MEETING RECORD



Subject:	Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee Meeting – Minutes of Meeting Page 1 of 7			
File No:	CLR/07/8/101/1/6			
Document Ref:	D18/77161			
Venue:	Council Chambers 1 Pope Street, Ryde			
Date:	Wednesday, 14 th March 2018			
Time:	5.00pm	Started at: 5.00pm	Closed at: 6.40pm	
Chair:	Councillor Penny Pedersen			
Meeting Support (MS):	Linda Smith – EA to the Mayor and Councillors			
Staff Convenor:	Kylie McMahon			
Circulation:				

Committee Role:

Committee Members as per the Terms of Reference

Present	Apology	Name	Position Title	Organisation
✓		Councillor Penny Pedersen	Chairperson and Councillor Delegate	City of Ryde
✓		Councillor Christopher Gordon	Councillor Delegate	City of Ryde
✓		Councillor Edwina Clifton	Deputy Chairperson and Councillor Delegate	City of Ryde
	✓	Councillor Trenton Brown	Councillor Delegate	City of Ryde
✓		Pamela Reeves	Community Representative	
✓		Libby Lawson	Community Representative	
✓		David Thomas	Community Representative	
✓		Terry Perram	Community Representative	
✓		Simone McGinley	Community Representative	
✓		Jill Hartley	Community Representative	
✓		Adrian Kong	Community Representative	
✓		Peter Brown	Community Representative	
✓		Bev Debrincat	Community Representative	
✓		Joanne Taranto	Community Representative	
	✓	Jane Valentine	Community Representative	
\checkmark		Sylvia Lane	Community Representative	
✓		Jessica Wilks	Community Representative	
✓		Angela Maier	Community Representative	
✓		Amelia Saul	Community Representative	
✓		Peter Davies	Community Representative	
	No contact	Margaret Kelly	Community Representative	

Present	Apology Name Position Title		Organisation	
✓	Sam Cappelli Manager Environment, Health and Building		City of Ryde	
✓	Kylie McMahon Senior Coordinator Environment		City of Ryde	
✓		Sandra Payne	Natural Areas Coordinator	City of Ryde
✓		Sean Simpson	Natural Areas Project Officer	City of Ryde
✓		Katie Helm	Sustainability Programs Coordinator	City of Ryde
✓		Linda Smith	EA to the Mayor and Councillors	City of Ryde



Details			Action	
1.	Welcome by Chair – Clr Penny Pedersen	1.	Noted.	
	Clr Pedersen opened the meeting by welcoming all present and by recognising the traditional owners of the land and her fellow Councillors.			
	Clr Pedersen made special mention of Peter Brown - a member of this committee, who has been working in Bushcare for over 40 years.			
	CIr Pedersen outlined her interests and the various roles and positions she has held and currently holds relevant to this committee, including her role as Vice Chair of Parramatta River Catchment Group.			
2.	Apologies	Council	lor Brown, Jane Valentine.	
3.	Chairperson Introduction			
	Councillor Pederson presented her vision for the committee which is to continue the work of the people who look after Council's local bushland. The importance of the role of volunteers was highlighted. Each member of the group introduced themselves. Edwina Clifton – current Councillor, strong interest in environment and bushland Terry Perram – former Councillor, long term involvement on this committee Adrian Kong- long term resident, interest in environmental issues Peter Brown – long association with Brush Farm Park Amelia Saul – interest in managing introduced species of flora and fauna Jessica Wilks – PHD in microbiology and interest in climate change Pamela Reeves – member of previous committee, Field of Mars resident, interested in bush regeneration and concerned resident Angela Maier – member of Bushcare group and local resident Joanne Taranto – Bushcare member and member of Five for Ryde Peter Davies – works in the area of environmental policy. Lecturer MQU Sylvia Lane – Science teacher and member of Bushcare group Libby Lawson – member of previous committee, member of Bushcare Jill Hartley – member of previous committee, represents environmental groups. David Thomas – member of Bushcare group Bev Debrincat – involved with Habitat nursery, also Bushcare member Christopher Gordon – current Councillor, has long time concern for environment	2.	A copy of Councillor Pedersen's vision for the committee is circulated with the minutes. Noted	
4.	Terms of Reference There was discussion regarding the definition of various terms included in the terms of reference such as biodiversity and the need to distinguish between private and public lands. Sam confirmed focus is on public lands however there will be times when delivering biodiversity education that private lands are implicated. Also some members requested clarification of what biodiversity means to members.		Adopted terms of reference.	
	The need to distinguish between this Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee and the Renewable Energy Committee was also noted.			
	None of the items mentioned, had any impact on the Terms of Reference which were subsequently adopted unanimously.			
	It was confirmed that this Committee is an advisory committee, not a decision making committee. It will however play a key role in influencing Council policy and processes.			
	It was also confirmed that specific budget detail is not a key focus of this committee. Staff will be available separately to discuss specific budgetary matters if required.			



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5. Update from past committee actions and status

Kylie McMahon advised that one of the major achievements of the previous committee had been the adoption of the Ryde Biodiversity Plan.

The Plan was adopted by Council in 2016 after several years of development.

The recommendations of the Plan are now being rolled out and funded with Council staff and BEAC members having an opportunity to determine the priorities of actions to be implemented in 2017/2018.

Sean Simpson has been employed to assist with rolling out the various actions identified in the Plan.

The Committee was also involved in the flora and fauna studies have been conducted and presented both the studies undertaken.

The previous committee also worked to obtain information from Bushcare groups, have input into the contracts entered into between Council and Bushcare contractors and various strategies to include feral animal control.

1. Noted.

6. Standing Items

Sustainability matters

- A small staff unit handles matters related to sustainability and environment.
- Some achievements of the unit include:
 - Delivery of capital works for stormwater harvesting and water sensitive urban design (WSUD)
 - Testing of water quality conducted twice per year testing both chemical and biological indicators in 5 creeks across Ryde since 2004.
 - In creek restoration and rehabilitation capital works projects
 - Working with the Greater Sydney Commission on the North District Plan for sustainability and resilience planning
 - Integral member representative on Parramatta River Catchment Group since 2008 and technical members on 4 key working groups towards delivery and implementation of the PRCG Masterplan – due for release and adoption in June 2018.
 - Examination of bike and car share policy, implementation and membership on Sydney wide working group to address issues, legislation and policy
 - Installation of a 303kW solar system for the aquatic centre towards significantly reducing electricity usage, installation on library and community centre (2018)
 - Delivering the Home Waste and Sustainability Advisory Service since 2012 towards educating and assisting local residents to live more sustainably and reduce their carbon footprint
 - The smarter, greener, cleaner newsletter produced monthly with over 2600 subscribers and growing. Providing community updates on environmental and waste events, sustainability tips and news
 - Education initiatives developed and implemented through REEN, the Ryde schools network
 - Various Environment and Biodiversity workshops held for the community throughout the year including; volunteer training, fungi workshop, world water and world environment days and others

1. Noted

2. Noted



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Climate Change

- Council is a member of a Sydney wide 100 Resilient Cities Program which examines issues such as globalisation, urbanisation and climate change towards future resilience planning
- Council recently joined the Cities Power Partnership which involves making 5 pledges in the areas of sustainable transport, energy and resource efficiency and climate mitigation.

Biodiversity Plan implementation

- 2017/2018 commenced on ground and physical works towards implementing the Biodiversity Plan actions
- Bush Regeneration area and bushland protection area signage is being installed to delineate areas, protect reserves and provide education across key areas in the city.
- Bush regeneration contracts have increased to further deliver improved natural areas regeneration and are now active at over 39 sites across the city.
- Extra funding has been provided to undertake additional work.
- Bush regeneration tender is currently being reviewed. New contracts to be in place from 2018/19
- Flora and fauna studies continue to be undertaken with the next round including Shrimpton's Creek, Parramatta River reserves and small sites not included in previous studies at Denistone, Marsfield, Macquarie Park and Chatswood West

Natural Areas Update

- A large amount of planting has been undertaken at Wilga Park with large selective removal of woody weeds as part of a grant to Council
- The 3 year Terrys Creek walking trail upgrade is progressing.
- A survey of Bushcare volunteers has been undertaken. A snapshot of the results included:
 - 83% of volunteers who responded first decided to join a Bushcare group to help improve the bushland in their local area, while 51% of respondents also joined to stay active and involved in their community
 - 57% of respondents are able to commit to working at their Bushcare site once a month and 57% preferred a 2 hour work session on their Bushcare site.
 - The majority of respondents (79%) enjoyed Bushcare volunteering as they are able to see the sites they volunteer at improve over time and at the same time giving back to the environment.
 - Respondents said a Bushcare supervisor was required at their Bushcare site (82%)
 - 34% of respondents thought the program was under resourced in terms of the number of volunteers and made a number of suggestions to better promote the program.
 - 50% of respondents found out about Bushcare through word of mouth, followed by various other methods (31%) such as leaflets, and walking past.
 - 100% were satisfied with the support provided by Council, (53% very satisfied and 47% were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the support)
 - 97% of respondents strongly agreed the City of Ryde provides a safe working environment for the Bushcare program.
- A common response was the desire to see more volunteers involved in the project
- A review of bushfire prone land was recently completed and maps recertified by Rural Fire Service and NSW Fire and Safety.

Noted

4. Noted



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General Projects Update

- A series of talks on sustainability was held at Macquarie University last year with high profile speakers in attendance. Talks included transport, heritage and culture and open space and how they can be planned for, preserved and managed on a sustainable basis into the future.
- This year, the talks will cover a variety of topics including a focus on resilience.
- Council program the Ryde Environmental Education Network (REEN) continued to be delivered throughout the year for all educational institutions across Ryde. Teachers and Council staff meet each term and are provided resources and presentations to further their knowledge on environmental and sustainability matters. These are coordinated with the Waste team to deliver.
- Feral animal control program continues targeting species within natural areas
- Ongoing education is occurring in the Field of Mars Reserve to stop people taking and allowing their companion animals (cats and dogs) into the reserve which is a Wildlife Refuge. This has been a collaboration between the Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Society, Council Rangers and Environment units.

5. 2016/17 Summary of Environmental Activities reported to Council in Nov 2017 to be circulated with minutes

7. General Business – Matters without notice

Food waste:

- Foodwaste makes up 40% of the waste placed in red bins
- Randwick and Lane Cove Councils have introduced programs to reduce this figure through diverting food waste from landfill through a separate bin collection introduction.
- The possibility of targeting nursing homes, schools etc in any program to divert food waste was raised.
- Earth Power food waste collector service could be good for multi-unit dwellings food processing?
- Staff advised that dialogue has previously occurred with the Waste team regarding food collection and the use of the Porters Creek site as a possible means of setting up an alternate waste disposal system. Presently contamination in the food waste collection bins is very high which many who have introduced this system are experiencing issues with the new system resulting in high contamination costs. Currently Ryde is not actively exploring this.
- It was also noted that under the current recycling regime, any items placed in plastic bags could not be recycled and that incorrect sorting hampered the recycling process.
- Education could be used as a tool to reduce the amount of food waste created
- A better business partnership and the Bin trim exists to help business be more sustainable taken up by a few northern area councils to work with councils. Presently Ryde does not have a business resource officer.
- The use of worm farms could be promoted for household food waste control. These occur multiple times per year to promote and encourage the uptake of food recycling and landfill diversion.
- Can private kerbside collections of food waste be permitted? if business could be enticed to do so then could be done.

Pool to Pond:

- Ku-ring-gai Council runs a dedicated 'Pool to Pond' program which permits owners to transform swimming pools to water ponds if they wish.
- It was noted that mosquitoes and fencing issues could arise from such a program.

 Investigation of food waste programs/initiatives used at other Councils to be investigated and status reported to next committee

 Investigation Speaker from Ku-ring-gai Council to be invited to present to this Committee and address interested patrons on the Waterpond project. Council staff will liaise with Environmental Health



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Officers to investigate.

Trees:

- It was noted that often Development Approvals for new dwellings permit the removal of established trees, shrubs, grass etc. and this is having a cumulative impact across the city on canopy loss
- A question was raised as to how applicants are followed up to ensure that they replant as required, what time period is allowed for replanting, is a check done to ensure that the plants thrive.
- Sam Cappelli advised that it is a requirement that trees of significance outside the building envelope are usually conditioned for replacement and fines can and do occur where proven for breaches.
- Members raised concerns about tree species in the Council's Street Tree Planting Program. Some felt only natives should be on the list. Majority considered tree canopy was more important and that there was a place for suitable exotic species
- Urban heat islands were raised as an issue. Staff advised they are aware of this issue and are carrying out investigations to explore opportunities into development and consent controls and when Council undertakes capital works programs
- Some members highlighted State Government approved applications and that there is no imperative for the views of Council re tree canopy to be considered. The loss of old trees and their replacement with new stock is not a good trade for fauna and the root systems and their impact on the water table is also underestimated.
- A question was raised with regard to verge gardens and street tree planting. It was suggested that Council create guidelines for people wishing to establish verge gardens. Staff advised there are numerous issues which need to be considered in the establishment of verge gardens.
- It was also noted that in the future, some large trees will cope better in hotter conditions.
- Trees need to be valued as assets and how the way Council manages trees to consider them as assets with their asset life and succession
- Ku-ring-gai council also have every application for removal listed on their website.
- It was also noted that there is a need to select tree species for planting that are suitable for the location. Some trees drop branches regularly and are not suitable for planting near homes.
- The species planted in parks also need to be directed for use by volunteers in natural areas and must be informed of the plants that are suitable for use in different parts of the local area. Council has developed a draft planting guideline for natural area land management that includes addressing to guide volunteers and stakeholders planting in Ryde. This was from previous BEAC committee suggestion.
- It is believed that some of the information on Council's website is incorrect relating to specific community listing. It is believed that some plantings and plant species are specific to Ryde and the information on Council's website should be Ryde specific not general. Clarified by staff that Council utilises the OEH mapping 2013 and are mindful that undertaking of additional and new categorisations create even further confusion to community and stakeholders. At this point Council will retain the OEH mapping classification.

Recycling

- Question regarding community education on whether bottles be recycled with their lids on or off? Off seems to be the preferred but concern over community confusion and need to give more education on this.
- Council's website could include promotion to address and make this clear and also provide a better listing of the types of plastic which can be recycled.

Explore other Council's

Policies on verge gardens

and review suitability for

Update

next

Explore how to regard trees as an asset to preserve their importance and ensure maintenance. Update next meeting.

Ryde.

meeting

- Provide draft of the Natural Areas Planting Guideline to assist Volunteers, Council staff contractors for managing natural areas. Submit draft to a future meeting of this Committee for review
- potentially Review to include this education on the Council website to ensure consistency and accuracy of recycling information. Additional education in the Smarter. Cleaner, Green Newsletter

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Detai	ils		Action
E	Biodiversity Plan / Flora and Fauna Studies - Some issues that could need future consideration are bats and microbats to change community attitudes towards them, and possible future provision of suitable habitat - Some measures to assist in the preservation of fauna include retention of mature trees and dead trees so that the hollows they contain are saved, and the careful use of fire in areas of significant habitat - It was then noted that there is conflicting advice regarding the use of fire with some sources saying it is a good thing and others a bad thing. - A member suggested more biodiversity marketing for education through brochure development. Most however, felt that whilst developing brochures	7.	That Ryde Biodiversity Plan Implementation Actions be reported to future meetings of this Committee on a regular basis and be included as a standing item for this Committee.
	had merit, social media was considered a more effective medium. One member highlighted fungi and the current period being most suitable for various species of fungi to be photographed. The call was put to Bushcare workers and volunteers in this respect.	8.	Noted
	Future Agenda Items and topics of interest		
	 It was suggested that given the size and broad level of interest in this Committee, that the Council staff email a table to members to provide a listing of their top 3 priority items be included for future consideration for the next meeting. 	9.	Agreed Council staff will email out a table for members to suggest topics for the next agenda (June)
8.	Next Meeting:		
	The next meeting is scheduled for 13 th June 2018 – 5pm to no later than 6.30pm in the Meeting Room next to Council Chambers – Level 1a Pope St, Ryde	1.	Agreed

Meeting closed 6.40pm