

Evaluation PIA Planet Training Session

Biodiversity & Urban Planning

21 September 2019



Event: PIA (Vic) Planet Course: Sustainable Transport for our Cities

Venue: PIA (Vic), Level 3. 124 Exhibition St, Melbourne 3000

25 people attended the seminar. 22 evaluation forms were received, and answers are compiled below. 88% response rate.

The session was facilitated by Sheridan Blunt from Loci Environment & Place with sessions run by Melbourne-based biodiversity planning specialists, Dr Melanie Birtchnell and Liz Drury.



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| 1. Out of 5, how satisfied were participants with this seminar? | Average 4.2 |
| 2. Out of 5, how likely were participants to recommend this seminar? | Average 4.1 |
| 3. Out of 5, how well did participants feel the learning objectives were met? | Average 3.8 |
| 4. Out of 5, how satisfied were participants that they had enough time? | Average 3.5 |
| 5. Out of 5, how well did participants feel that discussion was encouraged? | Average 4.2 |
| 6. Out of 5, how knowledgeable did participants feel the facilitators were? | Average 4.7 |

Loci Response: these scores are very high with time limitations identified as a challenge to learning and discussion.

7. What were the most valuable parts of today's seminar for you?

	Ticked by
General understanding of biodiversity in Victoria	82%
Understanding of regulations Federal: EPBC Act State: FFG Act	50%
Understanding planning controls MSS/MPS, overlays, cl 52.17 Native Vegetation	77%
Understand & managing construction impacts	41%
General opportunity for questions & feedback with specialists	32%
Learning from fellow participants & understanding where other organisations are at with their biodiversity planning	32%

Background of attendees*	No.
Strategic Urban Planning	4
Statutory Urban Planning	7
Environmental Planning	6
Conservation	3
Ecology/Biodiversity	2
Arborist	4
Urban Forester	1
Urban Designer	1
Landscape Architect	1
Archaeologist	1
Community Development	1
Open Space Planner	1

*attendees were able to select multiple disciplines

Loci Response: With an audience of diverse specialists, it is interesting to see that over 80% of the group place great value on continuing to grow their general understanding of biodiversity. It is a complex and evolving field to keep up with. The spread of interest areas is high, and compared to Loci's other topical seminars, the score of 32% for learning from fellow participants was very high (its normally less than 10%) and perhaps reflects a willingness for practitioners to join together on their challenges.

8. **Prior to today, how much did you feel you knew about how to use our suite of biodiversity controls?**

Average 5.2

9. **After today, how much do you feel you know about how to use our suite of biodiversity controls?**

Average 7.3

Loci Response: The growth in self-reported knowledge averaged 2.1 points and ranged from 1 (selected by five people – primarily stat planners) to 4 (selected by two people – an arborist and a strategic planner).

10. **What changes do you think the session will generate for you?** % of attendees that ticked option. Multiple options could be ticked.

50% Information and momentum to pursue a range of biodiversity initiatives eg: local mapping, revegetation works, education, engagement, enforcement, monitoring	50% Information and momentum to pursue planning controls for biodiversity eg: strategic planning, overlays, stronger application of planning controls	50% No changes yet, but will seek out future possibilities to strengthen biodiversity planning program	6% No changes needed.
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Loci Response: This is an oddly consistent result. The data shows no clear pattern amongst disciplines in terms of identifying changes they will pursue. Momentum to act is perhaps more likely based on the individual circumstances of each workplace and officer. 50% (8 people) have stated they will not be making any changes yet. Loci believes there is value in 'planting seeds' and that we hope these people will now have more confidence and knowledge to help projects emerge in the near future.

11. **What did you like about the session? What could we improve on?**

(these are direct quotes from participants however they have been clustered by Loci)

A great engaging course with relevant information and facilitator experts in the subject matter.

Great course. Needs to run whole day to allow for more in-depth discussion and examples, and to enable peer networking.

A good overview in the time available. Interactive components good.

Room was great, facilitators were clearly very knowledgeable and passionate about the topic, it was great to have a diverse background between them as well. Presenters engaged well. Content was relevant. Online activities useful.

Valuable content: Info about specific flora and fauna such as the rosella spider orchid. Helped understand ecosystems and reinforced importance of protecting biodiversity. Liked real world examples of biodiversity impacts/protection

There is far too much information to cover in 4 hours however, it is a very worthwhile session to get the slides and look up anything you personally want to know more about. It would have been good if the course incorporated more time for questions, perhaps dedicating time for questions after each segment of the presentation.

Interested in urban focus, this was a bit too greenfields focused.

Maybe separate sessions for statutory and strategic planners focussing on biodiversity basics and how flora/fauna and biodiversity reports are put together.

Good topics of conversation, (would like) more time on how the planning overlays operate and they could be applied to - also with reference to VCAT and DELWP assessment of amendments. And also planning panels view.

Loci Response: This feedback reflects that the attendees really enjoyed the course.

Most of the suggestions for improvements were due to the time restrictions and wanting more content & discussion.

Suggestions also come from urban planners who would prefer more detail on controls, overlays, permits. It would be good if we could find a way to cover overlays in more detail however the response to question 7 has not given us any clear ideas about what other we would drop to make room for this. Perhaps we can run consecutive half-day sessions as an alternative.

Another helpful idea is to run a session on how flora/fauna and biodiversity reports are put together so that planners can better understand how to respond to this.

For promotion of future sessions, we can make clearer the greenfields and native vegetation emphasis of the course.



Biodiversity Planning in Victoria

Tuesday 17 September 2019 – Planning Institute of Australia Planet Training Session

This course is designed for anyone wanting an overview of biodiversity planning requirements in Victoria. It covers the relevant requirements within planning schemes and introduces important strategic concepts and processes for protecting our flora and fauna.

The course provides a summary of issues and opportunities that can be applied to better protect our valued biodiversity. This course is structured to provide a brief overview of issues and is complementary to the annual detailed three-day training course run in conjunction with LGPro's Biodiversity Planners Network.

The overall objective of the course is to develop consistent approaches to statutory planning for biodiversity, so the more diverse our audience, the better.

Learning Outcomes

- Overview of the significance of biodiversity for Victoria and beyond.
- Understand the range of Federal and State legislative requirements that need to be applied for biodiversity protection.
- Consider the opportunities for applying supporting local planning policies, provisions and monitoring.
- Understand the role, processes and strategic planning considerations for remnant and indigenous vegetation in greenfields and brownfields development.
- Learn where you can access more detailed training services if needed.

Dr Melanie Birtchnell

Melanie has enjoyed almost two decades in the field of ecology and biodiversity planning. She has extensive experience in ecological consulting, research and education, and is a recognized leader in biodiversity planning. She has worked with a diverse range of clients and has worked in State and Local governments.

Mel's passion lies in sharing knowledge and advocating for biodiversity and empowering people to make decisions and choices that benefit biodiversity. She is innovative and creative in her approach to biodiversity planning and prides herself on finding solutions to complex problems, to enable projects to proceed...with biodiversity as a core consideration. She enjoys delivering quality biodiversity planning training with Liz and Loci to enable - and empower - others to plan for better biodiversity outcomes.

Liz Drury

Liz is an experienced leader in biodiversity planning field, with over ten years of professional biodiversity conservation experience. She has extensive experience working in local and State government with a consistent aim to minimise the ecological impact of public and private infrastructure projects.

Liz has a particular interest in conserving indigenous urban biodiversity and maintaining ecological connectivity across the landscape.

In 2018, Liz and Melanie worked with Loci and biodiversity planners across the State to create a three-day biodiversity planning course for Victoria. It was the first of its kind for Victoria and has now run for two years. Following this, Liz has continued to work with these peers on various professional development options. Her dream is to see consistent and ethical planning across the State, where conserving biodiversity is a priority.

Sheridan Blunt

Sheridan is the Knowledge Sharing Coordinator of [Loci Environment & Place Inc.](#) has been developing highly regarded multi-disciplinary training sessions since 2015 to help practitioners achieve greater climate change, biodiversity and urban sustainability outcomes.

Sheridan is an urban and environmental planner whose expertise lies in the area of integrating biodiversity objectives with multiple environmental outcomes including green infrastructure, sustainable buildings, urban ecology, waterway protection and air quality.

Sheridan is currently working with DELWP on their Suburban Parks Program and has previously worked as City Sustainability Coordinator at Moonee Valley City Council, Sustainable Water Program Coordinator at City of Melbourne, as an environmental planner in the Philippines, and an urban planner in both the Victorian and NSW State Government. Sheridan also lectures and tutors at the University of Melbourne for its Masters of Urban Planning program