

**PRESENT:** Phil Bartolo, James Bell, Ed Biel, Louise Davies (*left 9.07pm*), Will Davies, Cr Matthew Deeth (*arrived 9.19pm*), Ally Dench (WSC), Edgar Downes, John Galea (DPI), Stephen Gardiner (WSC), Cr Matt Gould, Vincent Hewson, Cr Noel Lowry, Sue Mossman, Andrew Pace, Joe Vella, Carolyn Whitten (WSC) (Chair), Tracy Paul (WSC) (minute taker).

**APOLOGIES:** Andrew Docking (DPI)

**PRESENTERS:** Michelle Close (WSC) (*left 8.00pm*), Dr Samantha Sharpe (UTS), Max Strassmeir (WSC)

DESCRIPTION		ACTION
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b> Meeting commenced at 7:10 pm.</p> <p>Welcome to Councillors present and the guest speakers.</p> <p>Apologies received from Andrew Docking (DPI) and noted Cr Matthew Deeth will be arriving late.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of Meeting 13 June 2018</b> The Minutes of Meeting for 13 June 2018 were circulated to the Committee on 28 August 2018.</p> <p><b>It was resolved that the Minutes of Meeting held on 13 June 2018, as circulated, be adopted as true and correct.</b></p>	
3.	<p><b>Update on Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme (AECS)</b> Ally Dench introduced Dr Samantha Sharpe from the Institute of Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney (UTS) who is working on the Agricultural Enterprise Credit Scheme (AECS).</p> <p>Dr Sharpe commenced work on the project in May 2018 and provided an overview on the work to date.</p> <p>As part of the project, Dr Sharpe is keen to talk to farmers and agricultural producers to explore stated that in relation to how credits might be created and to determine the perimeters of the Scheme. For example,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is the credit awarded on the value of agricultural produce;</li> <li>- how often do we award the credit;</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- do we treat different agricultures differently; or are they all treated the same;</li> <li>- is it about the size of the business or how much they produce.</li> <li>- what kind of value needs to be attached to a credit before it is a viable use or if there is a certain threshold before it is deemed useful; ie is there a certain revenue before the property is deemed useful.</li> </ul> <p>Dr Sharpe will send an email out to Committee members to invite interest from agriculture producers to be interviewed as part of the project. Interviews would run for approximately 30 minutes.</p> <p>Dr Sharpe said that she will be also speaking to both Local and State Government planning stakeholders to understand how to determine the demand for credits, which will be initially focused in Wollondilly. However, if the scheme is to be truly viable, it would have to extend beyond Wollondilly both with the awarding of credits and the exchanging of credit.</p> <p>Dr Sharpe stated that we need to think about the rules in relation to allocating the credits and how does the allocation fit around LEPs; how does the community participate in that process; and the practicalities of transferring a credit, ie do we need to have the process completed by solicitors, etc. Dr Sharpe advised that this will involve a separate set of interviews, however, if you have any ideas in relation to this, please let Dr Sharpe know. Dr Sharpe advised that they are hoping to start these interviews around the next month or so.</p> <p>A question was asked about the calculation process for the Heritage Floor Space Scheme that operates in central Sydney and, on which, the AECS is being modelled. Dr Sharpe noted that her presentation to the Committee in May 2018 included an explanation and the slides can be provided to the Committee.</p> <p>The calculator for the HFS is available on the City of Sydney Council's website along with more information.</p>	<p>Dr Sharpe to send email to Committee inviting agricultural producers to speak to her in relation to determining the perimeters of the Scheme.</p> <p>Committee members to advise Dr Sharpe if they have any ideas in relation to the rules in allocating credits, etc.</p> <p>Dr Sharpe's presentation from May 2018 to be distributed to the Committee.</p>
<p><b>4. Registered Animal Charities – NOM 1 – 16 July 2018</b></p> <p>In light of a recent animal welfare issue associated with a poultry farm in Lakesland Council has invited comment from the Committee.</p> <p>This is in response to a Notice of Motion (NOM 1) from the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 16 July 2018 as follows:</p> <p><i>“1. That Council write to the NSW Agricultural Minister, Niall Blair, expressing concerns about the alleged slow response at an individual property located at Lakesland by the RSPCA. Further, the Minister consult with animal welfare groups in regards to this issue.</i></p> <p><i>2. That this letter be sent also to NSW Farmers Federation, Department of Primary Industries and RSPCA.</i></p> <p><i>3. That the issue be put to Council's Rural Industry Liaison Committee for comment.”</i></p> <p>In response, the Committee's views have been sought by Council's Manager Compliance in relation to the recent incident.</p>	

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<p>The Committee noted that the matter was currently before the court and it is not considered appropriate to comment in detail other than to say that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• supports animal welfare,</li> <li>• do not consider that any laws need to be changed, and</li> <li>• biosecurity risk needs to be better managed through community education.</li> </ul> <p>More broadly, the Committee discussed the need for advocacy around the issue of biosecurity and where the responsibility for this sat.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to ask Council to write to the Minister after the findings from the Court case to advocate for resourcing education and monitoring biosecurity issued on the ground.</p> <p>The letter to the Minister is to state:  <i>“In light of the recent incidents, the community is concerned about biosecurity risks due to people breaking into chicken sheds and taking photos and ask that the Government monitor biosecurity issues on these grounds.”</i></p>	<p>Committee to ask Council to write to Minister in relation to their concern of biosecurity issues.</p> <p>Draft wording of letter to be distributed to Committee.</p>
<p><b>5. Introduction to Council’s Farmer Liaison Officer</b></p> <p>Council’s Farmer Liaison Officer, Michelle Close, was introduced and asked to share some of her experiences in the position to date.</p> <p>Ally Dench congratulated the Committee as this position was a suggestion by the Committee that Council have a personal contact for farmers.</p> <p>It was noted that Michelle Close has volunteered to do this on top of her current role. Ally Dench recognised the great work that Michelle has achieved to date which has resulted in some amazing outcomes for Wollondilly farmers, particularly with the drought.</p> <p>Michelle Close provided an overview of her role and shared some stories on work to date;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dilly Drought Drive/Drought Relief Fund,</li> <li>- Rate deferment,</li> <li>- Working with Sydney Water on draw out rates for water for farmers,</li> <li>- Challenge to be recognised amongst bigger regional areas,</li> <li>- Coordinating volunteer staff from Tahmoor Colliery to work on farms during recent operation shut-down,</li> </ul> <p>A view was expressed that this role should be the first point of contact for people who want to farm in Wollondilly, particularly when it comes to land use planning advice.</p> <p>In terms of assisting agriculture in Wollondilly Ally Dench noted that Kevin Abey, Manager Tourism &amp; Business Investment, is involved in setting up precincts around the new Western Sydney Airport in relation to agribusiness and getting the message out that Wollondilly is open for business.</p>	

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<p>Agribusiness is one of the 38 initiatives in the Western Sydney City Deal. Wollondilly as a leadership role to lead on the Agribusiness Precinct Project so it is a huge platform for Wollondilly to be able to voice our needs.</p>	
<p><b>6. Water Resources/Dam Licences &amp; Potential for a Shire Policy</b></p> <p>This agenda item has been included in the Agenda at the request of Cr Lowry at the last Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the water supply needs of farming in the area, particularly during dry periods like the current drought, the need for healthy river systems and legislative problems.</p> <p>In particular, discussion focussed on the opportunity to reuse treated sewerage water on farms and the associated benefits to diverting this from direct release into the river system.</p> <p>A need was expressed for making this water available in Cawdor, The Oaks, Oakdale and Belimbla Park.</p> <p>The cost effectiveness of reusing water was also discussed and it was noted that Sydney Water may not share the view that it would be cheaper to pump the water to nearby farms rather than the treatment plant at Camden.</p> <p>It was noted that there is an existing Greywater Scheme in Shoalhaven City Council where the residents have voted for treated sewage to be provided to farmers. This option is not as relevant to Wollondilly who does not control the water so Council cannot make those decisions. It was also noted that Sydney Water ultimately has the say on what happens with treated sewage in their system.</p> <p>It was noted that the Bingara Gorge Estate at Wilton has its own privately owned and operated recycled water treatment plan which is used to irrigate the golf course.</p> <p>The Committee expressed an interest in this issue being included in the Agenda for the next meeting. Council to approach Sydney Water about Wilton and the potential to reuse Wilton's treated sewage water use.</p>	<p>Council to talk to Sydney Water in relation to the treated sewage water use at Wilton.</p> <p>The re-use of treated water for Wilton to be included in next Agenda.</p>
<p><b>7. Development Application Process for Dams</b></p> <p>Max Strassmeir, Development Assessment Planner, delivered a presentation on the land use planning process associated with farm dams.</p> <p>A focus of discussion was the distinction between maintenance work to a dam which does not require formal approval from Council and an alteration to a dam which will require approval. And also what information and cost was associated with a development application and whether a proforma type process was ok.</p> <p>The distinction lies in whether the whole dame wall or structure of the dam is changed.</p> <p>It was also noted that a demolition will also need a development application as it is deemed as altering downstream water flows.</p>	<p>Presentation on farm dams to be distributed to the Committee.</p>

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<p>The Committee noted that the current drought provided an opportune time for landholders to fix dams.</p> <p>In particular the Committee questioned whether the decision on whether a development application was required based on the legislation or Council's interpretation of the legislation.</p> <p>It was noted that the 'harvestable rights' and whether a water licence was required were determined by Water NSW.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed the merits threshold for the maximum harvestable right dam capacity which is 10% of the average regional rainfall run-off for land on the eastern fall of the great divide. The committee requested for Council to make some representations to seek an increase in the threshold.</p> <p>The following actions were identified by the Committee in moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of a fact sheet on dams and the approval process,</li> <li>• commitment to setting up an internal group to investigate Council's interpretation around 'alteration' versus 'maintenance' work to dams and what requires approval, or simplifying the approval process,</li> <li>• Advocate to the relevant public agency(s) to review the proportion of rainfall run-off that can be captured under harvestable rights for land located to the east of the Great Dividing Range with a view to increasing the percentage capture.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's Planning Directorate to set up an internal group to investigate simplifying the approval process for farm dams.</p> <p>John Galea to confirm what the Natural Resources Water requirements are for a DA for a dam.</p> <p>Council to explore opportunities to advocate for a review of the maximum harvestable right dam capacity.</p>
<p><b>8. FIAL Innovation Inspiration Workshop for Local Producers/Food Manufacturers</b></p> <p>On the recommendation of DPI Council has approached Regional Development Australia and FIAL to investigate the opportunity for an Innovation Inspiration Workshop similar to an event held as part of the Hawkesbury Harvest.</p> <p>FIAL is an industry-led, not-for-profit organisation focused on growing the share of Australian food in the global marketplace.</p> <p>The following two videos were played to explain the program further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="https://fial.com.au/about">https://fial.com.au/about</a>; to explain FIAL and their purpose</li> <li>- <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKusL1hFYuM&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKusL1hFYuM&amp;feature=youtu.be</a>; video from Darwin Inspiration Workshop</li> </ul> <p>FIAL hold workshops and are looking to work with Wollondilly local producers who might have new ideas. FIAL will then show the local producers the tools on how to do a business plan and how to work out that new idea. FIAL has a view to working with five or six local producers who are quite serious about a new idea and then connect them to other people and other producers.</p> <p>A copy of FIAL's brochure, from a recent event in Northern Territory and Hawkesbury was available for Committee members to view.</p>	

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<p>Council has expressed an interest to hold a workshop as part of Small Business Month. A date is still to be confirmed.</p> <p>The Committee were asked to let Council know of any local producers in Wollondilly who may be doing something a little different. It was noted that Cedar Creek Orchard is doing a cider and that Cedar Creek Orchard is also keen to do the Farmers Market.</p> <p>The workshops will run for 3.5 to 4.5 hours and Council has expressed an interest to have the workshops in the evening. Feedback was invited from the Committee on how early a start is practicable for local producers. It was agreed that 6pm would be the earliest such an event should start.</p>	
<p><b>9. Farm Share &amp; Cooperative Agricultural Enterprises: Scoping Document</b></p> <p>This item relates to a document distributed to the Committee with the Agenda and was included at the request of a committee member.</p> <p>This document has come from SEE-Change which is an environmental group in Canberra. SEE-Change are pushing the idea of a farm that is half owned by someone so that the farm becomes one company and it is held in shares and then another company takes over the responsibility of running the farm and breaking the profit up on economic units. Therefore, all different little farming ventures could be on the same property farmed by different people.</p> <p>It was noted that Wollondilly has a whole bunch of young people who are excited about doing farming, however, they cannot buy land. Canberra wants to keep young, keen farmers in their area so they are supporting this venture. It might be worthwhile to consider this as an option for Wollondilly to encourage small scale farming.</p> <p>Glamping, as in ecotourism, would work really well here. Visitors from cities would stay on the farm and help with harvesting and do farm things.</p>	
<p><b>10. Workplace Health and Safety</b> Nil.</p>	
<p><b>11. General Business:</b></p> <p><b>a. Easy to do Business Agritourism Pilot Initiative</b></p> <p>Council is partnering with Service NSW to deliver the 'Easy to do Business' program in Wollondilly.</p> <p>This program is a free service for business owners to simplify the process to set up a business by providing personalised support and step-by-step guides tailored specifically for their business; including online information to help understand government licensing, approvals and regulations; and an online tool that guides you through what you need to do.</p>	

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	<p>This a new program for Council and in Wollondilly currently provides assistance to food related businesses such as café's, small bars and restaurants.</p> <p>Service NSW have approached Council to pilot an initiative to expand the East to do Business program to make it easier for farmers to diversify into agritourism. Not much is known about the pilot and what it would cover just yet.</p> <p>Service NSW will be meeting with Council at the end of September 2018 to discuss the Pilot.</p> <p>More information should be known about the pilot for the next meeting.</p>	<p>Easy to do Business Agritourism Pilot Initiative to be placed on the next Agenda.</p>
<b>b.</b>	<p><b>Scare Guns</b></p> <p>A request has been made for the Committee's feedback on the creation of a policy regarding the use of scare guns. Specifically whether the farming community wanted to or needed to use scare guns for the protection of their crops. It is understood the question has arisen in response to scare guns being used to manage issues with bats.</p> <p>The Committee's discussion included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an existing old policy (PLA009 – Scare Guns), however, this policy was last updated in 2001 and needs to be reviewed to make it current.</li> <li>• Some members of the Committee confirmed that they regularly use scare guns on farms and found these to be very useful.</li> <li>• wineries apparently use these a lot and there are no known noise issues with this in terms of complaints.</li> <li>• Apparently Cedar Creek Orchard was the first property that Council received a series of complaints about their use of scare guns.</li> </ul>	
<b>c.</b>	<p><b>Catering</b></p> <p>The Committee briefly discussed whether the current refreshment arrangements in terms of quantity and type of food were appropriate.</p>	
<b>d.</b>	<p><b>General Business</b></p> <p><b>Land zoning for rural properties in Yerranderie</b></p> <p>Cr Matt Gould brought the Committees attention to a planning issue affecting rural land in the Yerranderie area.</p> <p>The implementation of the standard instrument local environmental plan (i.e. Wollondilly LEP 2011) has resulted in land in Yerranderie being zoned E3 Environmental Management. This is causing local farmers some grief and they are relying quite heavily on existing use rights to continue farming. Councillors are working with the</p>	

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	<p>Yerranderie Committee to address these issues with assistance from Council's Sustainable Growth section.</p> <p>Dry periods present a particular problem as farmers are destocking in the drought, however, because they have less stock for more than 12 months then they lose the right to have the stock on their land.</p> <p>A need was identified for public advocacy on this issue to try and get the LEP changed in the LEP Review. However, it was noted that Council ultimately does not make that final decision in terms of amendments to the LEP.</p> <p><b>R U OK? Day</b></p> <p>The Committee were reminded that it is R U OK? Day on 13 September 2018. With the impact of the current drought, it is important for local producers and farmers to reach out to others to talk if they feel that they need help.</p>	
<b>e.</b>	<p><b>Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Wednesday, 5 December 2018 at 7.00pm.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 10:01pm.</p>	