



SUSTAINABILITY TASKFORCE MINUTES

Wednesday 18 February

Chair: Cr. Steve Gagen

Date: Wednesday 18 February

Scheduled Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Format: In-person meeting

	<p>Present: Cr. Kate Hamley, Cr. Steve Gagen, Harsimran Kaur, Cassy Ye, Joanne Russell, Sarah Flegg, Frances Evans, Ranjeet Verma, Bernadette Thomas (CEO, Merri Creek Management Committee), Jeni Jackson (Manager Sustainability, Climate and Waste), Shelley Franklyn (Coordinator Sustainability Engagement), Kaye Roberts-Palmer (Sustainability Engagement Officer and Sustainability Taskforce Administrator)</p> <p>Apologies: David Chandler, Jo Hannan, Bruce Barbour, Analisa Malone, Amy Sledziona</p>	<p>Meeting opened 6.30pm</p>
	<p>Conflict of Interest Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members’ attention was drawn to declare any conflicts of interest arising from agenda items • No conflict of interest was declared 	<p>Cr. Gagen</p>
	<p>Action items from previous minutes (18 November)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daniela Pascuzzo to follow up on the time it’s been taking for a reported rubbish job to be completed through Snap, Send & Solve reporting mechanism. (completed) • Daniela Pascuzzo to follow up on a potential signage audit. (completed) • Daniela Pascuzzo to find out about the possibility of planting medicinal plants in open space areas with the Urban Forestry team. (completed) 	<p>Cr. Gagen and Kaye Roberts-Palmer</p>
	<p>Confirmation of previous minutes 18 November, 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion moved by [Harsimran Kaur] seconded by [Frances Evans] • Motion carried 	<p>Floor</p>
	<p>Update on Sustainability Taskforce Waste to Energy recommendation to Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report has been prepared however will not be presented until Council has formed a position on Waste to Energy. Unfortunately, no timeline can be provided at this stage as it’s early in the process. 	<p>Shelley Franklyn</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jeni Jackson said that Council is seeking an independent expert to provide further information that Council requires. 	
	<p>Presentation: Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) See presentation for more detail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCMC is celebrating 50 years of community efforts. MCMC’s purpose is to Protect – planning controls, funding, advocacy, submissions, research. Restore and Repair – ecological restoration on-ground works. Engage – catchment education, community engagement, media MCMC interacts with Hume City Council through several channels including the Management Committee where Cr. Hamley and Cr Sherry represent Hume, by providing fee-for-service works on planning applications and on-ground conservation works, as well as providing input into precinct structure plans. Bernadette mentioned their National Landcare Award win, recognising MCMC’s decades-long efforts in transforming, protecting, and restoring the Merri Creek and its catchment through community collaboration. Bernadette talked about the support provided to Friends of Malcolm Creek and Friends of Merri Creek. Harsimran Kaur asked how community members could go about setting up a new Friends Of group. Shelley Franklyn explained that one of the actions in the Land and Biodiversity Plan is to explore how Hume can support community members with this, and that more information will be shared with the community over the course of the year. Ranjeet Verma mentioned the importance of medicinal plants and asked whether they could be planted along the Merri Creek. Ranjeet also wondered whether Council could provide land to Sikh farmers who grow food and give it to the community for free. Harsimran mentioned the Sikh farmers near Shepparton who grow food for free for the community, supported by Volunteers Australia. Shelley indicated that although it’s unlikely Council can provide land, there is an opportunity to engage the Sikh farmers to run workshops on medicinal plants and growing food as part of the Live Green plan. Bernadette encouraged Taskforce members to sign up to the MCMC newsletter to keep up with upcoming news and events. https://mcmc.org.au/get-involved/subscribe Bernadette mentioned the wallan wallan Regional Parkland Alliance (consisting of Wallan Environment Group, Merri Creek Management Committee, Friends of Merri Creek, and BEAM Mitchell Environment Group) have launched a campaign to establish the wallan wallan 	<p>Bernadette Thomas</p>

	<p>Regional Parkland in Melbourne's north. She asked Taskforce members to support the campaign by signing and sharing the wallan wallan Regional Park Petition - upper Merri Creek/Merlynston Creek area petition: https://wallanwallanrp.org.au/</p> <p>Action – Kaye Roberts-Palmer to contact Ranjeet Verma about a plant workshop.</p> <p>Action – Taskforce to share the wallan wallan Regional Park petition amongst their networks.</p>	
	<p>Presentation: Sustainability: A Way of life Review the PDF for more detail about Cr. Gagen’s presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr. Gagen discussed why he believed in sustainability, and the solution to act is with collective power that is local facing. • Cassey Ye asked about the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) that Cr. Gagen is part of. Cr. Gagen explained that it was a multi-Council group working together to create a zero-carbon society. He also explained that the Councillors primary purpose is to set the strategic direction of Council and make policy decisions and their role is governance, not day-to-day management and Councillors avoid directing staff or becoming involved in operational matters. • Ranjeet spoke about traffic problems in Kalkallo and no public transport to the airport. 	<p>Cr. Gagen</p>
	<p>Presentation: Sustainability Taskforce: Councillor Kate’s Sustainability Priorities for 2026 Review the PDF for more detail about Cr. Hamley’s presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr. Hamley discussed her four priorities for 2026: climate change transition and adaption, conserving biodiversity, water and food security, sustainable resource and recycling. • Cr. Hamley asked some questions of the Taskforce: What are the biggest sustainability issues in Hume? What are we doing well? Where do we need to improve? Where are the opportunities? • Community mindset was highlighted as an issue and opportunities for improvement including green waste collection and managing hard waste in new estates and dumping. • Ranjeet spoke about electrical appliances dumped on the side of the road and that there should be set days for collection of these items and that Council should maintain the nature strip. • Cr. Gagen spoke about community groups and the difficulty for them being able to book venues to meet due to complex administration and costs. 	<p>Cr. Hamley</p>

	<p>Action – Kaye Roberts-Palmer to organise the Hume Bookings team to present on booking system for community groups or provide information on booking system.</p>	
	<p>Group discussion and exercise Sustainability Taskforce focus for Hume 2026 Four questions were posed to Taskforce members with roundtable discussions on each:</p> <p>1) Which existing partnerships could be strengthened, and what new partnerships should be explored (schools, businesses, community groups)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information on partnerships • Strengthen the Northern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (NAGA) • Connecting with sporting clubs on sustainability issues (i.e. artificial turf) • Disseminating information through community gardens • Use existing knowledge with organisation and studies and implement them where possible • Feature Hume’s natural environs, run workshops or holiday program, library information sessions, water bug programs akin to Parks Vic Program • Junior Rangers <p>2) How can the Taskforce act as a bridge between Council and community voices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing to individuals/clubs • Online networks • Gardens for Wildlife opportunities 	<p>Floor</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives for Council • Improving the Taskforce’s visibility and recognition within the community • Including Taskforce stories in Live Green eNews • Holiday workshops • More active groups • Make groups easy to run <p>3) What emerging sustainability issues should the Council prioritise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal rubbish dumping (especially commercial) • Increasing the cost of dumping • Overflowing litter bins • Rubbish • Better public transport connectivity • Better buses • Upfield Line Duplication – looking ahead connecting northern suburbs (Donnybrook and Kalkallo) • Toxic signs along Hume water ways, water quality of rivers and waterways • Yuroke River • Merlynston River • Jack Roper Reserve <p>4) What barriers prevent community members from participating in sustainability initiatives and how do we ensure they are inclusive and accessible?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities not sure how to participate • Make community more aware of sustainability initiatives • Information access, how to? • In-Language where possible <p>It was agreed that this information will be further developed at the next meeting.</p>	
	<p>Terms of Reference and Expression of Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Terms of Reference are currently under review by officers, and a draft will be sent to Taskforce members out of session for review. • The Expression of Interest process for Taskforce members will begin in the second half of the year with more information to come once the Terms of Reference review is completed. 	<p>Kaye Roberts-Palmer</p>
	<p>Other business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances Evans asked the Taskforce to sign the wallan wallan Regional Park Petition (Upper Merri Creek/Merlynston Creek area) petition https://wallanwallanrp.org.au/ 	<p>Floor</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is developing a Master Plan for the Merlynston Creek Parklands and the Taskforce was encouraged to comment and share with their networks https://participate.hume.vic.gov.au/merlynston-creek-master-plan <p>Action – Taskforce to share the Merlynston Creek Parklands Participate Hume amongst their networks.</p>	
	Meeting finished	8.33pm
	Next Meeting: Tuesday 14 April, 2026 (online)	