



**GLEN EIRA
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

MINUTES

The Environmental Stewardship meeting commenced at 6.00pm.

**Monday 11 May 2026
6.00pm – 8.00pm**

***Yarra Yarra Room,
Glen Eira Town Hall, corner Glen Eira and Hawthorn Roads, Caulfield***

Present:

Councillors: Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair) Councillor committee member
Cr Li Zhang Councillor committee member

Community

Representatives: Simon Campbell Community committee member
Stephanie Epp Community committee member
Helen Fischer Community committee member
Eva Godnjavec Community committee member
Andiope Hatzis Community committee member
Jane Knight Community committee member
Sue Pennicuik Community committee member
Tamara Taylor Community committee member

Neshika Pillay (online) Community committee member

Council Officers: Niall McDonagh Director Sustainability, Assets and Leisure
Damien Connell Head of Climate and Circular Economy
Bruce Paton Coordinator Climate and Sustainability
Melissa Burrage Strategic Program Manager
Jess van der Werff Manager Parks Services
Jarrod Knight Coordinator Urban Forest
Natalie Mreulje Management Assistant

Absent:

Cr Dr Simone Zmood Councillor committee member
Mark Wallace Community committee member

1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair) welcomed the committee and acknowledged Traditional Owners and Custodians.

2. Apologies Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

No apologies received.

3. Conflicts of Interest Declaration Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

Members were reminded of their obligations under the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Governance Rules. No conflicts of interest were declared.

4. Action Items – Updates from last committee meeting Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

Chair noted all items are closed – no questions from members.

Members provided feedback on recent governance training, noting it was well delivered and informative. An item of interest included the historical amalgamation of councils in 1995 and its impact on staffing.

Members who could not attend can listen to the recording and view the presentation slides circulated.

The Sir David Attenborough 100th birthday event was discussed, with Chair honoured to speak at the event and see committee members in attendance especially Tamara who initiated the idea. Members noting its emotional impact and commending officers for its delivery.

5. Summary of meeting minutes from previous meeting Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

Meeting minutes from meeting held on Monday 16 February 2026 were adopted at the 17 March 2026 Ordinary Council Meeting (OCM).

There were no recommendations from the previous meeting for Council to consider at the OCM.

Member had requested further information on the item regarding the circular economy and the discussion around opportunities to work more closely with schools and businesses to reduce waste. Officers provided additional information under General Business.

6. Items for Discussion:

6.1 Council progress in key focus areas

Damian Connell

Notes:

Officers provided updates across multiple strategic projects:

Integrated Water Management:

- Elster Creek Action Plan endorsed
- Ongoing water quality monitoring and litter audits
- Caulfield Park stormwater harvesting under feasibility review

Circular Economy Plan:

- New plan in development (due October 2026)
- Based on extensive community engagement (~21,000 responses)

Climate and Emissions:

- Major de-gasification project underway at GESAC
- Additional projects progressing across council facilities
- Community emissions mapping currently in development

Air Quality:

- Desktop study underway with EPA peer review planned

Members noted the scale of work underway and the importance of aligning these initiatives.

Recommendation:

No recommendations made

6.2 ELC (Electrical Line Clearance)

Jess van der Werff
Jarrod Knight

Notes:

Officers presented on regulatory requirements for electrical line clearance. Key discussion points included:

- Mandatory pruning distances under current legislation
- Review of state regulations and Council submission
- Advocacy for reduced clearance distances to support canopy growth

Members raised concerns regarding harsh pruning impacts on tree health and aesthetics. Officers explained increased regulatory enforcement as a contributing factor.

Questions raised:

- Cost savings from reduced pruning (expected but not quantified)
- Basis of safety requirements (noted as largely anecdotal)
- Opportunities to improve planting strategies under powerlines

Members encourage and support Council's continued advocacy for evidence-based regulation reform and reduced clearance requirements.

Recommendation:

No recommendations made

6.3 Urban Forest Strategy Refresh

Jess van der Werff
Jarrod Knight
Bruce Paton

Notes:

Vision for 2040:

Members participated in a facilitated exercise to define success. Themes included:

- Increased canopy cover and biodiversity
- Indigenous planting and habitat restoration
- Active, engaged and proactive community
- Equitable access to green space (including 3, 30, 300 rule)
- Climate resilience and urban cooling
- Reduced reliance on cars and increased active transport

Topics highlighted in the discussion included:

- The importance of community mindset change
- Desire for stronger planning controls to support green infrastructure
- The connection between achieving a healthy urban forest and other sustainability outcomes
- Glen Eira's place in our wider landscape, which will require us to work with other councils and stakeholders.

Achievements:

Officers outlined progress over the past five years, including:

- 7,000+ trees planted and over 43,000 indigenous understory plants
- Significant maintenance and auditing programs
- Implementation of canopy protection local law
- Community planting programs and education initiatives

Challenges:

Discussion acknowledged key barriers:

- Limited physical space for planting
- High costs in hard infrastructure environments
- Climatic impacts on species viability
- Limited nursery stock availability
- Community attitudes toward green infrastructure

Indigenous vs Native Species Discussion:

Members debated the balance between indigenous and other suitable species. Officers acknowledged that while indigenous species are preferred where suitable, site constraints and climate resilience considerations mean this is not always achievable. A right plant, right place approach is used, recognising that both native and non-indigenous species can deliver valuable canopy and ecosystem benefits, including habitat for wildlife

Prioritisation Exercise:

Members allocated a hypothetical budget across planting priorities. This exercise highlighted trade-offs and informed future strategic direction. Results are compiled and included in attachment.

Private Land Engagement:

Recognizing that 70% of land is privately owned, members discussed strategies to influence outcomes, including:

- Incentives and recognition programs
- Stronger compliance and enforcement
- Behavior change initiatives (e.g. No Mow May)
- Education and sharing of plant survivability data
- Developer contributions and planning controls

Further notes can be found in attachment.

Action: Officers to develop a program logic framework incorporating workshop inputs and circulate for further feedback.

Recommendation:

No recommendations made.

7. General Business:

Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

- Circular Economy and Schools/Business engagement

Discussion focused on improving collaboration with schools and businesses to reduce waste.

Officers clarified that Council supports schools through facilitation rather than delivering curriculum-based programs. Existing initiatives such as ResourceSmart Schools were highlighted, along with opportunities to expand participation.

Members raised concerns about food waste in local businesses. Officers outlined current programs (e.g. Bin Trim), noting that uptake is limited due to business capacity and awareness challenges.

Key points raised by members included:

- Importance of better education and awareness for businesses
- Opportunity to broaden participation across sectors

Key priorities identified:

- Leadership and education
- Facilitation of existing programs
- Advocacy for systemic change

Members acknowledged the importance of partnerships and ongoing communication.

8. Forward Meeting Schedule

Cr Arabella Daniel (Chair)

Date	Items	Officer/Member
10 August 2026	To be determined by the Committee	TBC
16 November 2026	To be determined by the Committee	TBC

9. Next meeting

10 August 2026

10. Closure of Meeting:

Group photo was taken.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm.

Minutes to be confirmed at the next Ordinary Council Meeting on 9 June 2026.

• **Action summary from this meeting**

Title/Item	Action	Update	Responsible Officer	Active/ Closed
Share Urban Forest Strategy Workshop notes	Collate and share notes from workshop activities and invite feedback/additions from committee members		Kylie Hill	Closed
Develop program logic framework for Urban Forest strategy	Using outcomes from workshop activities, develop program logic framework for Urban Forest Strategy. To be shared at next meeting for committee feedback.		Bruce Paton	Active
Share presentations from today's meeting with committee members	Include workshop activity notes and PowerPoint presentations when sharing meeting minutes.		Kylie Hill	Closed