



Sustainability Advisory Committee

**Tuesday 31 October 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 31 October 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

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5. Next Meeting

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

6.00 pm Tuesday 19 September 2023

Council Chambers
209 Comur Street, Yass

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Present

Cr Adrian Cameron (Chair), John Connelly (on line), Saan Ecker, Alison Elvin, L McAlary, C Nelson (on line), Alex Tewes, Ana Wardale

Also Present

Chris Berry (Chief Executive Officer and Gabby Lucas (Manager Media & Communications)

1. Apologies

Nicole Elliott and Peter Davidson

2. Declarations of Interest

Nil

3. Confirmation of Minutes

COMMITTEE DECISION

That the minutes of the Sustainability Advisory Committee held on 01 August 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.

McAlary/Elvin

4. Presentation

Gabby Lucas (Manager Media & Communications) gave a verbal presentation on:

- Previous 'Sustainability Sunday' campaign on social media organised by Rebecca Widdows but lapsed due to her secondment to the State Government
- Garage Sale Trail promotion
- Chemical Clean Ups
- Eco Champions

Actions:

- *Cr Cameron to raise eco champions at Yass Valley Business Chamber meeting seeking nomination*
- *Recycle past sustainability posts on social media*
- *Promote eco champions on web site and extend nomination to community organisations (eg Community Garden Group)*

5. Reports

5.1 FOOD ORGANICS AND GARDEN ORGANICS SERVICE

SUMMARY

In April 2023 the Committee considered a report on the FOGO (Food Organics and Garden Organics) Threshold Questions. Staff advised in May 2023 that a discussions paper on the design of a FOGO service was being prepared for consideration by the Committee.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

That:

- *Council conduct of a bin audit, consistent with the guidelines issues by the EPA, in order that necessary data be collected to assist in the design of a future FOGO collection service*
- *In parallel with the bin audit, undertake the surveying and engagement of the community on a future FOGO collection service, adapting materials and background information from other Local Councils where appropriate and available*
- *Establish focus groups, in the first instance, through approaching existing community, environment and business organisations in Yass Valley seeking participants in the surveying / engagement process on FOGO services.*

McAlary/Ecker

5.2 POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

SUMMARY

The Committee requested a policy review schedule be presented to enable priorities for the input from the Committee to be determined.

COMMITTEE DECISION

That the Committee be briefed by Council staff in the remaining meetings of 2023 on the:

- *Housing Strategy (noting work done in this regard to date by the Economic Development Committee)*
- *Development Control Plan*
- *Draft Open Space Strategy*
- *Procurement Policy*

McAlary/Wardale

5.3 SMART METERS IN YASS VALLEY

SUMMARY

The question of how many smart meters are currently installed throughout Yass Valley. Essential Energy have provided a breakdown of meters by locality.

COMMITTEE DECISION

That the information on smart meters provided by Essential Energy be noted.

Tewes/Connelly

5.4 REVISED RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICY

SUMMARY

Following the recent consideration of the proposed Wallaroo Solar Farm and the comments made in Council's submission to the Springdale Solar Farm at Sutton, Council requested a review of its *Renewable Energy Policy*. Councillors made some suggested changes to the policy at a Workshop in August 2023.

In August 2023 a revised policy was presented to Council. Council determined that the revised *Renewable Energy Policy* be placed on public exhibition for 28 days and adopted, if no significant objections received

The revised policy is now presented to the Sustainability Committee for input as part of the public exhibition process.

COMMITTEE DECISION

That the Chairman be authorised to consolidate the Committee's comments on the revised policy into a submission to Council, noting that the closing date for comment is 9 October 2023.

McAlary/Nelson

Actions:

The Committee be provided with copies of Council's response to:

- *The mandatory September 2023 EPA Climate Change Survey*
- *The September 2023 Department of Energy and Climate Change's Local Government Climate Change Survey*

6. Next Meeting

Tuesday 17 October 2023, at 6.00pm in Council Chambers, 209 Comur Street, Yass

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

4.1 2022/23 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

The Standard Committee Constitution & Instrument of Delegation provides for the preparation of an Annual Report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the 2022/23 Annual Report be endorsed.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Standard Committee Constitution & Instrument of Delegation

REPORT

In accordance with the *Standard Committee Constitution & Instrument of Delegation* an annual report has been prepared for 2022/23 (refer **Attachment A**). The report is suitable for endorsement.

ATTACHMENTS: A. 2022/23 Annual Report

4.2 DRAFT OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

SUMMARY

The Director Planning & Environment will provide a presentation on the preparation of the Open Space Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That the update on the preparation of the Open Space Strategy be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Resources included in the Operational Plan

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*

REPORT

The Director Planning & Environment will provide an update on the preparation of the Open Space Strategy.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

4.3 ELECTRIC VEHICLE UPDATE

SUMMARY

To present an update on the take up of electric vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

That the update on electric vehicles be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil at this stage

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- Procurement and Disposal Policy

REPORT

In July 2022 the Committee considered a report on electric vehicles and determined that:

1. *The Council decision to closely monitor the domestic electric vehicle market, the range of vehicles offered, incentives, prices and infrastructure upgrades, to ensure that future decisions made consider fit-for-purpose and providing value-for-money be supported.*
2. *Representations made to the Federal Government for the Fringe Benefit Tax on Electric Vehicles be removed as an incentive for Local Councils to move their light vehicle fleet away from petrol and diesel vehicles be supported.*

Fringe Benefit Tax

The Fringe Benefit Tax on Electric Vehicles has been removed.

As indicated in the July 2022 report Council staff will continue to monitor purchase costs of EV and potentially, when deemed feasible Council's fleet staff will consider adding EVs to Council fleet especially for staff travelling large distances on an annual basis. There are several hybrid cars in the current fleet. The move to electric vehicles will be considered as fleet vehicles come up for replacement. Council cars are changed over every 3 years or 120,000km whichever comes first.

Charging Station

The Tesla charging station in the 'Kiss and Ride' car park at the rear of the Club Hotel are currently being installed. The charging stations are in place (the bases needed to be redesigned due to the 1 in 100 year flood zone) and some street work is being undertaken in the week commencing 16 October 2023. Following connection by Essential Energy they should be operational in mid-November 2023.

Electric Mowers

In March 2023 Council parks staff were involved in a demonstration of electric mowers in Riverbank Park.

Staff were impressed by the mower and how it performed, however, questions were raised regarding longevity of the mowers outside of maintained parks (e.g. roadside maintenance). The supplier did provide assurance that the mower would continue to perform, however did not have enough "in the field" data to support their contention.

At this stage the cost of electric mowers are double that of conventional mowers. The main difference is the cost of maintenance and fuel with electric mowers essentially recovering the cost of maintenance and fuel well before the completion of their 5-year warranty period.

At the time of demonstration most Council or Government sales such as the ACT Government have not had the equipment in service long enough to provide quality performance data. Parks staff are continuing to monitor the uptake of electric mowers and performance data.

ATTACHMENTS: Nil

4.4 CLIMATE CHANGE SURVEYS

SUMMARY

To present the climate change surveys requested by the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report on the climate change surveys be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Nil

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- *Protection of the Environment Operations 1997*

REPORT

At the September 2023 Committee meeting a request was made for copies of:

- The mandatory September 2023 EPA Climate Change Survey for licenced premises
- The 2023 Local Government Climate Change Survey by the Office of Energy & Climate Change

The EPA Climate Change Survey was for the Yass Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) and the former Murrumbateman Landfill. The survey submission for the STP is included in **Attachment A** and the landfill submission is included in **Attachment B**.

The Local Government Climate Change Survey submission is included in **Attachment C**.

- ATTACHMENTS:**
- A. EPA Licence 1730 - Yass Sewage Treatment Plant
 - B. EPA Licence 5895 - Murrumbateman Landfill
 - C. 2023 Climate Change Survey

4.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN THE DESIGN OF FOGO SERVICE - CURRENT STATUS AND ISSUES

SUMMARY

At its 19 September 2023 meeting the Committee recommended that Council conduct of a bin audit, consistent with the guidelines issues by the EPA, in order that necessary data be collected to assist in the design of a future FOGO collection service. In parallel with the bin audit, it was decided that the Committee would start engaging with the community on a future FOGO collection service, adapting materials from other local councils as appropriate. Also, as part of this engagement, the Committee would as a first step establish focus groups seeking participants from existing community, environment and business organisations in Yass Valley.

Since that meeting several steps have been taken to progress these matters and further work identified that needs to be followed through.

RECOMMENDATION

That the actions taken to date in progressing with its engagement work and the additional work now required be noted.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of a FOGO service will have financial implications for Council which needs to be identified as part of the design of a scheme.

POLICY & LEGISLATION

- Waste Management Policy

REPORT

1. Introduction

An engagement / research strategy (refer **Attachment A**) has been drafted to both set out the broad approach to engaging the community and, specifically, to outline a preferred methodology for the conduct of focus group sessions.

A basic background document, or participant information sheet, has been developed to inform focus group participants in advance of group sessions (refer **Attachment B**).

A contact list of community groups has been provided by Council staff (refer **Attachment C**).

A number of focus group sessions have been scheduled with village progress associations (Binalong and Murrumbateman) and the methodology established in the engagement / research strategy tested with members of the Bowning District Progress Association at a meeting on 18 October 2023.

2. ISSUES

2.1 Bin Audit

It is clear based upon the trial session conducted with the Bowning & District Progress Association that the bin audit will need to be of sufficient size to establish the character and volume of waste generated in the villages as well as town centres. The strong perception is that both food and garden organics are being diverted already from the residual waste stream, although experience from other NSW jurisdictions suggests that this may not actually be the case.

2.2 Contact List

Council has provided the attached list based upon its records but it is not definitive. There may be other community groups that can be approached to participate. Yass FM has its own record of community groups and associations and there may be others known to Committee members.

2.3 Data

When reviewing the paper provided by Council to the September 2023 Committee meeting, the Business Paper report of 25 March 2020 and Council's reporting to the EPA it is clear that there is inconsistent and contradictory data being used / reported by Council.

A definitive set of accurate and up-to-date data will be required in combination with bin audit results if the Committee is to provide useful advice to Council. Accurate and up-to-date data is also valuable in the conduct of the focus group sessions, as well as necessary in the making any future grant applications.

At a minimum the required dataset should cover:

- Volume and weight of actual green waste collected at transfer stations (averaged over number of years and major variations explained)
- Number of current weekly residual waste (red bin) collections and estimated growth
- Current and estimated capacity of the existing collection vehicles (including major variations in daily and seasonal patterns)
- Current and anticipated landfill costs per tonne
- FOGO processing gate fees per tonne at regional facilities
- Estimated transport costs to regional facilities
- Existing and future anticipated capacity of regional processing facilities
- Equipment and labour costs (eg. it is unclear why the March 2020 report references both outright purchase and leasing costs for vehicles)
- Available surplus funding from the Waste Services Business, given existing and anticipated commitments

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Consultation for FOGO
- B. What is FOGO
- C. Community Organisations