

Minutes: Rural Advisory Committee

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Tuesday 24 September, 2024 - 3pm to 5pm
Community Rooms – 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale
Chair: Cr. David Eastham – Yarra Ranges Council

Meeting 3 - 2024	
Rural Advisory Committee	Christine Ross; Hamish Mitchell; Kim Anning; Kevin Sanders; Robin Wood; David Reid
Council	Cr. David Eastham; Amanda Bunn; Anne Blakeway; Michelle Mulholland
Guests	Kim O'Connor
Apologies	Clive Larkman; Cr. Fiona McAllister; Leanne Hurst

Item	Topic	Speaker
1)	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledgement of Country - Apologies - Welcome to Anne Blakeway 	Cr. David Eastham
2)	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes</p> <p><i>Community awards</i></p> <p>Opportunity for inclusion of an agricultural award was discussed at the last meeting. Amanda raised this with Governance and was advised a decision was made to align with other Councils in the metropolitan region with no plan to broaden and add in the current plans. Amanda confirmed there is eligibility to apply for current awards with an agricultural / environment lens.</p> <p><i>Short stay accommodation tax</i></p> <p>Council does not have a position but is currently working on one with Amanda involved. This will incorporate consultation with relevant reps, including the RAC. Amanda will provide a further update at the next meeting.</p> <p><i>Comms plan for lost livestock</i></p> <p>In progress - Council's Comms team are working on a plan with the Safer Communities team. Will provide an update at a future meeting.</p> <p><i>Road safety on state roads – Kim O'Connor</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's approach for road safety – Kim highlighted relationships with State Government departments. While the Dept of Transport can be challenging to work with, Council have established a good relationship at higher levels. 	Cr. David Eastham & Amanda Bunn

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to conduct a roadshow to community in relation to maintenance and condition of roads. • Have completed a condition rating of roads Council is responsible for. Audits to 10m segments – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 85% of the road network is in good condition ○ 15% needs maintenance - within this 4% requires significant works. • Develop a Capital Works Project for resurfacing and rebuilding roads. • Some rural roads that required sealing are not wide enough due to constraints and costs involved with the resealing, which will impact evacuation in an emergency event, ie. moving animals. • Roads where multiple accidents are occurring at the same location. <p>Action: Kim will liaise with Council's Traffic team to raise the issue of advocating to VicRoads regarding the state of some roads, particularly roads that repeatedly have accidents occurring at the same location.</p> <p>Adoption of minutes of prior meeting</p> <p>Moved: Cr David Eastham Second: Hamish Mitchell</p> <p>Opportunity to disclose any conflicts of interest</p> <p>Nil</p>	
3)	<p>Council's changes in drainage and stormwater approach</p> <p>Kim presented the Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) 2024-2034:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Water has funds – having a plan assists with this. • SWMP can influence developers. • More focus on rural areas. • Flooding issues due to changes in rain events. • Population and housing increase. • Outlined key elements of the Draft Stormwater Policy. • Objectives of the SWMP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utilise stormwater as a resource ○ Protect and value waterways ○ Develop strategic partnerships ○ Manage existing and future flood risks ○ Reflect community values in planning. • High level actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing drainage and flood requests ○ Updates to development engineering guidelines and planning permit processes ○ Investigation of stormwater offsets ○ Continuing to foster and build strategic partnerships ○ Explore funding mechanisms ○ Focussing IWM/WSUD initiatives ○ 10 year flood mapping strategy – identifying mapping and where flooding occurs across the municipality, including Council assets that are not identified under the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO). There are 49 catchment areas. • Catchment prioritisation to assist with maintenance and Capital Works. Undertake localised catchment analysis. 	Kim O'Connor

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan with 32 actions to be reviewed, direct focus with the priority areas. Partner with Melbourne Water who will oversee the modelling. Gain an understanding of the impact to agribusiness areas once rural areas are mapped. Water overland flow path will be examined. Asset Management Plan will also be included for review. Integrated water management. <p>Kim to return to a future RAC meeting for further feedback as the SWMP develops.</p>	
4)	<p>Council department visits to RAC meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase Council departments awareness of the RAC. Invite departments to RAC meetings that lack exposure and experience with rural areas as both observers and to contribute. This can also assist to avoid the RAC missing out on vital criteria and involvement with rural issues. <p><i>Suggestions from the RAC:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite departments whenever there is a topic specific to them. Link with other advisory committees. Amanda to preview proposed topics and liaise with relevant departments for their input, then circulate to the RAC for review prior to their feedback. Policies and strategies to be assessed and determine if relevant to the RAC. Present slide snapshot at RAC meetings before open to questions. Dedicate time to tackle items on whiteboard. Send any issues to the RAC for feedback via email if more pressing and cannot wait until the next meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High cost of insurance deeming farming no longer profitable. For these areas to continue to be productive, action needs to be taken. Alternative is to sell. <p>Action: David Eastham to further review the high cost of insurance for farming businesses and investigate what assistance can be given, ie. advocacy.</p> <p>The priority list was reviewed and agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming sometimes no longer profitable (see above). Lifestyle properties/hobby farms - biosecurity; shared land. Ways of Working – how do the RAC bring things to Council? How do we engage the RAC? <i>This item has been covered internally.</i> Transitioning to retirement – other incomes. How ageing owners continue to manage their property. Vic Gov planning – helping understand it. How does YRC/RAC get a seat. Right to farm vs local amenity (eg. Mornington Peninsula model). <p>Action: Organise for Mornington Peninsula to present their model relating to right to farm to the RAC.</p> <p>Action: RAC members to send through any other major issues to add to the RAC priority list.</p>	Cr. David Eastham

5)	<p>Rate reduction concept for land management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christine raised the proposal of a potential rate reduction offered to landowners who undertake environmental and sustainability management such as weed control, hydrology management, avoiding soil erosion and keeping areas as conservation areas for rare fauna and flora. This has been raised with the rates department, who have also been approached about other opportunities for potential rate reductions. They are doing a review and looking into all options put forward to them. Will circle back to the group when there is an update. 	Amanda Bunn
6)	<p>Climate Change/Adaptation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liveable Climate Plan 2020-2030 guides the work to support the community with climate change. Amy and Patricia presented their latest community engagement tool, The Adaptation Game: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The game was created to engage the community to be more prepared and climate resilient. Aims to engage with people with climate change awareness and demonstrates what the next 10 years will look like with climate area. Game aims to discuss where we will be at the end of the century if strong climate action is taken. Game focus is to the local area. Dealing with climate issues and leaving with the tools to act on. Heat maps based on modelling by DEECA. Game is to develop a strategy to act through conversations. Game is still in test mode. Tested with Council's leadership and 3 pilot township groups. Seeking feedback from the RAC for lived experiences. Hamish has played the game in Monbulk and said it is very good. Lead through a process of thinking about the difference climate events with the cards thrown in was a bomb going off. Resilience process was very good. All agreed it needs to be meaningful for the groups RAC represents. Amy will invite the RAC and rural associates to play the game and provide feedback. 	Amy/Patricia – Resilient Environment
7)	<p>Key issues to discuss in depth in future meetings</p> <p>See priority list from agenda item 4.</p>	Cr. David Eastham
8)	<p>Other business</p> <p><i>Plan Vic update</i></p> <p>Council submitted its response at end of August – waiting for State Government to announce what it will look like. Will provide an update to the RAC.</p> <p><i>Yarra Valley Equestrian Park – Kim Anning</i></p> <p>Due to change in State Government, the new proposal has been halted. Renovation of the clubrooms at the Yarra Glen Hunt Club is</p>	Cr. David Eastham

	<p>underway. Christine to connect regarding the Upper Yarra Local Development Strategy abattoir proposal.</p> <p><i>Robin's last meeting</i></p> <p>Cr Eastham thanked Robin for his valuable contributions to the RAC over the years.</p>	
17:00	Close	Cr. David Eastham

Actions from last meeting carried over:

	Action	Who is to take the lead?	Date Completed
1.	<i>Follow up within Council regarding a position on short stay accommodation, how the RAC can give feedback, and required timing.</i>	Amanda Bunn	Awaiting update
2.	<i>Discuss possibility of a communications plan regarding 'what to do with lost livestock' with Communications and Safer Communities. Explore option of signage. Also contact VicPol and discuss their process.</i>	Amanda Bunn	Awaiting update
3.	<i>Distribute CSIRO climate projections site to RAC</i>	Amanda Bunn & Kevin Sanders	9/10/2024

Actions from this meeting:

	Action	Who is to take the lead?	Date Completed
1.	<i>Kim will liaise with Council's Traffic team to raise the issue of advocating to VicRoads regarding the state of some roads, particularly roads that repeatedly have accidents occurring at the same location.</i>	Kim O'Connor	
2.	<i>David Eastham to further review the high cost of insurance for farming businesses and investigate what assistance can be given, ie. advocacy.</i>	Cr. David Eastham	
3.	<i>Organise for Mornington Peninsula to present their model relating to right to farm to Council or to the RAC.</i>	Amanda Bunn	
4.	<i>RAC members to send through any other major issues to add to the RAC priority list.</i>	RAC members	
5.	<i>Rates team to provide update after review of alternative rate reductions</i>	Amanda Bunn	