



## **Sustainability Advisory Committee**

**Tuesday 1 August 2023  
6.00pm  
Council Chambers  
209 Comur Street, Yass**

# **SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

A meeting of the Sustainability Advisory Committee will be held in Council Chambers 209 Comur Street, Yass, on Tuesday 1 August 2023, commencing at **6.00pm**

## **AGENDA**

**Page No.**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

Yass Valley Council recognises the Ngunnawal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land, water, and sky. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and future emerging leaders. We extend our respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live in the Yass Valley Local Government Area.

### **1. Apologies**

### **2. Declarations of Interests**

### **3. Confirmation of Minutes**

Minutes of Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 30 May 2023

### **4. Staff Reports**

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### **6. Next Meeting – 21 September 2023**

Committee Members: Cr A Cameron, J Connelly, P Davidson, S Ecker, N Elliott, A Elvin, L McAlary, C Nelson, A Tewes, A Wardle



## **Minutes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee**

**Tuesday 30 May 2023**

6.00pm

Council Chambers

209 Comur Street, Yass

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## **Minutes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 30 May 2023**

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### **Present**

Cr Adrian Cameron (Chair), Luke McAlary, Alex Tewes, Ania Wardle (via Teams), Saan Ecker and Caitlin Nelson.

### **Also Present**

Chris Berry – Chief Executive Officer, and Shirree Garland – Corporate Planning & Executive Support Officer

Meeting opened at 6.03pm

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

#### **1. Apologies**

Alison Elvin and Peter Davidson

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Nil

#### **3. Confirmation of Minutes**

##### **COMMITTEE DECISION**

***That the minutes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 20 April 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.***

***(A Tewes/C Nelson)***

#### **4. Sustainability Policy Update – verbal report by Chair**

Cr Cameron provided a verbal report advising that Council endorsed the Sustainability Policy to go on public exhibition at its 25 May meeting.

##### **FOGO**

The Chief Executive Officer responded to the previous recommendation that staff further refine the FOGO threshold paper and advised that a report with a proposed detailed design and options would be brought to the Committee's next meeting. Discussion was held in relation to the need for education/community consultation.

##### **Electric Vehicles**

The Chief Executive Officer advised that staff had received demonstrations for various types of machinery for use in the Parks and Gardens areas. EVs are being considered as part of the fleet turnover. Currently there are a couple of hybrid vehicles in the fleet.

Proposed Tesla recharging station, park and ride site, requires power upgrade, hope to have operational next financial year.

## **5. Reports**

### **5.1 2023/24 INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING DOCUMENTS**

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#### **SUMMARY**

Council approved the draft 2023/24 Integrated Planning & Reporting documents for public exhibition at its meeting on 11 May 2023. While the Sustainability Advisory Committee provided a “pre-budget submission” to Council following its 31 January 2023 meeting, it would be appropriate for the Committee to consider whether it wishes to comment further on any items within the 2023/24 Integrated Planning & Reporting documentation.

#### **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

*That:*

1. *The Committee note the contents of the 2023/24 Integrated Planning & Reporting documents.*
2. *The Committee indicated support for the following budget items:*
  - *Conduction of waste services review*
  - *Engagement of a Waste Manager.*

*(L McAlary/S Ecker)*

### **5.2 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF VARIOUS PROJECTS AND REQUESTS**

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#### **SUMMARY**

The Sustainability Advisory Committee has been in operation for close to 12 months and has met on six separate occasions. Various actions have been proposed and are still in progress. Several matters have also been identified requiring Council assistance. It is appropriate at this stage to review those outstanding actions and requests for assistance to ensure matters continue to be progressed.

#### **COMMITTEE DECISION**

*That the Committee note the actions and requests for assistance in this report and continue to progress as appropriate.*

*(A Tewes/S Ecker)*

#### **Update from Chair**

The Chair advised that he had recently attended the Aboriginal Advisory Committee meeting and would be attending the Yass Soldiers Memorial Meeting this week.

Invitation to attend South West CWA meeting to discuss FOGO legislation – Caitlin Nelson to attend.

Resource Energy and Industry Forum – Towards Zero Emissions future, 6-8 June 2023.

## Minutes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 30 May 2023

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Meeting with Council's Communications & Media Team to discuss promotion of sustainability within the community etc.

**Action:** *CEO to follow up meeting request.*

### **6. Next Meetings**

Tuesday 1 August at 6.00pm.

Thursday 21 September 2023, at 6.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

## 4.1 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY - COMMUNITY FEEDBACK AND IMPLEMENTATION

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### SUMMARY

At its meeting on 25 May Council endorsed the recommendation of the Committee that the revised Sustainability Policy and the Sustainability Assessment Framework, as circulated to members offline, be endorsed. It further determined that the Policy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days and adopted if no significant objections were received.

The Policy was duly placed on exhibition to 29 June.

It is appropriate that the Committee (i) consider any submissions received and (ii) discuss how it can assist Council in the implementation of those Policy elements not being addressed by other means.

### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Committee agree to defer any further refinement of the Sustainability Policy for the time being and prioritise assisting Council in the implementation of all aspects of the Policy.*

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### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

### POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Guidelines for Advisory Committees and Committees of Council

### REPORT

#### 1. Submissions

One submission (**Attachment A**) was received during the exhibition period. The submission commented on the Sustainability Assessment Framework not being included for public exhibition, thereby not providing the public an understanding of how the Framework would be integrated with the Policy.

#### Chief Executive Officer's Comments

The Sustainability Assessment Framework is an internal document which will be used in conjunction with the Policy and therefore was not required to be placed on public exhibition.

#### 2. Chairman's Comments

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for all their work on the Policy and the Framework. I would also like to acknowledge the work of YVC staff and getting this out for community comments.

The key aspects of our Policy, have been before our Committee for more than nine months. These include the Committee's work priorities, the proposed research and engagement agenda, expectation of early engagement of the Committee in assisting with policy and strategy development and the use of the sustainability assessment framework by Yass Valley Council staff to assist their work in future policy development and service design.

It would seem appropriate at this time for the committee to focus on its key concern which is to assist in making real change which builds sustainability into Yass Valley and the operations of the council. In order for our Committee to maximise its effectiveness, it would be good for Council staff to begin to outline how they propose to use the Sustainability Assessment Framework in developing policy and service delivery. And hopefully how we can incorporate this framework to review decisions made against the benchmarks in the framework.

And there may be things that the committee can do to assist Yass Valley and the Council in making the Policy a real and living document.

**ATTACHMENTS:** A. Submission - Sustainability Policy



## 5.1 COMMUNITY BATTERIES RESEARCH PAPER

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### SUMMARY

The Committee has previously identified the options for renewable energy hubs in Yass Valley – most probably in the form of community batteries and solar PV - as one of its research priorities.

At its meeting on 20 April the Committee considered an approach to Council from Infra Pty Ltd proposing Yass Valley join a project called “Town Power”. Infra Pty Ltd is a private for-profit business that is looking to establish arrangements with up to 80 local councils to provide some 2 gigawatts of embedded generation capacity and 4 gigawatts of storage.

Upon consideration of the approach, it was decided by the Committee that it would be best if it first familiarised itself with the various models and ownership arrangements for distributed energy generation and storage and the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ associated with each model.

### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Committee note the contents of this research report on community battery models.*

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### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

### POLICY & LEGISLATION

N/A

### REPORT

The attached paper (**Attachment A**) discusses the variety of models for operating community batteries in Yass Valley as well as possible ownership arrangements.

Understanding the different models is central as they (i) drive where the financial benefits flow (ii) dictate how easy or complex it is for householders to participate and (iii) whether the battery fulfils any decarbonisation objectives.

Subject to discussion regarding the appropriateness or otherwise of the models to Yass Valley, further research and engagement with the energy sector and community may be warranted.

**ATTACHMENTS:** A. Community Batteries Summary

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## 5.2 ACTIVE TRANSPORT - YASS SPUR RAIL TRAIL

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### SUMMARY

As part of its research and engagement agenda the Committee noted that Council is seeking to use the Yass Spur Line as an active transport corridor and noted that additional options for further active transport corridors are being considered in the *Open Space Strategy*.

At its meeting on 29 June, Council considered a Strategic Assessment of the Yass Rail Trail (**Attachment A**) and determined that opportunities to fund the detailed design, community consultation and construction of the Yass Rail Trail should be pursued.

It is timely for the Committee to consider where its efforts might best be directed either in support of the Yass Rail Trail or the furtherance of active transport options across the rest of the LGA.

### RECOMMENDATION

*That the Committee agree on a course of action consistent with its previous decision to support active transport in the Yass Valley LGA through its research and engagement efforts.*

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### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

### POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*

### REPORT

#### 1. Background

Council has been considering the development of a rail trail in the disused tramway from Yass Junction Railway Station to the Yass CBD for several years. The trail would be a shared pedestrian and bicycle path constructed along the disused Yass Tramway corridor between the Great Southern Railway (Yass Junction Railway Station) and Yass Township for approximately 4.5 km.

A Strategic Assessment was undertaken by Burchill Engineering which found that the Rail Trail will provide the following benefits:

- Dedicated active transport from Yass Junction Station to various location in Yass township;
- Outdoor recreation opportunities for cyclists, walkers, joggers etc;
- Active transport connectivity for Yass CBD with North Yass CBD and the adjacent schools, sporting facilities etc
- Increased recreation options for residents and associated physical and mental health improvements;
- Showcasing Yass's heritage and history; and
- Opportunity for existing businesses to expand and new businesses, to develop.

The potential economic benefit for the Yass community has been estimated to be \$235,000 per annum and the estimated construction cost is \$11M including a 15% contingency. Upgrade of the heritage bridge over the Yass River would be the largest single component of the estimated cost at \$4.2M. The estimated annual maintenance cost of the rail trail is \$41,700.

## 2. Comment

While there are undoubted social, health and recreational benefits related to the building of the Yass Rail Trail, the Strategic Assessment implies, without explicitly saying so, that the value of the project is marginal in its current form. Certainly, from a purely economic development / tourism perspective the return on investment is poor, at least with the project in its current form.

While Council has decided that it will not be looking to fund the Rail Trail directly, but will rather be pursuing possible grant funding, this nevertheless will involve some resourcing and action on the part of Council staff towards a project which may not have the strongest chance of securing funding.

The question then is whether there is potential, in some way or other, through further research and investigation efforts by the Committee to identify options to improve the attractiveness of the project (eg. through possible extension, linking it to other trails, pathways and attractions etc) or whether it would be best for the Committee to focus any attention it can give toward other active transport possibilities elsewhere within the LGA.

**ATTACHMENTS:** A. Yass Rail Trail Strategic Assessment Report