really strong values statement or visions needed for the PRS that embeds sustainability.
- Seeking a consistent and agreed upon approach to city design is a good outcome, and is a sustainable approach for the organisation, including economic sustainability. Treating activity centres and public spaces independently in each suburb (an outdated approach) would be far more costly.
- PRS should provide direction for public lighting that meet sustainability standards.
- PRS is out for feedback until 26 February 2024. Info session to be held on 19 February 2024. BECAAC members encouraged to complete the survey on Shaping Banyule and attend the info session.
- Can BECAAC also provide feedback on the upcoming design guidelines that will accompany the PRS?

ACTION: Officers to confirm if the design guidelines could be brought to BECAAC for feedback.

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| 6:55 pm (10 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Updates | Cr Alida McKern |
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- Urban Forest Strategy, Urban Food Strategy and Volunteer Policy have recently been adopted.
- MoU for Friends Groups to provide guidance on how Council and groups can collaborate to progress their important work. It will involve co-development of an annual works plan.
- Biodiversity Strategy – draft strategy will be worked on in the coming months.

- Cat confinement Notice of Motion put forward. An Officer report to be brought back to Council in February 2024.
- Suggestion that the Zoos Victoria campaign on cat curfew may offer some learnings for Council.
- Cat Protection Society is supportive of cat curfews.
- Notice of Motion for planting on nature strips. BECAAC members encouraged to put forward their feedback on nature strips to support good environmental outcomes.
- Climate Emergency Australia – Council (Cr Alida McKern) is on the Board. Drive to bring more councils on board with CEA.
- Urban Forest Strategy – many actions un-funded in year 1. Cr Castaldo encouraged BECAAC to consider a recommendation for Council to allocate more resources to support critical year 1 actions.
- Suggestion that priority actions be identified that should be brought forward and implemented earlier.
- The 2023-24 operating budget for the Parks & Natural Environment Department would be allocated, but there may be opportunities to inform the reallocation of surplus funds (if any) to priority urban forest actions.

ACTION: Rowena and Damien to work with the suggestions and come back to the group with a pathway for a recommendation to reallocate any surplus funding to unfunded UFS actions.

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| 7:05 pm (15 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take as read (attached) • Expanding our Concept of Measurable Sustainability | Michelle Giovas and Denise Fernando |
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- Concerns about the conflict between (for example) installation of solar at the expense of trees / biodiversity.
- Messaging that environmental sustainability needs to be a holistic and integrated consideration.
- Much more holistic take required that elevates biodiversity.
- Biodiversity Strategy links to renewable energy and the trade-offs that are taking place.
- People may feel they are doing good for the environment installing solar, though the reality is very different when trees are a casualty of this. We need to encourage a more holistic understanding of environmental sustainability within the general public.
- The Council Report template that Officers use to report to Council includes consideration of such things as sustainable procurement, gender impact, financial sustainability and legislation, though not sustainability more holistically.

BECAAC Recommendation: that Council considers the inclusion of broader environmental sustainability as a standing consideration in the Council Report template.

Moved by Lynne Siejka, Seconded by Vicky Rowe; however a quorum was not present at this meeting. BECAAC to seek further advice on how this is resolved. Discuss at next meeting.

Stretch Break – 7:20 pm - 5 minutes

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| 7:25 pm (15 mins) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on the State of the Environment (SoE) | Damien Harrison Michelle Giovas |
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- The SoE was endorsed by Council at its meeting on Monday 11 December with the recommendation that a review of the report and indicators be undertaken and brought to BECAAC for consideration in 2024 before the next edition is published.
- While the SoE is a good read, it is a sales pitch for the good things that are happening rather than a robust scientific assessment of the state of Banyule’s environment. Better monitoring of the effectiveness of our strategies and targets is needed through the SoE.

- No local species extinction not referenced in the SoE and is a key target that we should be setting and tracking.
- Recognition that there is a gap in our knowledge of waterway health. Look at Melbourne Water data for future SoE reporting.

7:40 pm (10 mins)

- BECAAC process / pre work / potential pre meetings / briefings Paul Gale-Baker

- A pre-meeting discussion to better understand / consider what is coming up on the agenda would be useful, as it is difficult to meaningfully digest and discuss all agenda items on the spot without some thought.
- Options could include a meeting online to discuss upcoming agenda items, or a forum to interact in the lead-up to a meeting.
- What resourcing would be required from Council to facilitate this?
- Any additional work for officers would need to be considered and approved by the Director City Development under the Terms of Reference.
- Suggestion that a Teams site could be a viable option, to support a chat function, act as a repository for agendas, minutes, attachments etc, and allow members to meet online informally.

ACTION: Staff to present the Teams option to the Director City Development for consideration.

Standing Items

7:50 pm (10 mins)

- Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan (CERP) update Abdul Ahad Mohammed Firoze

- Abdul presented an update on the CERP and next steps, including promoting the upcoming consultation sessions.
- Questions to be written to staff due to time constraints.

8:00 pm (5 mins)

- Biodiversity Plan Update Damien Harrison

- Damien provided a short summary of consultation and next steps.
- A final meeting of the Community Biodiversity Working Group will be convened to review the Draft Strategy around May 2024.
- Given the terms of this group have expired, it was suggested that all BECAAC members be invited along to this meeting in May.

ACTION: Officers to invite all BECAAC members to the last Community Biodiversity Working Group meeting in 2024.

8:05 pm (5 mins)

- Adaptation Plan Update Rowena Cairns

- Rowena presented on the Climate Change Adaptation Framework, which will be developed by Council in 2023-24.
- Adaptation will encompass all facets of Council services and community life.
- Upcoming consultation sessions in conjunction with the CERP.
- Questions to be written to staff due to time constraints.
- Animation video is being prepared for the consultation stage related to Adaptation.

8.10 pm (5 mins)

- Community Batteries Update Rowena Cairns

- Jemena and Council progressing to community consultation on the Bellfield battery through the Federal government battery initiative.
- Potential second battery under investigation by the Yarra Energy Foundation through the State Government Neighbourhood battery initiative. A suitable site is being sought.
- These batteries would be the 'solar soaker' model of battery that is owned and operated by the Network Distributor (Jemena or Ausnet) and increase the electricity capacity of the local network to reduce grid reliance at peak times.
- Paul noted that Village Power is investigating a community battery model where residents could subscribe and be direct beneficiaries of the stored power.

8:15 pm (10 mins)

- Sustainable Macleod Clean Energy Expo Paul Gale-Baker

- Expo went extremely well. 140-150 people attended, all very interested in what was available. Exhibitors were very pleased with the level of engagement.
- Post-expo survey results were positive – most people would attend again, and most would take some action as a result of attending.
- Solar, batteries, installation (including some painted coating types), solar roof tiles, EVs on show and an EV talk.
- Village Power attended and were the third most interesting exhibit.
- No exhibitors had heat pumps on show, which will be investigated for next year.

8:25 pm (10 mins)

- Other Business
 - 1. NELP
 - 2. Q&A
- Any
Michelle Giovas
All

- No NELP update at this stage.
- Cr McKern thanked BECAAC members for their contribution over the year and wished everyone a great festive season.

Meeting end 8:35pm

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, 14th March 2024