

7.4.1 EAC REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

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| Responsible Manager: | Kristy Green, Manager Sustainable Monash. |
| Responsible Director: | Jarrold Doake, Director City Services |

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the activities of the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) during 2023, and thanks all members of the Committee for their time and contributions while being representatives of the Monash community.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an annual report on the Environmental Advisory Committee for 2023, in accordance with Council's resolution at their September 2019 meeting, for all Advisory Committees to provide annual updates on activities.

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sustainable City

Ensure an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable municipality.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the EAC is to inform and advise Council on environmental and sustainability related issues. The EAC has advisory capacity only and has no delegated authority to make decisions as if they were Council. Advisory Committees provide advice to Council and staff to assist them in their decision making.

Since 2007, EAC has provided advice on Council's environmental sustainability programs with a focus on the implementation, monitoring, and review of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-2026 actions and resulting strategic projects and plans.

EAC is represented by up to 15 community members and up to three Councillors. The term for the community membership is approximately 2 years. Community members are appointed by Council following a public expression of interest. EAC is guided by a Terms of Reference which was endorsed by council in 2022, prior to appointment of new members.

DISCUSSION

In 2023, meetings were held monthly from 6.00-7.50pm on the first Monday of the month. A total of 10 meetings were held, with four meetings held online (via Zoom).

There were no formal resignations in 2023, but one of the members decided not to continue their membership on the committee.

Some members had difficulty attending to due to work commitments especially around face-to-face meetings, but on average there was 74% attendance of members. Meetings were supported by 5 staff at each meeting, and there were 4 external speakers during the year.

The 2022 meeting format includes workshops during meeting time, to enable all community and council members the opportunity to collaborate with others when providing feedback under the following agenda:

- Welcome, Acknowledgement of Country, Attendance and Apologies
- Conflict of Interest declaration and confirmation of minutes
- Workshop on topic of interest including occasional staff presentations.
- Outstanding actions and other the business

The table below lists the topics discussed during 2023 by the EAC and the feedback has been used to support and inform sustainability program delivery. All topics align with the priorities of Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26 and related plans and strategies.

| 2023 meeting topics | Outcome and Achievements |
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| February Eastern Innovation – 6.15-7.50 | |
| Circular Economy update – integrating Sustainability into Council Infrastructure Overview of upcoming projects and opportunities for EAC involvement and format of meetings. | April Williams - provided feedback on the final outcome presentation on a project which supported the use of recycled content materials in infrastructure projects. Priorities for 2023 meetings were determined and included <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trees and Biodiversity - gardens for wildlife and tree retention to address urban heat - Circular Economy – upcycling and repair cafes - Zero Carbon – for residents and council. - A monthly communique summarising the meeting is also provided for the members to share in networks and social media. |
| March Zoom – 6.03-7.40 | |

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| Green shoots programs and Communicating the importance of trees and vegetation | <p>Anna Mezzetti presented on the GreenShoots projects including Microforest, Bush Kinders, Skink link and nature strip planting. Following the meeting – many of the members became participants and advocates of the Green shoots program.</p> <p>They then discussed how council might improve engagement regarding the importance of trees to our community – this input helped inform Council’s education program.</p> |
| April Eastern Innovation – 6.15-7.50 | |
| Zero Net Carbon - reducing GHG emissions in the community | <p>Daniel Berry presented on council’s progress to Zero net carbon by 2025 and the actions taken to support community emission reduction.</p> <p>A discussion was then undertaken to understand what the members have done to reduce their emissions to support our communications with community on key action to take.</p> |
| May The Corner Store Network – 636-.7.40 | |
| Opportunity to learn about the Corner Store Network and their sustainability activities – both locally and in Timor Leste. | <p>Alice Maher spoke about the work at The Corner Store network which included sustainable produce, preserving workshops and sustainable coffee importing from Timor Leste.</p> <p>Trish provided an update on the ‘What’s your Jam? The Promotion to encourage more environmental volunteering so the members can share with their networks to get involved.</p> |
| June Zoom - 6.05-7.35 | |
| <p>Update on strategic waste projects and challenges getting to Zero Waste</p> <p>Discussion on the big waste issues affecting Monash.</p> | <p>Simon Hill provided a presentation on the diversion of food waste from landfill and advanced waste processing to address residual waste. The members discussed how this could work and address a zero-waste commitment.</p> <p>Then the members discussed challenging waste priorities – this included e-waste, managing human behaviour illegal dumping, managing non council or public waste and the disposable challenge. They then provided feedback on how council might be able to address these matters. This will be considered in our future education plans.</p> |
| July Zoom – 6.03-7.14 | |
| <p>Getting to Net Zero in the Community</p> <p>Adaptive Community Assets</p> | <p>Scott McKenry from the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action spoke about a recent analysis of Community emissions for each council and highlighted key areas where they could have a positive impact based on their level of influence to enable the community to reach Net Zero. Scott also spoke about Climate adaptation approaches for the community to assist councils to quantify risk, cost and set actions to minimise.</p> <p>Then the committee provided feedback and questions on the elements of both reports.</p> |
| August Civic Centre – 6.05-7.30 | |
| Reimagining Glen Waverley | <p>Andrew Shaw, Principal Design Architect for City Design & Property, presented on the schematic design for a replacement of the Glen Waverley library.</p> <p>Members provided constructive feedback on the design and were encouraged to also provide feedback via Shape Monash.</p> |
| September - no meeting | |
| No meeting was held because it clashed with the joint advisory committee meeting | |

| October | | Eastern Innovation – 6.15-7.15 |
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| On engaging young people in environmental volunteering | | Maya from the Youth Affairs Council provided some insight to engaging young people into environmental volunteering. |
| November | | Zoom – 6.08-30-7.08 |
| Repair Café outcomes Bushcraft and Survival | | Connie shared the success of the recent repair café event which helped divert 13 kg of waste from landfill and the joy of the residents to see their treasured items repaired by dedicated volunteers. CC shared her experience and involvement in the Bushcraft Survival program which helps build participants connection to nature. Also promoted the Nature strip program and composting discounts. |
| December | | Mulgrave Micro Forest – 6.30-8.00 |
| Mulgrave Microforest tour 2023 EAC reflections | | Anna Mezzetti, Biodiversity Champion, explained the concept of the Microforest and the steps taken to establish Victoria’s first Microforest at Wellington reserve, including partnerships, plant selection and community planting/mulching days. EAC members were invited to use thermal cameras to test the difference between shade and direct sunlight (10-13 degrees difference). EAC members also reflected on their highlights from 2023 and areas of focus for 2024 |

At the last meeting of the year, EAC members reflected on the highlights of the year and what they would like to focus on in 2024:

What you enjoyed about 2023:

- Learn more about the work that Council does in Sustainability.
- Sharing information with neighbours, community and networks to spread the message.
- Get to know EAC peers more and learn from their expertise.
- Programs like Nature Strip planting invite conversation from the community and they are “stunned” by the programs offerings.
- Listening to the experts that presented throughout the year.
- Being back in person face to face
- Being with like-minded people to get inspired and maintain your energy
- Finding out about future plans for Council to achieve sustainability goals (e.g. Alternative waste processing)

- **Focus for 2024:**
- Help to prevent tree loss in Monash
- Work towards better engaging the wider Monash community in sustainability initiatives and information to encourage them to embrace sustainable practices.
- Share more inspiring and relevant information with our networks (e.g. social media posts).
- Explore and take action on strategically protecting biodiversity into the future.

- Increase the use of recycled materials in infrastructure with an EAC working group to identify opportunities to increase recycled content in Council (e.g. construction and building areas).
- EAC members will seek and share new research, case studies, products or services they have discovered through a new ongoing agenda item.
- Broaden our reach (e.g. get into school newsletters, partner with community groups etc).
- Tap into knowledge and expertise of EAC to offer advice and alternative viewpoints on Sustainable Monash issues and initiatives, “diversion” thinking.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications to this report.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As per the Terms of Reference, EAC provide advice and guidance on the delivery of Council’s Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26 actions and related programs. All EAC members have been informed of the new Policy for Advisory Committees and updated Governance rules for Advisory Committees, and the agenda was updated to align with the changes.

CONSULTATION

The Environmental Advisory committee, by its very nature, is heavily consultation based in its approach. Many of the activities undertaken by the EAC across the year have involved consultation and advice, such as the feedback they provided on Reimagining Glen Waverley in August, Getting to Net Zero in the Community Adaptive Community Assets in July, discussions on the Green shoots programs and Communicating the importance of trees and vegetation in March, as well as many others listed in this report.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

EAC provides the opportunity to access community perspective to support the delivery of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2016-26. Engagement with the community on matters of personal importance to them is a key responsibility of Local Government, and Advisory Committees are an important mechanism to share information and seek input and

advice from the community. Community membership is based on public invitation and members selected to provide a balanced representation of the community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The operation of Council’s Advisory Committees ensures that many community members have the opportunity to engage with Council on matters of importance to them, consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* in relation to the right to take part in public life.



GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A GIA was not completed because this agenda item is not a 'policy', 'program' or 'service'.

CONCLUSION

That Council note the discussions and outcomes that the Environmental Advisory Committee has contributed in 2023.

ATTACHMENT LIST

Nil