



# 12 COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

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## 12.1 Introduction

Stakeholder and community engagement has played an important role in developing and shaping the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects.

LXRA recognises public participation provides the best project outcomes. As such, LXRA has undertaken an extensive engagement program to ensure the Edithvale and Bonbeach communities and stakeholders with an interest, or those expected to be affected, are informed, involved and able to actively contribute to the development of the projects.

LXRA has undertaken market research that demonstrates strong awareness and support for the projects, with many recognising the travel, safety and community benefits that come from removing level crossings.

This chapter summarises the stakeholder and community engagement activities, and findings, for the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects over the past two years. It also steps out the approach for ongoing engagement during construction.

## 12.2 Consultation framework

LXRA undertook consultation during the early investigations, options assessment and design development stages of the projects (see Figure 12.1). The early investigations and options assessment phases of engagement helped LXRA to understand concerns and opportunities, ultimately resulting in a preference for trench solutions.

The primary focus of the EES is to assess potential environmental effects on regional groundwater, the Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands and the disturbance of acid sulfate soils. During the preparation of the EES, LXRA recognised the value in engaging on other key topics including design solutions, walking and cycling connections, the look and feel of the station precincts and planning and managing disruptions.

Feedback has been considered on these aspects as part of further planning and design work for each project (refer to Section 12.9). Given the stage of the project, the engagement undertaken during the preparation of the EES is referred to as the design development stage.

The EES process further provides the opportunity for a comprehensive and transparent analysis of any impacts associated with the project, including possible mitigation measures.

### Scoping Requirements

The Scoping Requirements for the Edithvale and Bonbeach Level Crossing Removal Project require that:

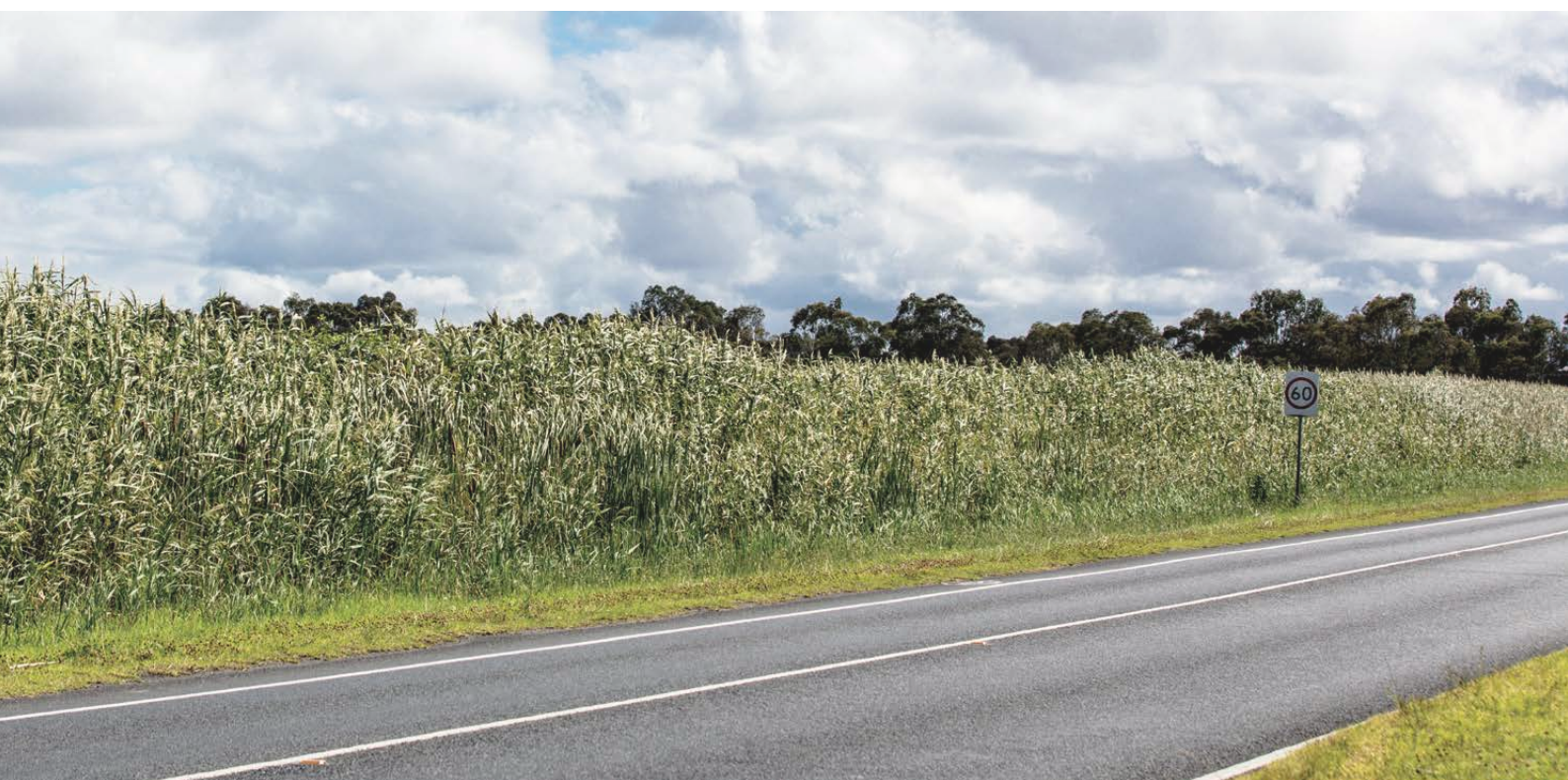
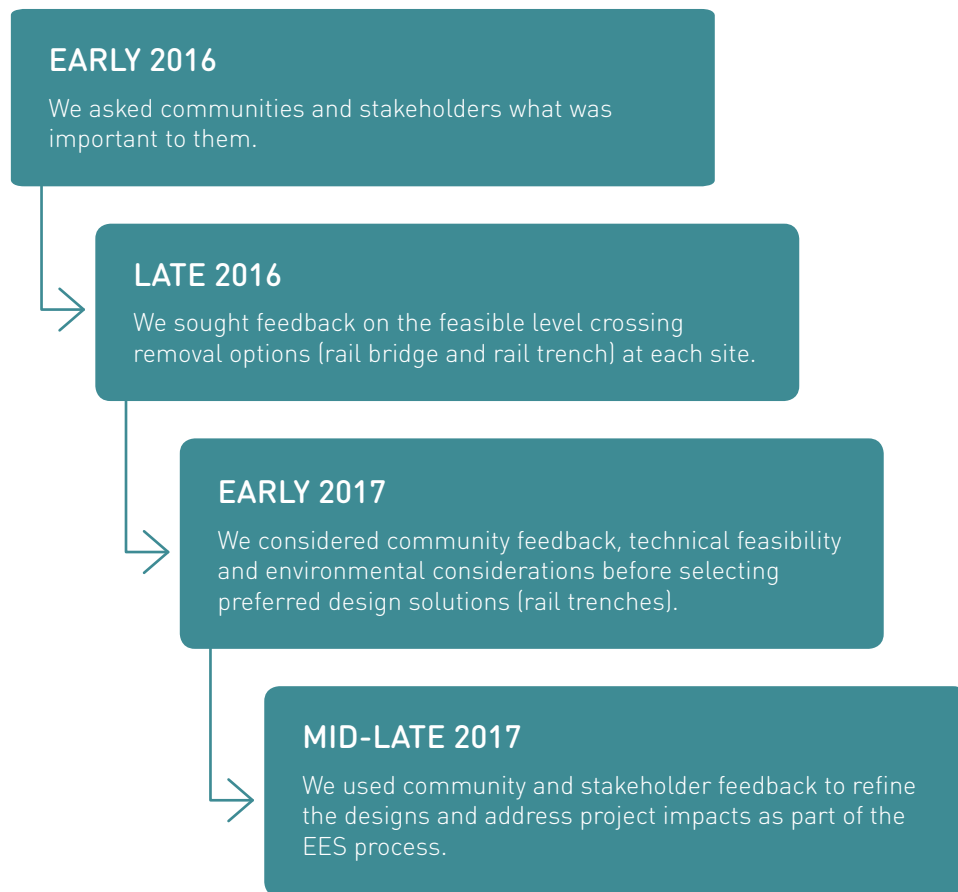
The EES should document the process and results of consultation undertaken by LXRA during the preparation of the EES, including:

- issues raised and suggestions made by stakeholders or members of the public
- the responses then made by LXRA in the context of the EES studies or the associated consideration of mitigation measures and the draft planning scheme amendment.

The EES should also provide an outline of a program for community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications proposed for implementation of the project, including opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with LXRA to seek responses to issues that might arise during project implementation.

LXRA developed and published a Consultation Plan at the outset of the EES process which outlines how communities and stakeholders would be informed and involved in the EES, as well as how feedback would be addressed. Outcomes from the plan are detailed in this chapter.

**Figure 12.1 Community and stakeholder engagement timeline**





## 12.3 Engagement principles

LXRA recognises public participation provides the best project outcomes, and has undertaken an extensive engagement program throughout all stages of the project lifecycle.

Project engagement principles were developed with guidance from the relevant Government legislation and policies around the need for community engagement:

- the *Transport Integration Act 2010* includes the principles of stakeholder engagement and community participation in decision-making
- guidelines under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* provide formal opportunities for public engagement and the proponent's proposed plan for consultation
- *Victorian Government Accessible Communications Guidelines 2014* ensure communications materials are presented in ways that allow all Victorians to access information
- *Victorian Government Communications Guidelines 2013* ensure communications activities by Victorian Government entities are effective, well-managed and responsive to the diverse needs of the Victorian community
- the *Victorian Auditor-General's Office Public Participation in Government Decision-Making Guide 2015* provides a high-level framework for the public sector to use when deciding how best to involve the public in government decision-making and implementation.

A number of engagement principles were adopted, as established in the Victorian Auditor-General's Office Better Practice Guide for Public Participation. These principles, and LXRA's approach to each, are set out in Table 12.1.

**Table 12.1 Engagement principles and LXRA approach**

Principle	LXRA approach
Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prompt acknowledgement of queries or concerns</li><li>• Respond to all issues raised, no matter how big or small</li></ul>
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be open and honest in our interactions with the public</li><li>• Continue to meet with residents and stakeholders as requested</li></ul>
Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a Community Reference Group (CRG) during the formal planning phase to inform on the project and ensure community and stakeholder views are captured</li><li>• Ensure materials and documents are provided in an accessible format, allowing a wide range of community members to participate</li></ul>
Transparency and integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide timely updates on project progress through various communication channels</li><li>• Provide information with enough time for people to understand and ask informed questions, before we ask for feedback</li></ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take ownership for any issues which may arise and have an impact on residents or stakeholders</li><li>• Provide key points of contact within LXRA for any community queries or concerns</li></ul>
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broad communications spanning neighbouring suburbs regarding the EES and opportunities for involvement</li><li>• Use a range of communication channels to tap into different audiences i.e. online, newspapers, letterbox drops, signage, face-to-face</li></ul>

## 12.4 Engagement objectives

LXRA developed engagement objectives which were outlined in the EES Consultation Plan, published at the outset of the EES process, and revisited throughout the EES stage of engagement to ensure relevance. Communications and engagement outcomes have been evaluated against these objectives as outlined in Table 12.2.

**Table 12.2 Engagement objectives**

Objective	Result
Achieve a high level of awareness with local residents, businesses and stakeholders regarding the EES process and opportunities to influence outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project newsletters were delivered to 20,000 households and businesses on two occasions during the EES phase</li> <li>• Business and social impact interviews assisted in generating a high level of awareness about the project, EES process and opportunities to influence outcomes (refer to Chapter 8 <i>Potential local impacts at Edithvale and Bonbeach</i>)</li> <li>• Telephone surveys conducted at the start of the EES phase with a random sample size of 389 (190 Edithvale and 199 Bonbeach), demonstrated a high awareness for the projects (97 per cent Edithvale and 96 per cent Bonbeach) and a moderate to high awareness about the EES (69 per cent Edithvale and 63 per cent Bonbeach). Follow up telephone surveys will be conducted after the EES has been exhibited.</li> </ul>
Provide opportunities for community involvement in the EES process, particularly regarding any potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established a Community Reference Group (CRG) to inform interested community members and stakeholders on the project as well as provide an opportunity to raise questions and concerns</li> <li>• Held an Edithvale/Bonbeach community workshop on 14 September 2017 with 32 attendees</li> <li>• Information sessions planned for the EES Exhibition phase to help explain the EES investigations and provide access to project staff.</li> </ul>
Encourage participation in the EES and project development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlighted the EES process and future opportunities for involvement through three email updates, community newsletters to 20,000 businesses and households, 11 social media posts, as well as a video, online information and media releases</li> <li>• Ran two CRG meetings and participated in six Technical Reference Group (TRG) meetings with stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Ensure communications materials are clear, accessible and easily understandable, allowing community members and stakeholders opportunities to provide comment on the draft Scoping Requirements and EES upon exhibition, if desired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed collateral in print and digital formats that were easy to understand with accessible options</li> <li>• Project language line available to assist those requiring information in other languages</li> <li>• Consulted with key stakeholders, including Kingston City Council, on languages preferred among the community for the future promotion of the EES exhibition and opportunities to get involved</li> <li>• Consulted with community group leaders via the Kingston City Council to identify and engage with vulnerable and hard to reach communities to inform them of opportunities, such as the community workshop.</li> </ul>
Demonstrate how community and stakeholder concerns have been addressed through the EES process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to Section 12.9.</li> </ul>



## 12.5 Overview of engagement

This section provides an overview of engagement activities and outcomes undertaken in relation to the removal of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossings.

### 12.5.1 Early investigations

From February to June 2016, LXRA created opportunities for local communities and stakeholders to learn more about the projects and to share what is important to them in their local area. This engagement was targeted to people living and working alongside the Frankston line from Cheltenham to Frankston.

Specifically, the project team was keen to learn what was important for LXRA to consider in the development of level crossing removal design options. Additionally, these opportunities were used to build awareness of the projects and share information on how people could find out more and participate throughout the project development. This is summarised in Table 12.3.

Activities included community sessions, door-knocking more than 2,600 homes, distributing 20,000 flyers to local household letterboxes and a community newsletter to thousands of homes. Local media coverage was secured and 'pop-up' events were staged at train stations, shopping centres and other key locations. LXRA collected feedback through phone and email channels, hard copy feedback forms, community information sessions and an online engagement platform known as 'Social Pinpoint'.

To provide further insight on community awareness and knowledge of the projects, independent market research company EY Sweeney was engaged to conduct a survey between late May and mid-June 2016. Using a mix of face-to-face and telephone interviews, the survey (2,938 surveys undertaken) revealed that more than 80 per cent of residents, train users and businesses were in favour of the planned removal of the level crossings along the Frankston line. Reduced road congestion and increased road user and pedestrian safety were the most anticipated positive impacts; most cited potential concerns were disruption during the construction phase and visual amenity.

The feedback emerging from this phase, along with the results of technical and environmental studies, were used to explore all feasible level crossing removal options at the nominated sites along the Frankston line, with due consideration to localised interest and concerns.

**Table 12.3 Summary of engagement during the early investigation phase**

Method	Purpose	Result
<b>Meetings/ Drop-in's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drop-ins and meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders to disseminate information, and to discuss and inform design and planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drop-ins to all businesses across the Edithvale and Bonbeach shopping strips</li> </ul>
<b>Community pop ups and information sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pop-up events at train stations to highlight the upcoming activities and promote participation</li> <li>Community information sessions to display information and maps, and to provide access to the project team and collect feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19 pop-up train station events along the Frankston line</li> <li>Nine community information sessions along the Frankston line including one at the Longbeach RSL in Chelsea</li> </ul>
<b>Communications materials and door-knocks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications collateral including flyers and project newsletters developed to highlight the project and ways to get involved</li> <li>Door-knocks to residents within a 200 metre proximity to the rail line</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Along the Frankston line there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,600+ homes door-knocked</li> <li>20,000 flyers distributed to local household letterboxes</li> <li>65,000 newsletters delivered</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Digital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Pinpoint launched to gauge impacts and information specific to residents and business locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4,090 pins dropped on Social Pinpoint</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys and feedback forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Telephone and face-to-face interviews to determine level of interest and awareness in project including benefits and issues</li> <li>Feedback forms developed to capture feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Along the Frankston line there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,938 residents interviewed</li> <li>more than 500 responses to feedback forms received</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Feedback themes

This stage of engagement highlighted high levels of support for both the Edithvale and Bonbeach projects. Both projects shared common themes including a strong interest in urban design outcomes, local access and potential noise impacts and a desire to retain the small beach village feel that makes both locations unique. Providing safe access for pedestrians from car parks to retail areas, the station and the beach also emerged as a key theme for both projects.

Edithvale key findings highlighted concerns about existing traffic congestion on the Nepean Highway and Edithvale Road and also with elevated rail. The retention of the Fraser Avenue pedestrian crossing over the rail line was a key outcome whilst there was a strong desire to protect and enhance the nearby Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.

Key findings for Bonbeach during the early investigations showed that while many expressed support for the project, others queried the need given this location was not perceived as congested compared with other areas. Concerns were raised regarding elevated rail, the impacts to the station gardens and about illegal traffic movements in the area from motorists trying to avoid delays. Feedback also highlighted support for a road bridge crossing Patterson River connecting Station Street either side of the river.

## 12.5.2 Options assessment

LXRA undertook an extensive round of community and stakeholder engagement between 6 September and 30 October 2016 to gain feedback on the proposed level crossing removal options. LXRA shortlisted two feasible options for community consultation at each site – a rail trench (rail under the road) and a rail bridge (rail over the road).

LXRA alerted people to the consultation process through a multi-faceted communications campaign involving direct mailouts to households in the area, local newspaper ads, radio alerts, media releases and articles, email updates, social media posts, YouTube videos and flyers/posters at local shopping centres and train stations.

LXRA engaged with community members and stakeholders through varied methods including targeted community presentations and stakeholder meetings. Thousands of people viewed information via the project specific 'Your Level Crossings' online engagement portal that was established at the start of the engagement phase. Hundreds participated in the engagement activities and asked questions.

Shortly following the consultation process, telephone surveys were undertaken by EY Sweeney to further understand local views and concerns about the level crossing removal projects along the Frankston line. A total of 260 residents and 50 traders in Edithvale and Bonbeach were surveyed in this round.

Participants were asked to consider benefits and concerns in relation to the level crossing removal solution, as well as a range of questions relating to their awareness of the level crossing removal and views relating to the importance of different factors. Those participating also provided feedback that highlighted high levels of concern regarding the rail bridge options due to visual impact, with little benefit for being able to use the space under the rail line, such as at other sites. There were high levels of support for a trench solution with various suggestions for maintaining connections over the rail line for pedestrians.

Feedback gained from this stage of engagement, along with technical and environmental considerations, resulted in the trench design being chosen as the preferred option for level crossing removals at both locations.

**Table 12.4 Summary of engagement during the options assessment phase**

Method	Purpose	Result
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>One-on-one meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders to gain insight and feedback on the proposed designs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Met or spoke with ten key stakeholders or stakeholder groups:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Kingston City Council</li><li>Friends of Edithvale- Seaford Wetlands</li><li>Bonbeach Surf Lifesaving Club</li><li>VicRoads</li><li>No Sky Rail – Frankston Line</li><li>Noskyrail.com.au</li><li>Bicycle Network</li><li>RACV</li><li>Bus Association of Victoria</li><li>Public Transport Users Association.</li></ul></li></ul>



Method	Purpose	Result
<b>Community presentations and information sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations for those living and working close to each level crossing to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provide locals with technical information about the level crossing removal options under consideration</li> <li>– inform people about the engagement process</li> <li>– provide an opportunity to ask questions of relevant technical experts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Four 'drop-in' style community information sessions were held for Edithvale and Bonbeach locals, providing the opportunity for people to learn more about the project, view maps and plans, speak with members of the project team and provide direct feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations were held on 14 September 2016 in Edithvale and 16 September 2016 in Bonbeach to provide technical information about the options under consideration and inform about the engagement process</li> <li>• Two community information sessions were held for the Edithvale project at Mordialloc Secondary College on 26 September and 8 October 2016 with 365 people attending the sessions</li> <li>• For the Bonbeach project, two community information sessions were held at Patterson River Golf Course on 21 September and 13 October 2016 with 345 people attending the sessions.</li> </ul>
<b>'Your Level Crossings' online engagement hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LXRA launched a new online engagement hub at the start of the consultation process called 'Your Level Crossings', providing information about the level crossing removal options through images, videos, maps, frequently asked questions and fact sheets</li> <li>• People could share feedback through an online survey, discussion forum and quick poll. In addition, a question and answer tool assisted with providing more information about key aspects of the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3,930 people visited the Edithvale online engagement hub providing 348 online forum comments</li> <li>• The Edithvale project video was viewed 7,657 times</li> <li>• The Bonbeach online engagement hub attracted 3,140 visits with 194 online forum comments provided</li> <li>• There were 9,686 views of the Bonbeach project video.</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys and feedback forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The feedback form, also replicated online forming the 'survey' section of the Your Level Crossings hub, was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the importance of various technical factors</li> <li>– perceived benefits and concerns associated with the design options under consideration</li> <li>– priorities for LXRA as project planning and development further progresses</li> <li>– satisfaction levels with the consultation process.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Participants were asked to consider benefits, concerns and improvement suggestions for the rail bridge and rail trench solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 503 survey responses were captured for the Edithvale feedback form and online survey</li> <li>• The Bonbeach feedback form and online survey received 320 responses.</li> </ul>



## Feedback themes

Overall, feedback indicated a strong preference for rail trench solutions at both Edithvale and Bonbeach. The main issue raised in relation to rail bridges was that the designs would have a negative visual impact on the area, given the narrow rail corridor in these areas.

While there was strong support for rail trenches, there were some concerns raised regarding this option including potential impacts to the water table and a perceived division of the suburb. Ensuring the projects would have visual amenity that appealed to the local area was considered to be the main priority for the future of the projects.

### 12.5.3 Design development

During the EES phase, there was a strong focus on stakeholder engagement through the project's TRG. The TRG, convened by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), provided advice to the project team on key issues and concerns from their respective areas of interest. This ongoing engagement with councils and relevant government agencies has enabled the key issues and interests of Victorian and local government to be incorporated into the EES.

A Community Reference Group (CRG) was also formed during the EES investigations to strengthen links with the community and to share information about the EES process and outcomes. This group helped promote broader engagement activities including community workshops and one-on-one meetings. This engagement provided an understanding of the concerns and preferred outcomes of local residents, businesses and other interested parties and ensured that these were considered in the design and assessment process. Key themes from discussions included traffic impacts, managing and protecting the wetlands, business continuity and management of the construction and disruption.

In addition, LXRA met directly with local groups and stakeholders including Kingston City Council and the Friends of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands to gain feedback on key areas of interest, and to allow more in-depth conversations around impacts and mitigations.

LXRA undertook broad consultation during this stage to further inform the design and enhance overall project outcomes, as summarised in Table 12.5. This included meetings, briefings and workshops with communities and stakeholders to understand the issues and work collaboratively on potential mitigations, resulting in a better outcome for all involved.

**Table 12.5 Summary of engagement during the design development phase**

Method	Purpose	Result
<b>Meetings (including as part of social and business impact assessments)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One-on-one meetings were held with a number of key stakeholders to gain insight and feedback on the design, construction impacts and environmental considerations</li> <li>A CRG was established with 12 members representing a diverse range of groups and opinions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Met with 20 business stakeholders as part of the business impact assessment</li> <li>Interviewed a range of stakeholders as part of the social impact assessment</li> <li>The CRG met twice (7 September and 9 November 2017) during the preparation of the EES.</li> </ul>
<b>Community workshops and information sessions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A community workshop was held with three key themes that were of interest to local communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>walking and cycling</li> <li>station precinct and design</li> <li>construction impacts.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32 people attended the community workshop held in September 2017 at the Patterson River Golf Club.</li> </ul>
<b>'Your level crossings' online engagement hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An online engagement hub featuring project information, including details about the EES process, as well as opportunities to ask questions through a Q&amp;A tool and provide feedback through a survey was made available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3,300 visits to the online engagement hub during the design development phase</li> <li>35 questions asked and responded to via the Q&amp;A tool</li> <li>173 survey responses received to the 'Have your say' survey launched following the community workshop.</li> </ul>
<b>Surveys and feedback forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative research was conducted to assess baseline awareness of the EES and measure and seek feedback on potential impacts</li> <li>Follow-up research to be conducted at the end of the EES phase to test awareness levels against the baseline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial research demonstrated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>69 per cent of the Edithvale respondents had 'some' awareness of the EES</li> <li>63 per cent of the Bonbeach respondents had 'some' awareness of the EES.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

As a result of the telephone surveys completed at the start of the EES phase, the two issues that stood out as most important for respondents were:

- the impact on traffic flow during and after construction (44 per cent of Edithvale respondents and 39 per cent of Bonbeach respondents named this as most important)
- impacts on the natural environment, including the Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands (Edithvale 41 per cent and Bonbeach 30 per cent).

When asked if there was anything else more important to them that the EES should consider, the issues most raised were:

- Edithvale:** impact on the natural environment (trees/water table), the impact on local residents during construction, a preference for an underground option, look of the design/aesthetics.
- Bonbeach:** the look of the design/aesthetics, impact on local residents during construction, preference for an underground option, consideration for pedestrians and children using the area.

A community workshop was held on 14 September 2017 with 32 community members and covered three key themes and topics: walking and cycling connections, the look and feel of the station precinct and planning and managing disruption.



There was concern about the viability of a shared path alongside the rail line although many suggested that travel to the beach was by foot, stressing the importance for improved safety for pedestrians crossing the Nepean Highway. Many expressed an interest in 'beachy' themed stations with natural treatments that blend into the village community. Other comments included the need for hardy and ample plants to survive the beach landscape and a well-lit and open design to improve safety. There were concerns about increased disruption during construction, as well as increased noise levels. While feedback was mixed on the best time to undertake the works, all agreed that strong communication and adequate advance warning was required before any works.

#### 12.5.4 Preliminary design

A round of consultation is scheduled for early 2018 to encourage people to view the information presented in the EES and seek feedback through formal channels.

Planned methods of engagement for this phase include a dedicated website, information sessions and activities to identify and inform hard to reach communities. A broad communications campaign would be carried out to promote the exhibition and would include newsletters letterbox drops to residents, signage, media, advertising, website, email and social media updates.

#### 12.5.5 Project delivery

A comprehensive Community and Stakeholder Management Plan would be developed to support the delivery phase of the projects.

During project delivery, the focus of engagement would shift to information on timing and impacts from the construction activities. This would include considering community concerns and feedback around construction impacts, and how the project team can avoid, minimise or mitigate impacts and disruptions.

These activities would be supported by the establishment of a Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) to help facilitate communication during construction. Members would meet bi-monthly to discuss construction progress and raise any issues. Ongoing communications via letters, phone calls, Variable Message Signs, emails, social media and online channels would continue.

## 12.6 Consultation activities and tools

LXRA has used a range of communications and engagement activities and tools to keep people informed of the process and progress for each project, and to highlight opportunities for involvement along the way. Community and stakeholder feedback is collected, recorded and considered as part of the project at each stage in LXRA's community database, as well as through its online systems and hard copy feedback forms.

Engagement activities have been targeted to the various phases, audiences and needs of each stakeholder. These methods are listed below.

### 12.6.1 Print communications

Traditional print communications have been used extensively throughout the engagement to disseminate information and seek public participation. These have included:

- project newsletters dropped to neighbouring suburbs and available at local train stations, libraries and council and Member of Parliament offices
- fact sheets, brochures, posters and signage
- media and advertising
- maps and other visual aids.



### 12.6.2 Digital communications

Dedicated pages were established on the LXRA website <[www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au](http://www.levelcrossings.vic.gov.au)> and updated regularly with consultation opportunities. An online engagement tool, through the 'Your Level Crossings' online engagement hub has proven a successful way to gain feedback. Other methods included:

- email updates
- social media
- videos, 3D modelling and digital advertising.

### 12.6.3 Engagement

Engagement methods have been targeted to the audience and phase of the project. A CRG was established during the EES phase to facilitate communication and inform on progress. Workshops were also held on key topics of interest, such as urban design and walking and cycling connections, to capture local perspectives, insights and aspirations for local communities during the design development phase. Additional avenues of engagement included:

- stakeholder briefings to help strengthen relationships, encourage participation and increase understanding of project issues and opportunities
- meetings involving one-on-one discussions with interested traders and residents to hear concerns and address issues
- information sessions during the formal exhibition stage to display EES documentation and provide access to core team members to answer any questions
- community presentations to local groups to increase awareness about the project and EES process.

### 12.6.4 Hard to reach

During the exhibition phase, a focus of the engagement approach is to ensure all members of the community are able to have their say on the projects. LXRA would implement options to ensure all feedback is captured, particularly those of hard to reach communities. Information for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities will be provided and a language line for interpreters is already established. Other means would include:

- advertising in specific language publications
- holding events in accessible venues
- consultation with community group leaders to identify vulnerable and hard to reach communities
- collaboration with local government to use known contacts.

## 12.7 Stakeholders

LXRA has engaged with a range of stakeholders as part of the consultation process – from the early investigations phase through to the EES process. The interest and awareness levels of the communities, particularly those who live or work, in or near Edithvale and Bonbeach has been extremely high, and participation in the projects has been actively encouraged.

Key stakeholders engaged by the project include those that live or work, in or near Edithvale or Bonbeach and/or have an interest in transport, land or environmental impacts.

### 12.7.1 Approvers and Government

The Victorian Minister for Planning and the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment are the Ministers responsible for the primary project-wide planning and environment approvals for both projects, under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, respectively. Aboriginal Victoria is also responsible for approving the necessary Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

The project's planning process also requires detailed engagement and a rigorous approval process with regulators and other government agencies including the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy, DELWP, Melbourne Water, EPA Victoria, Heritage Victoria, and the Kingston City Council. Local Members of Parliament were also consulted.

Kingston City Council has had a strong level of engagement in planning for the level crossing removals at Edithvale and Bonbeach. Council was primarily engaged directly via meetings, briefings, attendance at information sessions and representation on the TRG.

### 12.7.2 Community and stakeholders

Many industry associations, peak bodies, local community groups and transport focused organisations have an interest in the projects. Varied communication methods were used to engage these stakeholders including briefings, information sessions, workshops, presentations and an online presence.

These groups included transport user groups such as the RACV, transport operators being Metro Trains Melbourne, special interest groups like the local surf lifesaving clubs or the Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, and the relevant utility providers.

The CRG, established during the EES phase, includes a diverse range of community members including residents, traders, Kingston City Council staff, Bonbeach Life Saving Club, Chelsea Bonbeach Train Station Group, Kingston Conservation and Environment Coalition, and Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.

## 12.8 Feedback received through engagement

LXRA has captured community and stakeholder feedback at each engagement phase. This has allowed communities and stakeholders multiple opportunities to provide input to improve outcomes and share concerns about the design, impacts and benefits of the project from inception to completion.

Continuous improvement has been informed by the feedback received, including tailoring engagement to the community needs, establishing reference groups and informing the detailed designs.

Table 12.6 outlines how feedback has been used to inform design solutions and how it will continue to inform the project.

**Table 12.6 How feedback is informing design**

Project stage	Timing	How feedback is informing the project
Early planning and consultation for removing the level crossings	February 2016 – October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community and stakeholder feedback considered as part of the options analysis and shortlisting phase.</li> </ul>
Feedback analysis, further technical works and determination of design solutions – rail trenches	October 2016 – March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trenches selected for Edithvale and Bonbeach following community feedback, technical assessments and environmental considerations.</li> </ul>
Detailed planning through the EES process	June 2017 – December 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation on detailed aspects of the projects including potential environmental impacts and mitigations, urban design (including streetscape and landscape design), location and design of pedestrian bridges over the trenches, parking, walking and cycling connections, station design and construction impacts</li> <li>LXRA will provide feedback gained from this phase of the project into its tender process so the contractor is fully briefed and aware of community concerns and desires.</li> </ul>
Formal exhibition, Inquiry and Assessment	Early – mid 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public submissions through the formal exhibition of the EES</li> <li>Submissions to independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee</li> <li>Minister for Planning's Assessment and consideration of approvals.</li> </ul>
Construction	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing communication regarding construction, expected impacts and mitigations</li> <li>Opportunities to inform construction methodology and ways to reduce impacts</li> <li>Dedicated communications and stakeholder resources to handle issues or concerns during construction.</li> </ul>



## 12.9 Response to feedback

Capturing community and stakeholder feedback has been a vital part of the EES process. Although engagement on the project was initiated some 12 months prior to the EES process commencing, this phase allowed for a more in-depth conversation around targeted topics of interest.

The EES document responds to the impacts and effects of the projects, with the environmental performance requirements capturing responses to these issues. Table 12.7 further outlines the key topics of community and stakeholder interest during the EES phase of the projects and LXRA's responses. This data was captured through face-to-face meetings, online surveys, a community workshop, telephone surveys, the CRG and via written submissions received from Edithvale and Bonbeach residents that came about during the Mentone level crossing removal's planning process, which extended along each side of the rail corridor as far down as Bonbeach.



**Table 12.7 LXRA response to community feedback**

Project stage timing	How feedback is informing the project
<p>Community members expressed concern about construction impacts, particularly around traffic disruption during construction and associated impacts to local businesses. Noise and interruption to services such as power and internet were also raised as concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LXRA has removed 10 level crossings over the past two years, with a further 16 currently under construction. Many of these projects have been, and are being undertaken in busy town centres featuring shopping centres and major access routes. LXRA has continually learnt from each project to develop strategies for minimising impacts on the community.</li> <li>LXRA and its contractors have implemented specific measures on past projects to reduce construction impacts on surrounding communities. Such measures have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>relocating residents during unavoidable night works or long rail shut down periods</li> <li>water carts to reduce dust</li> <li>a dedicated 24-hour community contact line so concerns can be responded to immediately.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The successful contractor for these projects would develop targeted strategies outlining how impacts would be managed and communicated to locals before works start. LXRA would review and approve these documents in line with its Contractor Communications Specifications. This includes minimum notice periods for construction works, as well as disruptions affecting commuters, drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LXRA has a strong focus on trader engagement. Targeted trader engagement strategies would be developed for the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects. These strategies would include measures to reduce impacts on traders, such as scheduling works outside of busy periods, where possible, as well as developing a 'Shop Local' campaign to promote and highlight local businesses. There are also opportunities to partner with local businesses such as food suppliers to provide services and goods to the workforce and to disrupted commuters during rail shut down periods. The trader engagement strategies would be developed by the preferred contractor for the projects, with input and oversight from LXRA.</li> </ul>
<p>There was interest in the location and type of access that would be provided across the rail trench. Previous phases of engagement had indicated approximate locations of pedestrian overpasses. Some alternatives were provided during this phase for community comment. Pedestrian safety is a concern for locals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LXRA have focused heavily on consulting with the community on movement and access, and the proposed locations of pedestrian rail crossings.</li> <li>During a survey conducted for Edithvale during the design phase, LXRA sought feedback on replacing the pedestrian crossings at Berry Avenue and Denmark Avenue with elevated pedestrian crossings. Ground level access could also be available at Fraser Avenue.</li> <li>76 per cent of those who responded to the Edithvale survey indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the proposed locations of the pedestrian rail crossings.</li> <li>The same survey was done for Bonbeach, where LXRA are proposing to combine the Broadway/Wellwood and Golden/Chadwell pedestrian level crossings into one, safer elevated crossing to be located at Golden Avenue and Chadwell Grove. The Broadway/Wellwood pedestrian level crossing will be removed.</li> <li>55 per cent of those who responded were either satisfied or very satisfied with the location of the Bonbeach pedestrian rail crossing.</li> </ul>

Project stage timing	How feedback is informing the project
<p>CRG members and stakeholder groups such as the Friends of the Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands expressed concern about the possible environmental effects of the project, particularly any effects on regional groundwater and the internationally protected wetlands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LXRA has undertaken significant investigations into the possible environmental effects of the project, particularly any effects to the ecology of the Edithvale-Seafood Wetlands and regional groundwater.</li> <li>• The technical work and findings have been peer reviewed by some of the country's foremost experts in this field. In addition, feedback was sought from the project's TRG and associated agencies during the process.</li> <li>• Following this work, it was determined there would be a negligible impact on the wetlands as a result of the project.</li> <li>• The EES findings and recommendations would be considered by the Victorian Minister for Planning and the Commonwealth Minister for Environment and Energy.</li> <li>• LXRA would comply with the recommendations resulting from these stringent and transparent legislative processes.</li> </ul>
<p>The look and feel of the new station precincts attracted some interest. There were many suggestions for particular design treatments, such as matching in with the natural beach environment. Many commented that stations should be designed as open and welcoming buildings that discourage undesirable behaviour such as vandalism and crime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LXRA has a strong focus on urban design, having developed overarching principles and project-specific guidelines for Edithvale and Bonbeach. These have been informed by community feedback.</li> <li>• Chapter 11 <i>Urban design approach</i> provides further detail regarding the design opportunities and constraints for these sites.</li> <li>• LXRA and its contractor would continue to provide opportunities for community and stakeholder input as the projects progress towards construction.</li> <li>• Although there are limited opportunities for planting and landscaping with the rail trench solutions, LXRA would continue to work with local groups on environmental initiatives associated with the project, such as station plantings and water-sensitive design treatments.</li> </ul>
<p>Many expressed concern about the lack of car parking in both Edithvale and Bonbeach. There was concern about lack of parking during construction, as well as in the ultimate design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LXRA, through its traffic studies, is looking at potential offsite parking locations for a large workforce during construction. While some parking would be affected by construction activities, this would be minimised as much as possible to keep parking available to locals.</li> <li>• The trench solution does not offer opportunities to increase parking compared with the current offering. LXRA is ensuring no net loss of commuter parking as part of its design and would continue to look for opportunities to optimise parking where possible.</li> </ul>
<p>A number of community members reinforced their preference for rail trenches. There was some concern regarding the EES process and whether the findings could trigger a change in design to a rail bridge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Victorian Government announced rail trench solutions for Edithvale and Bonbeach in February 2017. This EES process has assessed the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of rail trenches.</li> <li>• The project designs have been amended to mitigate potential effects on groundwater, and LXRA maintains that trench solutions are feasible at both Edithvale and Bonbeach.</li> <li>• The EES and its findings will now be referred to the Victorian Minister for Planning for his assessment.</li> </ul>



## 12.10 Ongoing engagement

LXRA is committed to continuing to inform, consult and involve community members and stakeholders during the next phase of the level crossing removals at Edithvale and Bonbeach.

The following communications and engagement activities are planned to help inform the public on the final documentation and encourage participation during formal exhibition:

- community information sessions
- focus on hard to reach communities
- respond to email and phone queries
- communications regarding the exhibition including:
  - newsletters letterbox drops to residents
  - signage
  - media and advertising
  - website information and email updates
  - social media
  - pop-ups.

Upon completion of the EES process during mid to late 2018, planning and environmental approvals are expected to be obtained. This would lead to further design development in preparation for construction to commence, all of which would be outlined in a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy that would be developed to support the delivery phase of the projects.

During this phase, the key priorities are to inform the community of construction timing and associated impacts prior to works commencing, while obtaining feedback to encourage continuous improvement.

LXRA would undertake the following communications and engagement activities during this time:

- ongoing communications via newsletter and email updates, website information and social media
- respond to email and phone queries
- establish a Stakeholder Liaison Group (SLG) to help facilitate communication during construction. Members would meet bi-monthly to discuss construction progress and raise issues or concerns.

In addition, the successful project delivery partner would be required to develop a Construction Environmental Management Plan to ensure that processes and controls are put in place to avoid, minimise or mitigate potential environmental effects.