

Minutes



Bushland and Natural Heritage Advisory Committee

**Wednesday 14 February 2024
5:00-6:30 pm**

Location:	Willoughby City Council Depot, 25-27 Gibbes Street, Chatswood
Chair:	Councillor John Moratelli
Attendees:	Meredith Foley – Member Kay Donovan – Member Edward Coates – Member Lorraine Cairnes – Member Gay Spies – Member Adrienne Kabos – Member Alfred Bernhard – WCC Bushland Team Leader Nicholas Yu – WCC Natural Assets Officer
Apologies/absent:	Members: Mark Crew; Scott Graham; Ross Wellings WCC Staff: Bushra Salam (Governance)
Guests	Councillor John Moratelli Councillor Robert Samuel Councillor Anna Greco

Agenda items

Item	Topic / Discussion	Action
1	Welcome The meeting was declared open at 5:00 pm.	
	Acknowledgement of Country <i>Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet today, the Gamaragal People, and their connections to land, waters, and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those who may be in attendance today.</i>	
	Apologies Members: Mark Crew; Scott Graham; Ross Wellings	

Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Appointment of Committee Chair

The committee agreed in the previous meeting that they did not want to appoint a permanent chair for the next 12 months and that community members would appoint a chair at each meeting.

In accordance with Item 5.2 of the terms of Reference, the committee appointed Councillor John Moratelli as the Chair for this meeting.

Nominations for Chair of the meeting:

- Lorraine Cairnes nominated Councillor John Moratelli
- Kay Donovan seconded.
- No other nominations were received.

The Committee unanimously approved.

3 Confirmation of Minutes – 18 October 2023

Moved by Councillor John Moratelli and seconded by Lorraine Cairnes the minutes of the 18 October 2023 were adopted unanimously.

4 Meeting Schedule

The Committee unanimously resolved to hold next meetings on the following dates:

- Wednesday 17 April 2024, 10:00 am (on-site);
- Wednesday 15 May 2024, 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm (WCC);
- Wednesday 19 June 2024, 10:00 am (on-site);
- Monday 1 July 2024, 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm (WCC)

5 Business arising from the previous meeting

Tree Removal Notifications

Meredith Foley informed the Committee that the tree removal

notification listed in the Action table, was followed up by a motion to Council rather than by the Sustainability Advisory Committee.

Griffin Reserves Action Plans

Adrienne Kabos informed the Committee of the Griffin Reserves Working Group site meeting at Casement Reserve, The Lookout and Cortile Reserve. The Working Group reviewed these draft Reserve Action Plans and provided feedback. The Bushland Team Leader informed the Committee that the Castlecrag Griffin Reserves Action Plans will be prepared for consultation on Have Your Say in coming months, to allow further review and possible adoption during the current term of Council. There was discussion relating to the new format and timing for Council minutes and reports.

Bushcare Working Group Report

Scott Graham is co-ordinating this group and will be asked to provide an update as soon as available before the next meeting.

6 Strategic Activities

6.1 Fire Ants

Lorraine Cairnes informed the Committee of the impacts of Fire Ants and of the Emergency Order issued by the Department of Primary Industries restricting the importation of material likely to harbor the ants into NSW from Queensland. She mentioned the health implications and commended the State Government on their measures to prevent the spread of the ants. She suggested that Council prepare an operational plan to deal with this issue. The Bushland Team Leader informed the Committee that Council will support and conform with notifications issued by the Department Primary Industry as well as liaising with other Councils and State agencies. He also mentioned educational opportunities such as the Bushcare network, social media and events like Council's Fauna Fair. Following detailed discussion, it was agreed that a memo or briefing to Councilors would be an important step to increase awareness of the impacts and serious

risks of Fire Ants.

6.2 Management of cats in Willoughby/Cats containment

The impact of cats on wildlife and the danger they expose themselves to was discussed in detail. The inadequacy of NSW State legislation was highlighted, in contrast to cat management measures in other states and territories.

Moved by Meredith Foley and seconded by Lorraine Cairnes, the Committee recommended the following. Adopted unanimously.

Motion:

“that Council write to the Minister for Local Government to amend the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 to enable Local Governments to enforce anti-roaming laws for pet cats at a local level and to provide adequate funding for compliance, education, desexing, identification and registration programs.”

Councillor Samuel informed the Committee that the Minister for Local Government at the Local Government Association conference confirmed that he would be investigating measures for cat containment. An update will be sought on this with the Department of Local Government.

6.3 Weed Management

The Bushland Team Leader informed the Committee that State Government requirements for managing weeds had changed significantly, with the focus being on managing newly identified priority weeds. Council communicates information to the community about weeds and distributes information from the Regional Weeds Committee. More specifically, this issue was raised in relation to the Artarmon Railway and town centre plantings, where the use of exotic and potentially invasive species was questioned.

Moved by Kay Donovan, seconded by Adrienne Kabos, the Committee recommended the following. Adopted unanimously.

Recommendation:

“The Committee recommends that species listed in the booklet ‘Garden Escapes in Bushland and Reserves’ published by the Sydney Weeds Network should not be planted, by Council and that this be incorporated into future design briefs.”

6.4 Crown lands Aboriginal claims

To be discussed in the next meeting.

7 Other Business

Tree vandalism and canopy loss

Adrienne Kabos presented an article relating to the tree vandalism incident that occurred along Willowie Road in 2023. There was detailed discussion relating to deterrents, penalties and the need for stronger State legislation to deter illegal tree removal or vandalism. As this was a proposal presented to the recent Local Government Conference, in 2023 Councilor Greco stated that she would follow up on any outcomes at this time. The Bushland Team Leader noted that in addition to the erection of banners and the use of motion cameras, there had been liaison with neighboring Councils and their arborists in relation to similar incidents. The Committee expressed concerns about impacts of current planning reforms, resulting in tree canopy loss. It was noted that a forum on this issue was being held imminently by the Council and that participation was welcome.

8 Next Meetings

Site visit: Wednesday 17 April at 10:00 am at Warners Park

Committee Meeting: Wednesday, 15 May 2024 (5pm)

Suggested Agenda Items:

- Bushcare working group report
- Griffin Reserves Working group
- Reserve Action Plans

- Community issues
- Crown lands Aboriginal claims

9 Meeting Conclusion

The meeting concluded at 6:35 pm.
