

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY SUB-COMMITTEE

Meeting held in the Conference Room, Operational Services Area, Level One of Civic Centre, 10 Watson Terrace, Mount Gambier, on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 at 7:30 a.m.

### AGENDA

- PRESENT: Cr I Von Stanke (Presiding Member)  
Crs D Mutton and S Mezinec
- COUNCIL OFFICERS: Mark McShane, Chief Executive Officer  
Daryl Sexton, Director - Operational Services  
Aaron Izzard, Environmental Sustainability Officer  
Carmel Ron, Environmental Sustainability Officer  
Sarah Moretti, Administration Officer - Operational Services
- APOLOGIES: Cr Von Stanke moved the apology received from Cr P Richardson be accepted.
- Cr Mutton seconded Carried
- COUNCIL MEMBERS AS OBSERVERS: Nil

**WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE BOANDIK PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND WHERE WE MEET TODAY. WE RESPECT THEIR SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LAND AND RECOGNISE THE DEEP FEELINGS OF ATTACHMENT OUR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HAVE WITH THIS LAND.**

- MINUTES: Cr Mezinec moved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 be taken as read and confirmed.
- Cr Mutton seconded Carried
- QUESTIONS: (a) With Notice - nil submitted.  
(b) Without Notice – nil received.

1. **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – Crater Lakes Water Quality Program – Valley Lake Water Testing - Ref. AF11/403**

*Goal: Environment*  
*Strategic Objective: (i) Use every opportunity to increase the level of community understanding and awareness of the necessity of environmental sustainability*

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) Water sampling of the Valley Lake was undertaken on the 21st of December 2015 by the Environmental Sustainability Officer and Community Health Officer. The purpose of the sampling was to test if any potentially toxic bacteria or algae are present in the lake.

(b) Summary of Sampling

Sampling was undertaken by boat from four locations on the Lake – Freemans Landing (1), Playground Point (2), Boat Ramp (3) and Middle Point (4) (attached to the agenda). Two samples from each location were taken. One sample from each site was analysed for bacteria, the other was analysed for algae.

(c) Summary of Results

***Algae***

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The statement on the algal report from the laboratory for each sampling location reads “A diverse range of algae was observed. Only non-toxigenic BGA (blue green algae) were detected however current levels are likely to influence water quality. These levels could also cause skin irritations in sensitive individuals”. Basically, this means that no known toxigenic taxa were observed in the sample, including the blue green algae *Microcystis aeruginosa*. Hence, (blue green) algae are in the water, but not the toxic varieties.

As far as can be ascertained this is the first time the lake has been sampled for algae, so there are no historical results to compare to.

***Bacteria***

The NHMRC guidelines for managing risks in recreational water does not provide threshold values for the number of indicator bacteria in fresh recreational waters. Historical and international guidelines vary but generally have the following range:

- *E. coli* – no greater than 100-130 organisms/100mL.
- *Enterococci* – no greater 25-35 organisms/100mL.
- Faecal coliforms – no greater than 150 organisms/100 mL.

*E. coli* – No site exceeded 100 organisms/100mL. Playground Point was close, at 96 organisms/100mL. Playground Point is the section of the lake where most of the water birds congregate, just down from the playground area. So this is not surprising.

*Enterococci* – Two sites exceeded this value: Playground Point (390 organisms/100mL) and Freemans Landing (59 organisms/100mL). Playground Point exceeded by a fair margin. Freemans Landing is the shallow inlet area on the northern side of the lake. The other two sites were borderline – Middle Point (24 organisms/100mL) and Boat Ramp (28 organisms/100mL).

Faecal coliforms – No site exceeded 150 organisms/100 mL.

Compared to the sampling that was undertaken on 28-07-2008 the bacteria values are higher, though that sampling was done in winter, as opposed to summer. Water temperature and amount of sunlight could have an impact on water quality.

(d) Interpretation of Results

Given the results, swimming or other aquatic recreational activities at Playground Point and Freemans Landing is not advised. *Enterococci* can cause a variety of illnesses, including enteric and respiratory illnesses.

- (e) With regard to signage, wording on the current signs near the boat ramp say “Swimming Prohibited” and “WARNING Due to the quality of the water in the Valley Lake, direct human contact with water should be avoided” (photos of signs are in Attachment B). Council should consider changing the wording on the signage to “Bacteria and algae that potentially pose a risk to human health have been recorded in the Valley Lake water at times, particularly close to shore. Water skiing and other aquatic recreational activities are done at own risk”. A sign with this wording should also be placed on the shoreline at Playground Point.

**Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:**

- (a) **The report be received;**
- (b) **signage at the Valley Lake in the vicinity of the boat ramp be changed to “Bacteria and algae that potentially pose a risk to human health have been recorded in the**

**Valley Lake water at times, particularly close to shore. Water skiing and other aquatic recreational activities are done at own risk". A sign with this wording also be placed on the shoreline at Playground Point.**

**Cr Mezinec seconded**

**Carried**

**2. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – Environmental Waste Management and Education Program – Recycle Right Bin Tagging - Ref. AF11/408**

*Goal: Environment*

*Strategic Objective: (i) Use every opportunity to increase the level of understanding and awareness of the necessity of environmental sustainability*

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) As a result of the success of the Recycle Right Bin Tagging program trial conducted from February to April 2015, the City of Mount Gambier, with the support of Limestone Coast Local Government Association, continued to roll out this program within the City.

Based on the trial, the program was run for three collections across six weeks with an introductory education tag in the fortnight before tagging, a total of four visits to each household. Week 1 data was collected on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October and the program was completed on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

- (b) Before beginning the program, Council identified an area and number of households which would be involved in the program; a total of 152 residential households were chosen. The area chosen was at the end of the recycling and waste truck route, to ensure that bins could be inspected prior to being emptied.
- (c) The trial was successful in reducing both the number of recycling bins presented with contamination and level of contamination in recycling bins with incorrect items, and in reducing the number of waste bins presented with contamination. (Result tables and graphs were attached to the agenda).
- (d) On first inspection the average number of contaminated recycling bins was 54%, which decreased to 42% by the end of the trial. This resulted in a 22% reduction in contamination across three collections.

The top five contaminants placed in recycling bins at the beginning of the trial in order of prevalence were containers and bottles with lids on, textiles/clothing, food and organic material, dirty soft plastics, and bagged waste.

The level of contamination presented in recycling bins also dropped across the trial by 11%; meaning that recycling bins that still presented contamination, presented a lower level of contamination.

Presentation rates of recycling began at 54%, due to the time the bins were inspected and with an adjustment of the timing of inspections increased to an average of 76%. Recycling bins were on average 73% full. Participation and capacity rates for recycling bins do not indicate a need for increased/decreased frequency in recycling collections.

On first inspection, the average number of contaminated waste bins, predominantly recyclables was 60%, which decreased to 47% by the end of the trial. This resulted in a 22% reduction in contamination across three collections.

The presentation rate of waste bins remained steady across the trial at an average of 76%. Waste bins were on average 68% full. Participation and capacity rates for waste bins do not indicate a need for increased/decreased frequency in waste collections.

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- (e) The following are strategies for improved, ongoing educational activities to assist householders to develop the desired knowledge and behaviours.
1. Continue with ongoing waste education using both Zero Waste branded material as well as new Council material; presentations to community and school groups and the A-Z Disposal Guide. Households from the trial who need improvement could be targeted by sending information packs directly to their address. Positive reinforcement is also extremely important to enhance the commitment of recycling from the community.
  2. Include incentives as a part of future bin tagging programs to provide greater promotion of the bin tagging program, and encourage wider community improvement in recycling. \$20 gift vouchers could be created as prizes and participants can be told that their results will be compared to others. This incentive could provide competition to improve recycling habits. After the prize has been allocated the winners could be interviewed for tips on how they use in their household to improve recycling.
  3. Increase local media activity through media releases and advertising. A range of advertisements on the main contaminants and poor recycling practice could be placed during and/or in the lead up to the bin tagging program in the papers most likely to be read in the area being tagged. Media attention to the bin tagging program can be very helpful in educating the community about why the trial is occurring and how they can do to improve their recycling behaviours.
- (f) When comparing the results from this bin tagging trial to the initial trial, the results show that the initial trial achieved more marked improvements from beginning to end. In the initial exercise, the overall number of contaminated recycling bins reduced by 41% compared to the 22% achieved in the most recent trial. Additionally, the overall number of contaminated waste bins reduced by 47% in the initial trial compared to the 22% reduction in the most recent trial.
- (g) Whilst this is the case, both results highlight the positive trend on improved behaviours that arises from providing direct feedback and positive reinforcement. This program provides an insight into the areas of recycling and waste which require improvement and gives the Council an alternative avenue to engage the public.

**Cr Meziniec moved it be recommended:**

- (a) **The report be received;**
- (b) **Council continue the bin tagging program.**

**Cr Mutton seconded**

**Carried**

**3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT NO. 1/2016 - Environmental Management – Environmental Sustainability Initiatives – Proposed Sustainability Innovation Fund – Ref. AF11/407**

*Goal: Environment*

*Strategic Objective: (i) Support initiatives that value and preserve our unique environment and contribute to environmental sustainability*

**Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:**

- (a) **Environmental Sustainability Report No. 1/2016 be received;**

- (b) Council allocate an amount of \$20,000 in the 2016-2017 budget for the creation of an Environmental Sustainability Innovation Fund as outlined in ESR 1/2016.

Cr Mutton seconded

Carried

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT NO. 2/2016** – Environmental Management – Climate Change – Summary of COP21 Paris Climate Agreement – What does it mean for Mount Gambier - Ref. AF11/2278

Goal: Environment

Strategic Objective: (i) Systematically build Council as an environmentally sustainable organisation

Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:

- (a) Environmental Sustainability Report No. 2/2016 be received;

Cr Mezinec seconded

Carried

5. **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT NO. 3/2016** – Environmental Management – Council Carbon Emissions – City of Mount Gambier 2014-2015 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Ref. AF12/388

Goal: Environment

Strategic Objective: (i) Systematically build Council as an as an environmentally sustainable organisation

Cr Mezinec moved it be recommended:

- (a) Environmental Sustainability Report No. 3/2016 be received;

- (b) Environmental Sustainability Officers undertake further investigation in regards to the City's greenhouse gas emissions and actions or alternatives to reduce and/or offset emissions.

Cr Mutton seconded

Carried

6. **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT** - Environmental Sustainability Sub-Committee - Reports for Information - Ref. AF12/377

The Presiding Member reported:

- (a) Environmental Sustainability Program 2016 - Project Progress

The current table outlining projects for 2016 was attached to the agenda for Members information.

Cr Von Stanke moved it be recommended:

- (a) The report be received;

- (b) item (a) as above be received and noted for information.

Cr Mezinec seconded

Carried

