

Minutes of Meeting No. 17 held on 18 April 2017 at Community Room, Lillydale Lake at 9am.

1. Welcome and acknowledgement of traditional owners of the land

Convenor Anne Langworthy opened the meeting, welcomed committee members and invitees, introduced Martin Kilner, who has recently joined the DELWP Project Team, and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land.

Conflicts of Interest

The committee noted the potential conflict of interest that Cr Jim Child may have when the Council comes to consider a report on the proposed Yarra Ranges Amendment C148.

Attendees

Convenor: Anne Langworthy

Members: Cr. Jim Child (Yarra Ranges SC)
Marianne Sawyer (Cardinia SC)
Jeff Latter (Community Rep – Cardinia SC)
Dan Harley (Zoos Victoria)
Dan Robertson (Melbourne Water)
Bob Anderson (Community Rep – Yarra Ranges SC)
Peter Cooper (Community Rep – Yarra Ranges SC)
Sue Tardif (Community Rep – Yarra Ranges SC)
Stephen Thuan (PPWCMA)

Invitees: Victoria Purdue (DELWP)
Conrad Annal (Parks Victoria)
Steve Hosking (Melbourne Water)

Guests: Chris Hardman (Parks Victoria)
Martin Kilner (DELWP)

Secretariat: Keith Longridge

Apologies: Craig Bray (Parks Victoria)
Merryn Kelly (DELWP)
Ben Cullen (Trust for Nature)

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

Acceptance of the minutes meeting No. 16 held on 21 March 2017

MOTION:

That the minutes of meeting No.16 on 21 March 2017 as circulated be confirmed, with one correction, namely that Marianne Sawyer attended the meeting.

Moved: Jim Child **Seconded:** Bob Anderson

CARRIED

3. Matters arising

3.1 Keith Longridge reported that the proposed working group to recommend process and communication guidelines for the YCACC Communications and Engagement Plan has not yet been convened.

3.2 Keith Longridge reported that the action to compile a submission to Yarra Ranges Shire Council in support of the Yarra Ranges SC proposed Amendment C148 has not been completed and noted that the new 'Actions List' identifies the due date as 21 May 2017. Cr Jim Child confirmed that the Responsible Authority must consider all submissions up until the time it actually makes a determination on the proposed amendment.

3.3 Victoria Purdue reported that she had not been able to produce a separate report for the spatial categorisation mapping process for circulation prior to this meeting. Victoria briefly summarised the progress to date; that she had received several comments from members; and that she proposed that the classification descriptions be altered to the following: Conservation, Restoration, and Mixed Use. Victoria indicated that the working group would meet prior to the next YCACC meeting to finalise the mapping.

4. Correspondence

A letter from Chris Vassos has been received advising that he has accepted a new role with Parks Victoria and will therefore not be able to continue in his role supporting the work of YCACC.

MOTION:

That YCACC write a letter of thanks to Chris Vassos to congratulate him on his new role with Parks Victoria and to express its appreciation for his valuable contributions to the development of the Yellingbo Conservation Area and supporting the work of YCACC.

Moved: Bob Anderson **Seconded:** Sue Tardif

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Regular updates

5.1 Actions List

Keith Longridge outlined the two principal functions of the proposed new 'Actions List', distributed prior to the meeting, they being:

- To keep track of actions determined at YCACC meetings; and
- To streamline YCACC meetings.

Keith also noted:

- That the 'action reference' is compiled by the meeting number first and followed by the respective agenda item number, so that its history can be readily identified;
- That the list can be updated regularly and that particular actions can be deleted when their completion is reported to a YCACC meeting;
- The 'Actions List' can be tabled as a regular update at YCACC meetings; and
- It is not proposed that the 'Actions List' replace the 'Matters arising' section of the YCACC meetings.

5.2 Budget Update

Victoria Purdue reported that it had not been possible to produce a separate budget report prior to the meeting. Nonetheless, Victoria reported the following summary:

- That Haining Farm Working Group had incurred minimal costs, mainly catering costs;
- That Chris Vassos had organised works along Cockatoo Creek at a cost of \$15K;
- That the project at Millgrove will incur costs of about \$35K, (see attached briefing note);
- In relation to the status of YCA project expenditure, the total budgeted expenditure for the Bushfire Management Planning process was \$130K and was to begin with Haining Farm. The planning work at Haining Farm has expanded beyond what was originally anticipated and will most likely use the entire bushfire planning budget. Investigations are underway to estimate costs to complete the remainder of the whole of the Bushfire Planning project and identify resources to ensure that it is completed.
- Melbourne Water will still be allocated the planned \$1M (to be confirmed);
- DELWP is working with Parks Victoria to transfer further funds from the project budget to DELWP;
- The total government budget provision was \$3.2M; \$2.78M came across from Parks Victoria.

Victoria further clarified the potential bushfire planning funding from the 'Safer Together Program' funds of which have been allocated elsewhere for this financial year and reported that the Project Team was considering an application for the next financial year. Victoria undertook to produce an update of project expenditure for YCACC meetings.

5.3 DELWP: YCA Project Team

Victoria Purdue spoke briefly to the briefing note circulated with the meeting agenda and in summary canvassed the following:

- Staffing update;
- Bushfire planning process;
- Haining Farm Working Group;
- Site visits;
- Work with Melbourne Water;
- Meeting with Yarra Ranges SC staff;
- Meeting with DELWP staff about the Yarra River Protection Act; and
- Meeting with Millgrove Residents' Action Group.

Following clarifications and further discussions on how internal departmental strategic actions interact and how best to provide contemporary briefings to YCACC members, committee members requested that future reports ,

- Canvass planned actions and projects;
- Enlarge on the particulars of site visits, e.g. quantify number and scale of the works or conservation/ riparian agreements planned.

During the extensive discussions several other issues arose, namely:

- In relation to the likely impacts on Crown land of the proposed extension of the Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme. Following a brief discussion of this issue, Victoria Purdue took the question on notice and undertook to seek further advice; and
- In relation to Melbourne Water detailed survey work being undertaken along the Little Yarra River upstream of Warburton Highway, Dan Robertson reported that although there are degraded riparian areas, there are also high quality sections where native vegetation is intact. There was some discussion of an infestation of the weed *Wachendorfia* (Blood Root), likely spreading from a former nursery site on private property. It was noted that while DELWP cannot undertake or fund action on private property, there are alternative funding sources that may enable control works to be undertaken.

At 10:15 am Convenor suspended the meeting for morning tea.

At 10:30 am the meeting resumed and the Convenor invited the Parks Victoria Executive Director Melbourne, Chris Hardman, to address the meeting.

6. Chris Hardman, Parks Victoria Executive Director Melbourne

Chris Hardman addressed the meeting and pointed out that Parks Victoria (PV) currently manages 10 of the larger reserves that will in part constitute the proposed Yellingbo Conservation Area (YCA) and will assume direct management of the YCA once declared. Further, Chris outlined the three most important aspects of the collaboration with the wider community that PV utilises in practice, namely:

1. Conserving Victoria's Special Places

Acknowledgement of this aspect increases the confidence that the wider community has in PV to manage parks well.

That there exist serious management problems, such as the extent of eucalypt dieback at Yellingbo Nature Conservation Reserve, that require attention and additional management resources.

2. Connecting People and Parks

This aspect is critically important to connect with the wider community.

Once that relationship is established, the community will hold agencies to account in critically examining how scarce resources are invested.

3. Providing benefits beyond park boundaries

For an obvious example, emergency management provides wider social benefits than is constrained to individual parks. Wider impacts apply especially to State faunal emblems and the respective conservation reserves. Wider benefits also accrue in the areas of community lifestyle, recreation and social inclusion. It is incumbent on PV and partner agencies to work closely with both supporters and non-supporters.

Currently, the proposed YCA includes about 230 kilometres in public/ private boundaries. This has the very significant impact of increasing the edge effects enormously. Further, Chris made the following observations in relation to reestablishment of habitats in other places and parks:

- Reestablishment of habitat takes a long time and a successful project will need public education campaigns and the like to bring the local communities along.

- As well, while in transition, such reserves and parks can give the general impression of lack of management, or a very poor appearance to the untrained eye. Thus there is a need for increased weed control until a forest canopy (for example) can be reestablished and habitat fully restored.
- In effect, PV does not unilaterally decide on the level of investment in particular parks, rather, the community effectively decides on the level of management, maintenance and sustainability by their level of engagement with parks and park management.
- Chris recommended that YCACC identify clearly the standard of habitat restoration within works programs and particular or individual targets that authorities such as Melbourne Water (MW), Catchment Management Authorities (CMA) or Local Government Authorities (LGA) may employ. In addition, to increase effectiveness, he emphasised the importance of considering how best to leverage such actions by the public authorities.

In relation to the Concept Planning process, Chris thought that community input offered the opportunity to lead and support the necessary change. Parks Victoria has also learnt that it must accept community opposition at times and that it is best acknowledged and alternative views treated respectfully. Parks Victoria staff have also learnt that it is important to be confident to manage parks for the whole of Victoria not simply for interest groups, and thus planning must recognize benefits that accrue to community sectors far wider than local interest groups.

Reservation under the *National Parks Act 1975* will set the status and community standing of the proposed Yellingbo Conservation Area. Parks Victoria already does extensive works in the existing large blocks, with limited funds and successful management under those conditions requires a good understanding of threats.

In summary, Chris emphasised that concept planning needs to consider carefully the three strategies or approaches mentioned above and also highlighted the importance of partnership, leverage, and an equitable spread of investment funds. Chris thought that the Haining Farm project will be a good indicator of the effectiveness of the works/ processes and results for the larger Yellingbo Conservation area.

In general discussions with committee members, Chris agreed that terms such as 'manage' can be open to interpretation by different sectors of the community and acknowledged the importance of language in persuading communities to fully engage with the park planning process. He further emphasised that PV needs to respect the full spectrum of views, i.e. 'try to understand', 'acknowledge and accept' and 'bring all into the conversation'.

In relation to tips for collaboration, Chris emphasised the importance of discipline:

- Project staff must make time to put in the extra effort to fully engage communities;
- Departments need to lead collaboration;
- Devise mechanisms to ensure a proper exchange of information;
- Communications essential to connect departments with communities to ensure positive outcomes; and
- Trust partners to deliver.

Finally, Chris emphasised that for project success, it is essential that communications make plain the nexus between positive outcomes and investment funds. To this end, it is important that PV develops detailed assessments on operational funds and leverages with others, including volunteers. For example, Chris outlined an approach that PV has taken to empower the Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater Inc (HeHo) that encourages sharing power and management responsibilities for optimum community outcomes.

On behalf of YCACC, Convenor Anne Langworthy thanked Chris for his time and valuable contribution.

7. YCA Action Plan Development

Keith Longridge lead a planning exercise with committee members to initiate the development of the YCA Action Plan. As an introduction, Keith reminded committee members of the requirements of the plan set out in the committee's Terms of Reference, in summary:

- The YCA Action Plan can be characterised as an overarching plan to establish strategic priorities and clear directions;
- The Action Plan will describe how the recommendations of the VEAC Yellingbo report will be implemented by the responsible agencies.

- It will outline what needs to be done, when, and by whom and identify how the community can be involved in management activities.

About 50 particular actions identified in various planning documents produced to date were reprinted on individual sticky notes. The exercise entailed assessing whether each identified action was valid, then if so, to locate it, by general agreement, on a timeline over the three years, 2016, 2017 and 2018, to identify when particular actions can or must be done. Keith undertook to compile a preliminary draft of the Action Plan from that data.

Committee members agreed that an informal working group comprising Steve Hosking, Victoria Purdue, Keith Longridge, Anne Langworthy and coopting Marty White from Yarra Ranges SC to collaborate on the development of the YCA Action Plan. A tentative date to convene was agreed as Tuesday 2 May.

8. Meeting time allocation

Keith Longridge spoke briefly to the briefing note distributed with the agenda. He noted that YCACC has an increasing workload to accomplish its set tasks within finite timeframes and that individual members are asked to commit additional time to a number of working groups meeting out of session. Therefore to improve the productivity of YCACC he recommended that the YCACC meeting time be extended to allow the opportunity to undertake some of the work during meeting times that is now expected to be carried out in working groups meeting out of session.

MOTION:

That the normal meeting time allocation for meetings of YCACC be extended to 2pm, comprising the following schedule, first session: 0900 to 1200; lunch 1200 to 1230; second session: 1230 to 1400.

That the second session be reserved to consider matters relating to the working groups namely, Key Actions, Concept Planning, and Engagement and Communications Plan.

That the aforementioned allocation of meeting time operate until the Concept Plan is completed.

Moved: Bob Anderson **Seconded:** Dan Harley

CARRIED

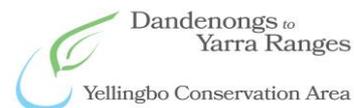
At 12:00 Convenor Anne Langworthy, with the approval of committee members, allowed an extension of time to deal with other business.

9. Other business

9.1 Bob Anderson raised the issue of proxy representation for absentee community representatives. Bob indicated that he would be travelling from 9 May 2017 and therefore unable to attend the next meeting. After a brief discussion about the merits of various alternatives and the relevant protocols, Convenor undertook to take further advice on the matter.

9.2 In Bob's absence, the committee confirmed that Dan Harley will represent Bob at the Haining Farm Working Group meeting during that time.

Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee



9.3 Cr Jim Child reported that Yarra Ranges SC has appointed Cox Architects to develop the concept of the 'Yarra Valley Trail'. Following a brief outline of that work, committee members agreed to list that as an agenda item on the next meeting of YCACC.

Close of meeting: The meeting closed at 1210

Keith Longridge

Executive Officer