

Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Panel

MEETING MINUTES – 18 JULY 2023

Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Date & Time:	18 July 2023 - 5:00pm
Location:	Council Chambers, 21 Saunders Street, Wynyard
Council Representatives:	Cr Celisa Edwards (Chair), Cr Andrea Courtney (Deputy Chair)
Members:	Brenton Hosking, Colin Hocking, Fiona Loughran, Hannah Sadler, Ian Ferris, Ian Newman, Peter Lawrence, Robin Krabbe, Sarah Smith, Wendy Bryant
Staff in Attendance:	Kassandra Steward, Daniel Summers, Bill Walker
Guest Presenter:	Jenny Donovan – Pause Places
Apologies:	Cr Celisa Edwards, Cr Andrea Courtney, Dana Hicks, Brenton Hosking, Colin Hocking, Fiona Loughran

AGENDA:

1. Welcome
2. Confirmation of Minutes
3. Pause Places
4. Food Security Update
5. Vegetation Management Strategy
6. SEAP Action Plan
7. Update on Recommendations to Council
8. Review of Actions List
9. Upcoming Meetings
10. General Business
11. Closure

ACTIONS TAKEN:

1. Group to consider the pause places programme and provide feedback and/or endorsement to the Cradle Coast Authority representative out of session and prior to the September meeting.
2. Food security sub-group to provide further updates on the food security proposal development, including initial action recommendations for consideration.
3. S. Smith to provide a link to the "tree plotter" product / website.
4. Group members to provide a finalised version of a Vegetation Strategy scope document for review of group ready for recommendations to Council.
5. K. Steward & D. Summers to provide a finalised version of the SEAP Action Plan to members out-of-session for agreement prior to going to Council for endorsement.
6. I. Newman and H. Sadler to provide Sisters Beach toolkit/education options for discussion at the September meeting with the intent of producing a community introduction and education campaign focusing on Sisters Beach.
7. Sub-group (S. Smith, P. Lawrence, I. Ferris and R. Krabbe) explore, map and make recommendations on Ballad Avenue to SEAP which will inform recommendations to Council at September meeting.
8. D. Summers to resend the small community solar paper for SEAPs review and consideration.
9. H. Sadler to provide a copy of a 2 page report from the Climate Council on bioenergy.
10. B. Walker to organise an information session on the move from the Weed management Act to the Biodiversity Act.

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1 WELCOME

- A quorum was established with the nomination of SEAP member W. Bryant to Chair in the absence of Councillor representatives.
- The meeting was officially opened at 17:02

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Moved P. Lawrence, Seconded I. Newman

That the minutes of the SEAP meeting held on 16 May 2023, as circulated to Members, be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Carried.

3 PAUSE PLACES

J. Donovan presented an overview of the Pause Places project. The premise of Pause Places is to provide natural “breakout areas”, “rest spaces” and/or “gathering spots” adjacent to footpaths, created out of locally sourced natural elements that fit the environment. These types of places have been shown to increase walking, social connection, community pride and reduce traffic in communities where they have been installed.

In 2022, during the Department of Health’s Healthy Focus grants round, the Cradle Coast Authority’s (CCA) Pause Places was awarded a \$100,000 grant to work with community groups to implement a pilot program over two (2) years. As part of initiating this pilot, CCA is identifying stakeholders, partnerships and resources as well as detailing promotion and design guidelines. CCA are seeking support from the community to codesign and identifying exemplar sites.

During the post presentation discussion, a number of potential sites were mentioned such as near bike tracks or along the Coastal Pathway. Other ideas and concerns were raised in relation to the how and where natural resources were gathered such as; not felling for purpose but the “repurposing” of already fallen trees. Careful design and orientation were also noted for consideration, so as to allow the use to continue during the cooler, damp periods of the year.

CCA are seeking SEAP endorsement and assistance with contacts and exemplar locations around the municipality and propose any associated recommendations to Council.

Action 1: Group to consider the pause places programme and provide feedback and/or endorsement to the Cradle Coast Authority representative out of session and prior to the September meeting.

4 FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

R. Krabbe, H. Sadler, W. Bryant & S. Smith provided an update from the sub-group looking at food security. The group have met a few times since initiating the sub-group earlier in the year. In order to decide where to go, the group have looked at what food security is and what it means. The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) define food security as being achieved when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs.

The group suggest that there could be greater emphasis placed on food security within the Health and Wellbeing plan, with an initial aim being to increase awareness and highlight the impact that lack of food security has in the community. It is noted that the five year plan is due for review in 2024. The group went on to relay recent statistics on; perceived food security by age group post COVID, greenhouse gas emission data from industrial and agricultural uses, food wastage in Australia, and the increasing costs of feeding the world population heading into 2050.

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The group are looking at ideas to implement localised food so as to be in a position to be self-sufficient within the community should another COVID type shut down to food production occur in the future. This may also lead to lower emissions and higher resilience for the community. It was suggested that we look at doing some data mapping of potential sites, consider a Community Food Security Policy, Host some information on our website.

Conversation moved into possible identification of Council land to progress food security ideas such as “food forests”, fruit trees, more space for the community garden, individual and group plots, potential volunteer groups. Further discussion led to grander ideas around the potential sub-division policy changes that could incorporate land for gardening plots, thoughts on incentives for people/entities who may be able to offer available land for use in this vein.

The group has conceded that there is a lot to consider around the subject including the process of changing thoughts within the farming communities towards more sustainable practices, public education and community resilience. The group suggested looking into grants for the data mapping which could be available for small projects such as through ‘step forward’. The group is determined to further develop this food security proposal including specific actions that can be brought to the group and then taken to Council for consideration for the next meeting.

Action 2: *Food security sub-group to provide further updates on the food security proposal development, including initial action recommendations for consideration.*

5 VEGETATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

P. Lawrence and I. Ferris provided some updates from the sub-group looking at a tree and other vegetation strategy. The group began looking at tree policies and strategies as a starting point and found that the research became more difficult and evolved as there are so many directions that it could go in many different considerations for trees and other vegetation. It was determined that starting with an overarching strategy would allow multiple policies to ‘fall out’ as a by-product of a robust strategy. It was suggested to start with a solid scope, make recommendations to Council based on that scope, then appoint a strategy writer following any Council endorsement of the recommendation(s). The group advised that the strategies/policies from our neighbours at Central Coast Council could be a good starting point for how to proceed.

The next point followed that we look at (survey) what we have, so that we know what we need to account for in policy; such as dollar values on trees/vegetation information for penalties, threatened species, community values, etc. S. Smith mentioned a product called “tree plotter” may be of use in this space.

Further discussion was held on the current state of the strategy outline with feedback from the group being good so far. It was also noted that Council would need to be onboard, there are a lot of implications out of such a strategy with some potentially affecting subdivision approvals, roads and the like. It was determined that the document should come back to the group for review after further polishing with the intention of making recommendations to Council thereafter.

Action 3: *S. Smith to provide a link to the “tree plotter” product / website.*

Action 4: *Group members to provide a finalised version of a Vegetation Strategy scope document for review of group ready for recommendations to Council.*

6 SEAP ACTION PLAN

A short discussion on the revised action plan documents occurred. It was thought that the plan be higher level with the document provided by C. Colins be polished by K. Steward and D. Summers and distributed to the group out of session. It was noted that the action plan and potential recommendation(s) to Council may be made out-of-session once the revised action plan is finalised and agreed among members.

Action 5: *K. Steward & D. Summers to provide a finalised version of the SEAP Action Plan to members out-of-session for agreement prior to going to Council for endorsement.*

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7 UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- **Recommendation 6:** *SEAP recommend Council consider extending the virtual fencing along Sisters Beach Road*
 - Initial discussion with Parks & Wildlife has occurred, they have suggested that the request makes sense though proper data is needed to back up the proposal.
 - B. Walker advised that when required in Circular Head, they hired a consultant to check, pick up and record roadkill incidents in order to supply evidence based data for their request.
 - It was suggested that with the introduction of the fencing, devils, and other fauna, have undergone behavioural changes and shifted their movements and/or habits towards un-fenced areas of Sisters Beach Road; this in turn has seemingly led to more visibility of roadkill in some locations where it may previously have been spread over a wider area.
 - There is currently a roadkill application in place for Sisters Beach, but it was noted that it requires more consistency of use for the data to be deemed realistic. It was suggested that education and more community awareness around the roadkill app may help to rigourise the information to back up a fence extension request. Additionally, the data collected includes information about all roadkill incidents to the area, not just devils, increasing its practicality.
 - It was suggested that perhaps an information campaign could be run through the Council Comms Officer to include the Sisters Beach community tool kit. I. Newman and H. Sadler advised they could provide some options that could be discussed as an agenda topic at the next meeting.
- **Recommendation 5:** *SEAP recommend Council request a speed limit reduction for Sisters Beach Road from the Transport Commissioner.*
 - Traffic data is being collected and assessed which will go to the next Council meeting.
- **Recommendation 3:** *SEAP recommends Council to participate in the Cities of Power Partnership which presents an opportunity to join dozens of other councils across the country leading the way to a zero emissions future by providing the necessary tools, resources, and connections to help accelerate their climate and energy goals.*
 - An update on the initial list of pledges chosen by Council were relayed to the group. These include;
 - Install renewable energy (solar pv and battery storage) on council bldgs.
 - Roll out energy efficient lighting across the municipality.
 - Develop procurement policy to ensure the practices of contractors and financiers align with councils renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transport goals.
 - Support the local community to develop capacity and skills to tackle climate change.
 - Provide fast charging infrastructure throughout the city at key locations for electric vehicles.

Action 6: *I. Newman and H. Sadler to provide Sisters Beach toolkit/education options for discussion at the September meeting with the intent of producing a community introduction and education campaign focusing on Sisters Beach.*

8 REVIEW OF ACTIONS LIST

- Action Item 1 to discussion meeting frequency was postponed to the September meeting as not all members were present for the discussion.
- Action Item 9 to provide an outline of a food security proposal for the group to consider remains in progress. An update to the group was given (refer Agenda Item 4), further updates to follow in future meetings.
- Action Item 14 to provide research and case studies on wildlife corridor concepts and management including threatened species for group consideration continues in progress. W. Bryant requested to be removed from this action with I. Ferris and P. Lawrence to be added.

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- Action Item 21 to review Ballad Avenue information and provide in return ideas for possible land use at Ballad Avenue. S. Smith suggested investigating the opportunity to implement a Tiny Forest installation with the assistance of the high school's Green Team in this location if deemed appropriate. It was suggested that a sub-group explore, map and make recommendations to the group to inform recommendations to Council on Ballad Avenue re: tiny forest and/or possible food forests options for the site.
- Actions Confirmed

Action 7.: *Sub-group (S. Smith, P. Lawrence, I. Ferris and R. Krabbe) explore, map and make recommendations on Ballad Avenue to SEAP which will inform recommendations to Council at September meeting.*

9 UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Next meeting on 19 September 2023 located at Council Chambers has been confirmed.

10 GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair called for members to raise other general business; the following discussions were noted:

- SEAP question for the Eco Fair poster needs to be finalised by September meeting. Some suggestions given, discussion via email to go ahead out-of-session.
- H. Sadler raised questions about bioenergy and whether Council may be looking to endorse it. There were concerns raised about its efficacy and whether it's really better for the environment. D. Summers mentioned that DSG were funding a forum WWC helping to facilitate participation by industry and a venue. H. Sadler mentioned that the Climate Council had weighed in on the subject and has advised that she would provide a copy to the group for review and consideration as well.
- Also mentioned was a paper for consideration of the group in the previous meeting regarding small community solar / localised renewable energy shared for the community.
- NRM Officer B. Walker has advised the group that the Weed Management Act is no longer in effect and that overarching weed management regulation falls under the Biodiversity Act. Discussion progress about some of the changes and it was suggested that an information session could be held by the NRM Officer.

Action 8.: *D. Summers to resend the small community solar paper for SEAPs review and consideration.*

Action 9.: *H. Sadler to provide a copy of a 2 page report from the Climate Council on bioenergy.*

Action 10.: *B. Walker to organise an information session on the move from the Weed management Act to the Biodiversity Act.*

11 CLOSURE

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 18:47.