

Minutes



Sustainability Advisory Committee

Wednesday, 31 January 2024
4:00-5:30pm

Location:	Banksia Meeting Room, Willoughby City Council, Level 6
Chair:	Councillor Anna Greco
Attendees:	Eva Coulam – Member Rena Czaplinska-Archer – Member Gay Spies – Member Janet France – Member Peter Lisle – WCC Sustainability Team Leader Simon Brown – WCC Wildlife Officer Bushra Salam – WCC Governance Admin Officer
Absent:	Andrew Assaee – Member Elisha Mangassarian– Member
Guests	Councillor Anna Greco Councillor John Moratelli Councillor John Jam Xia Mark Seemanpillai (Member of Public)

Agenda items

Item	Topic / Discussion	Action
1	Welcome: The meeting was opened at 4:07pm when a quorum was reached.	
	Apologies: None	
	Absent: Andrew Assaee & Elisha Mangassarian were absent.	
	Declarations of interest There were no Disclosures of interest submitted.	
	Acknowledgement of Country Bushra Salam (Governance Administration Officer) acknowledged country on behalf of Council.	

2 Committee Governance

Nominations for Chair of the meeting

- Gay Spies nominated Councillor Anna Greco
- Rena Czaplinska-Archer nominated Eva Coulam
- Eva Coulam declined and seconded Councillor Anna Greco nomination
- No other nominations were received
- Councillor Anna Greco accepted the nomination
- All in favour

Appointment of Chair

Pursuant to clauses 5.4 of the Committee's Terms of Reference, the Committee unanimously appointed Councillor Anna Greco, as the Chair for the meeting of the Committee.

3 Confirmation of Previous Minutes

Moved by Eva Coulam and seconded by Gay Spies, the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 December 2023 were unanimously accepted.

4 Actions arising from previous minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5 Strategic Activities

5.1 Standing item- Update on Carbon Targets

Peter Lisle – WCC Sustainability Team Leader updated the Committee that Council's corporate carbon target is net zero emissions by 2025. Given the Nov 2022 updated net zero guidelines formulated by International Standards Organization it will be challenging for Council meet net zero emissions by 2025. The target is currently under review internally.

Action: Update to be provided at the next meeting

5.2 Matters for discussion

NSW rebates for heat pumps in Willoughby raised by Janet France:

Peter Lisle – WCC Sustainability Team Leader briefed the Committee that Council will review promoting domestic hot water heat pump technology in 24/25, ascertain any rebates available and look to promote further on the Council website alongside the Solar Bulk Buy Program currently available.

Councillor John Moratelli noted that hot waterheat pump systems have a smaller carbon footprint for equal capacity and presented medium to longer terms financial savings too. The Committee suggested explanatory signage be provided at the Leisure Centre as heat pumps will be used to provide heating and other sustainability initiatives adopted by the Centre. Peter Lisle said this this will be considered by staff once the Centre is reopened.

Presentation by Council’s wildlife officer on matters raised by Eva Coulam:

Simon Brown – WCC Wildlife Officer gave a presentation on the following issues:

Council use of pesticides:

Currently Council does use a range of pesticides for the control feral animal (including fox and rabbit). WCC staff and contractors are required to have “Chemcert” training to use any pesticides. WCC staff and contractors have completely stopped using second generation rodenticides 10 years ago. Since 2014, we have requested contractors to stop using second generation rodenticides. Rat baits like “Racumin” (Coumatetralyl, a first-generation anticoagulant) are currently being used in all WCC properties that require rat control. A program from birdlife Australia is calling out suppliers of second-generation rodenticides to stop supplying these chemicals. See

<https://www.actforbirds.org/ratpoison>

The Committee made the following recommendation:

Recommendation: *That the Committee recommends that Council require contractors not to use 2nd gen pesticides and that Council circulate material from Birdlife Australia not to use rodenticides and ensure the contractors are monitored for compliance.*

Moved by Eva Coulam and seconded by Rena Czaplinska-Archer

- **Weed control:**

Simon Brown further briefed the Committee that there are lots of herbicides used for the management of weeds in Willoughby. All pesticide requires regular documentation of use.

Janet France commented that Council is moving towards more eco-friendly solutions.

Simon Brown noted that weed control techniques vary considerably from site to site and depend on various factors, but soil condition and natural resilience are key factors. The revegetation sites at Flat Rock Gully comprise heavily disturbed soils with no natural resilience. Consequently, there is little to no natural regeneration of native plants but regular and ongoing outbreaks of weed species.

In contrast, sites like Blue Gum Reserve are less disturbed, even along some of the degraded edges, and there are often more sources of native seed and natural recruitment. Consequently, traditional bush regeneration techniques that do not require ongoing herbicide spray regimes are more effective.

- **Fox Control:**

Simon Brown noted that 1080 (Sodium fluoroacetate) is a very easy/inexpensive option. There are of course other options including trapping programs which have not been very successful. Over the last six years council has carried out shooting programs with professional shooters in partnership with local golf course managers. This is more expensive than baiting but has a similar effect in reducing fox numbers in areas being treated.

Fox numbers are being reduced as a result of 1080 use. 1080 is used

in the New Zealand to control possums however the concentration of 1080 in those baits is much higher than what is used to control foxes. Native fauna has a high resistance to 1080 which is why it is used in Australia. The possibility of them being poisoned by the low concentrations in the baits used for foxes is very low and the bait stations are also constantly monitored to further reduce risk.

He further noted that shooting is by far the most humane measure and have been doing this for six years mainly limited to golf courses and large ovals. Also using soft jaw leg hold and cage trapping. Cage traps have been found to be not very effective. 1080 is still an essential tool for controlling foxes in Willoughby and has been used since 2001.

During that time, baiting has occurred over two, four-week periods each year in conjunction with members of the Sydney North Vertebrate Pest Committee, including 9 councils and state government agencies, LLS, DPI and NPWS. Willoughby has over 30 baiting stations that have been approved for the use of 1080 poison baits.

Over the last five years, Willoughby Council has reduced the number of locations where 1080 is used and has increased the use of other controls, such as trapping and shooting. In early 2023, 1080 poison baits were used at only two locations. 1080 has not been used again after that and will not be used to control foxes in 2024.

See <https://pestsmart.org.au/toolkit-resource/code-of-practice-fox/>

- ***Tree removal at 31 Willis Rd Castle Cove 9DA (2023/75):***

31 Willis Rd Castle Cove 9DA (2023/75) is under review. Peter Lisle will provide an update at the next meeting.

- ***Pollution events in local creeks:***

Peter Lisle noted that most pollution events tend to be post-rainfall manifesting as natural turbidity, but occasionally there can be human-induced pollution present in watercourses. If this is suspected, then call Customer Service can be telephoned on 9777 1000.

6 Other Business

- The streetscape upgrade and active travel initiative at Edward Street will be placed on public exhibition in March/April 24.
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7 Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, 06 March 2024 at 4pm (virtual)

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Contaminated mulch
 - Report of the Artificial Turf Committee
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8 Meeting Conclusion

The Meeting concluded at 5:41pm.
