



Environmental Advisory Panel

MINUTES

Environmental Advisory Panel (EAP)
Wednesday 22 May 2019 from 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Large Meeting Room, Goolwa Chambers

Council Representatives: Cr Karyn Bradford (Acting Chair), Cr Melissa Rebbeck

Community Members: Jo McPhee, Tim Vale, Ben Simon

Staff in Attendance: Shen Mann – Principal Strategy and Policy Officer
Grayson Saruwaka, Environmental Strategy Projects Officer

Apologies: Meredith Tothill, Christine Trenorden (Chair), Glenn Rappensberg – CEO,
Mayor Keith Parkes

1. **Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country** – Cr Bradford
2. **Guest Presenter** – Nick Whiterod, Nature Glenelg Trust (NGT)

Nick described the research and engagement activities undertaken by NGT. Local project examples include:

- The Great Goolwa Cockle Challenge held at Goolwa Beach in January 2018, researching cockle movements and population dynamics.
- Freshwater fish monitoring & community engagement in the Eastern Mount Lofty Ranges (EMLR) in partnership with Natura Resources SA Murray Darling Basin across more than 60 sites, providing annual updates of how fish are coping with seasonal changes in water quality and quantity. This monitoring program has demonstrated a clear need for return of environmental water which is being achieved via projects such as Flows for the Future funded jointly by the Australian Government and State Government, installing low-flow bypass devices on dams and watercourse diversions to restore natural stream flows in the EMLR.
- Collaborating with Peter Mirtschin, the Clayton Bay Nursery and Environment Group and the Foundation for Australia's Most Endangered Species (FAME) on a local captive breeding program for the Southern Bell Frog.

Nick also spoke about the importance of conservation projects for native, small bodied fish such as the Yarra Pygmy Perch, Southern Pygmy Perch, Murray Hardyhead and the Southern Purple-spotted Gudgeon. The Yarra Pygmy Perch is considered to be the Murray-Darling Basin's first fish extinction. Traditionally found in the Lake Alexandrina region, the wild population was lost during the Millennium Drought and reintroduction efforts from captive breeding programs have been unsuccessful. Remaining populations are being held in refuge dams in various locations across the EMLR.

Further information here: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-04-12/yarra-pygmy-perch-extinct-murray-darling/10988136>.



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Nick identified a number of opportunities for Council and NGT to work together which include:

- Collaborate on future community events such as the Great Goolwa Cockle Challenge;
- Work together to advocate for the establishment of a locally based Wetland Research Centre which could include a centralised, native fish hatchery.

Nick or another representative from NGT was invited by Cr Melissa Rebbeck to attend and make a presentation at the MDB Region 6 Symposium being planned for July 2019.

3. Analysis – Federal Election 2019 – Shen Mann

Shen spoke to Council's election advocacy platform document, [Alexandrina Advocates](#), which identifies twelve issues of national significance with importance to the needs and interests of the Alexandrina community. Environmental issues addressed in this document include climate change and the climate emergency, water management in the Murray Darling Basin and key projects in need of external funding such as the Sugars Beach Icon Project and establishment of a local Wetlands Research Centre.

Relevant election commitments of the returned Morrison Coalition Government were summarised and the implications for Alexandrina's advocacy priorities discussed.

Panel members were asked to identify any gaps or make suggestions for Council's federal environmental advocacy moving forward. Issues raised included:

- Advocating for regenerative agriculture as a means of carbon sequestration into the soil and finding alternatives to use of nitrogen fertilisers;
- Continued importance of advocating for Federal government investment in landcare and incentives for protection of remnant vegetation; and
- The need to include discussion of ecosystem collapse in climate change efforts.

4. NRM/Landscape Reform – Shen

Shen presented a summary of the reform process and Council's submission. State Government is currently proposing that the whole of Alexandrina Council move into the new Hills and Fleurieu Landscape Board, along with the District Council of Mount Barker.

Reflections from the Panel included:

- Community largely disengaged with reform process.
- Boundary reform makes good sense from land management perspective but there is some community concern re impacts of boundary change on water allocation planning and management, noting the Lakes & Coorong will be split across two regions.
- Importance of Landscape Boards addressing climate resilience.
- Importance of Local Action Planning (LAP) groups as delivery agents for on-ground action.

Panel reflections will be incorporated into Council feedback to LGA on the Landscape SA Bill 2019, which was introduced to Parliament on 20 March 2019.

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5. NVC Interim Roadside Vegetation Guidelines – Shen

Shen summarised key changes in these guidelines, as compared to previous versions. The new guidelines have been designed to help Councils manage roadside vegetation for safety without having to constantly apply to the Native Vegetation Council (NVC) for permission to do so.

The biggest change relates to the clearance of regrowth within the primary clearance envelope. Previously permission from NVC required for regrowth older than 5 years old – that threshold has been increased to 20 years. This change is supported by Council administration. Panel members expressed some hesitation about 20 year timeframe and considered that 10 years might be more appropriate in certain circumstances.

Concerns that first iteration of interim guidelines might enable clearance of large remnant trees on the road shoulder without NVC approval have been addressed in the revised guidelines.

6. Action List and Current Events/Project Updates

Panel membership:

- Term of current members expires in September/October 2019. Existing members are encouraged to reapply.
- Panel discussed options for filling the vacant community position (created when Cr Bradford was elected to Council) and agreed that rather vacancy should be held open until all community positions are advertised later in the year.
- Panel Terms of Reference to be considered at next Panel meeting prior to advertisement seeking nominations.
- Cr Rebbeck advised that Cittaslow are interested in Panel membership. Members are appointed on an individual basis rather than as representatives of a particular group. Panel requested that Cittaslow be invited to present to next meeting.

The Panel were advised of the following current events/project updates:

- Annual Business Plan and Budget open for public consultation from 21 May – 17 June. At this stage, budget bids for Goolwa Library & Customer Service Centre solar and energy efficiency not included in the draft budget.
- Southern Right Whale Nursery Protection Area – Council resolved that administration should write to State Government in support of the protection area with an exception for emergency services. Letter will now be written to Minister Knoll cc Minister Speirs.
- On 20 May 2019 Council endorsed an application being made to the Native Vegetation Council for a Heritage Agreement over the Goolwa Dunes.
- Gazania Free Gardens – community planting day held at Middleton on 19 May with campaign closing on Friday 31 May.
- ABC Adelaide broadcast from Signal Point scheduled for 31 May 2019 as part of “River Lives” series.

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7. Panel Member Updates

Cr Rebbeck

- Noted reply from Minister Littleproud to MDA-R6 correspondence re outcomes of Royal Commission. Copies to be circulated to Panel.
- MDA-R6 organising a community symposium for 26 July 2019 at Fleurieu Function Centre.
- Working with a number of groups to explore regional potential for biochar production.

Tim Vale

- Working with DPTI on bushfire mapping and policy for planning reform.
- Fleurieu Peninsula Swamps recovery team on hiatus – defunded but Natural Resources AMLR are investing in some localised weed control works.

Ben Simon

- GWLAP hosting a series of watercourse restoration workshops in July, including guided walks.
- Will be holding a farm dam workshop – dam biodiversity.
- Held a survival and bush tucker session with Investigator College.
- Received small grant for Port Elliot marine debris project.

Jo McPhee

- The Wooden Boat Festival waste separation trial was well received – waste education officers/volunteers allocated to bin stations. Bins were spread out so it was not easy to monitor all effectively. When bins left unattended by waste education officers they were quickly contaminated within a short space of time.
- Hindmarsh Island Landcare also received Marine Debris grant.

Cr Bradford

- Congratulated Shen for being shortlisted as a finalist of the LGA Emerging Leaders Awards

8. Next Meeting Date

- 21 August 2019 at 6pm in Angas Room, Strathalbyn Library
- Guest Speakers:
 - SAMDB and Community Safety Team re Cat Management.
 - Council administration to invite Cittaslow to present.

9. Close – 8.30pm