

SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday 12 May 2022, 7.00pm – 9.00pm



Yarra Yarra Room, Glen Eira Town Hall

Attendees	Councillors Cr David Zyngier (Chairperson) (DZ) Cr Simone Zmood (SZ) Cr Li Zhang (LZ) Community Representatives Lindsay Donde (LD) Judy Glick (JG) Diana Prapas (DP) Sophie Vidinovski (SV) Council Staff Ron Torres, Director Planning, Place and Sustainability (RT) Bruce Paton, Coordinator Climate Emergency and Environment (BP) <i>For agenda item 4:</i> Brooke Ranken, Manager Community Safety and Compliance (BR) <i>For agenda item 5:</i> Jennifer Shin, Coordinator Circular Economy (JS) Amy Sayce, Recycling and Sustainability Communications Officer (AS)
Apologies	Kim Le Cerf, Manager Climate and Sustainability

[Sustainability Advisory Committee – Terms of Reference](#)

1. Welcome, acknowledgement of country and declaration of conflicts of interest

- No conflicts declared.

2. Previous minutes

- Minutes from 3 February 2022 SAC meeting endorsed at the 17 May 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting.

3. Summary of previous SAC recommendations/actions

- DZ updated SAC community representatives that every report to council includes a section requiring a response to Council's Climate Emergency Response Strategy – prompting teams across council to make sure this is integrated into their work. This is improving over time. Climate change action is now required by new Local Government Act 2020, and Councillors recognise the need to break down any silos across the organisation.

4. Woodfire heating advocacy

- BR outlined the advocacy approach endorsed by Council at Ordinary Council Meeting on 22 February 2022 and gave some background information on the number of complaints Council had received for the 2021 period, outlined current regulations, spoke about the previous benchmarking exercise and the results of that exercise.

Feedback and questions:

- JG asked whether there is a definition of what heating is okay, as not all heaters are the same. *BR mentioned that regulation is set by Environment Protection Authority who regulate the manufacture and supply requirements, and this is supported by a Waste Management Policy which recommends ways to reduce smoke emissions. There are two Australian standards that woodfire heaters need to meet. However, a chimenea or open fireplace does not meet them.*
- SZ asked whether the number of complaints were from different complainants or whether some people put in multiple complaints. *BR stated that complaints submitted by the same people get counted as different complaints in the Council statistics.*
- LD asked what are the objectives of advocacy? *BR responded that the advocacy approach endorsed by Council outlines many actions. Council will be providing an education and awareness campaign via all existing communication platforms regarding the impacts. A dedicated website page will be developed and the information will align with the Environment Protection Authority.*

Council will be seeking support from the MAV to enable Council land and assets to be used for air monitoring within Glen Eira which will expand the EPA Ambient Air Network. Currently the radars are not located within every Council and while Glen Eira's reading is good, it would give a more accurate reading if we have additional radars located within the municipality. This will give us a better idea of the impact woodfire heating is having locally. Council will be calling on the State Government to restrict the use of woodfire heaters in urban and built-up areas and for support to be given to households with no other main form of heating to switch to electric heating options though the introduction of a bulk-buy, or other incentive scheme. Prior to this occurring Council will be reaching out to other Councils to gauge their support.

- DZ mentioned a number of residents have bought their own sensors that provide a breakdown of pollutants.

- LD asked whether there is a mechanism or requirement of outdoor fireplaces to be registered. She has previously contacted council about banning fireplaces.
SZ outlined that the local law only allows fire outdoors for religious activities and cooking food (eg barbecue). State regulation control woodfire heaters inside houses but we don't know where these are located which have woodfire heating as their sole form of heating. Part of the advocacy approach is asking state government to support these households to transition to electric heating, before bringing in a ban.
- DZ and SZ queried whether there is any planning controls Glen Eira could introduce to ban woodfire heaters.
RT responded that Councils do not have the power to regulate the type of domestic heating through the planning scheme / a planning permit. State government would have to introduce a control that would apply to all municipalities, although very hard to see how this could be done.
- DZ asked about the education campaign, and whether we would include information in Glen Eira News, and whether we had included any information in previous years.
BR outlined that as part of the education campaign, information will be included in Glen Eira News. Also plan to include information on the website, social media, e-newsletters and other appropriate channels.
- DZ suggested that the report to Council be shared with other councils when attempting to seek their support in the advocacy efforts.
- JG asked whether there was a way to retrofit or upgrades to fireplaces with filters or similar, to decrease their impact.
RT responded to say that a good starting point will be education and building awareness of the impacts of woodfire heaters and the alternatives for households.
- DZ remarked that action on woodfire heating is critical for reaching net zero emissions.
- SZ mentioned that it only makes up a small proportion of total emissions, and that it is also important to address because of impacts of health.

Action/recommendations

- Ensure there is a dedicated website and information sheet

5. Circular Economy Plan

- SZ presented an overview and reflections on the United Nations and MWRRG *Circular Economy Leadership Course* that SZ and JS have completed.
- SZ stated that the course included 300 people across different levels of government and industry sectors and highlighted the benefits and necessity of a collaborative approach to creating a circular economy.
- JS presented on the draft Circular Economy Plan being developed to support the community to transition to a circular economy and implement circular economy principles into Council operations.

Feedback and questions

- DZ queried if Council could support community members to participate in the course if it is run again.
- SZ explained the links between the circular economy and the waste hierarchy models.

- DZ stated that the circular economy mirrors natural cycles and is partly about finding opportunities for where society can be more like the natural cycle.
- SZ agreed and responded that regenerating nature is a pillar and key principle in the draft Plan.
- LD queried examples of designing systems with waste minimisation that are within Council's scope.
- JS responded that an example is in our procurement of materials.
- LD commented that keeping materials in use for as long as possible before replacing them is best.
- SZ and JS agreed and responded that this is a key area of the draft Plan.
- JG commented that the issue is products being manufactured cheaply and to be disposed. This is an issue beyond Glen Eira, for example cheaply made furniture and fast fashion.
- SZ responded that we can advocate to federal government for greater producer responsibility, such as Extended Product Stewardship.
- SV suggested more education for the community about buy nothing Facebook groups to promote reuse rather than disposal.
- LD suggested more education for textile recycling initiatives such as UPPAREL and tool libraries for sharing resources.
- SZ suggested a repair café would help the community repair items and keep them in use for longer.

Action/recommendations

- BP to send Committee members a direct link to the draft *Plan* and Have Your Say survey when it is available.

6. Integrated Water Management Plan update

- BP presented an update on the IWMP, acknowledging that at the last meeting SAC was presented with most of the technical information. Work since then includes the engagement with Boonwurrung Land and Sea Council and development of the action plan.

Feedback and questions:

- SZ commented on the limited above ground water in Glen Eira and that it would be good for the community if we could explore rewilding Elster Creek or where else in our open space we can explore opportunities to rewild natural swamp and flood areas.
- JG queried if we could have more signage where the underground creeks and waterways exist, to help connect the community with water.
- BP and SZ responded that this could be explored in the future.

7. Expanding the reach of community engagement

- BP presented on increasing the reach of community engagement around climate change and sustainability. BP reviewed external behaviour change and climate education research.
- BP provided an update on the Climate Conversations Program and current Council work to create engaging and accessible climate information to the community.

Feedback and questions:

- LD suggested that shorter climate conversations would be beneficial for some community members, as the current format and time commitment is a barrier in their experience.
- SZ responded that it could be good to have a format that enables people to feel confident to have multiple short conversations over time.
- LD agreed and queried if there is a summary sheet that exists from another initiative that provides suggestions or examples of how to include climate information in everyday conversations.

- SV suggested that training or a script with key messages could be provided to influential people within existing organisations, such as sports club presidents.
- BP explained the place base engagements that Council is exploring to help reach wider audiences.
- LZ queried if we could organise a session for multicultural groups such as the Bentleigh Chinese Seniors association. An activity is run every Friday and it could be an opportunity to communicate with members of the community who are influential within their family groups.
- JG commented that Council needs to focus on areas with the best cost-effectiveness such as green electricity.

8. Discussion about Sustainable Gardening Programs

- This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting.

9. General business

- DZ stated that this is the last committee meeting for this current committee and thanked all members for their contribution.
- LD queried the process for applying to be reappointed to the committee.
- DZ queried if information about the expression of interest process will be provided to committee members.

Action/recommendations

- BP to provide SAC community representatives with information about the expression of interest process once it is publicised.

10. Next meeting

- Next meeting will be in August 2022, to be confirmed
- New community representatives will need be appointed in July, and the next meeting date will be confirmed after this.

Meeting concluded at 9.23pm.