

Meeting Minutes



Southern Community Liaison Group

Date	17/10/2025	Time	10am – 12pm
Chair	Jeni Coutts	Meeting no.	7 of 2025
Location	Manningham Hotel and Club	Minute taker	Emily Sun

Attendees

Attendees			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Jeni Coutts (JC)	Chair	Mia McMahon (MM)	Spark
Frank Freschi (FF)	Community Representative	Fahad Majeed (FM)	NEL
John van Delft (JVD)	Community Representative	Megan Cusack (MC)	ETSA
Ros Magee (RM)	Community Representative	Christian Green (CG)	EHBA
Glennys Jones (GJ)	Community Representative	Dennis Joyce (DJ)	EBTA
Leah McGuinness (LMc)	Whitehorse City Council	Michael Hobbs (MH)	NEL
Amy Cassidy (AC)	EHBA	Jaimie Ledwidge (JL)	EBTA
Emily Sun (ES)	NEL	Rebecca Stewart (RS)	Spark
Connor Curtin (CC)	Manningham City Council	Nic Morton (NM)	NEL
Shayne Garratt (SG)	NEL	James Hamilton (JH)	Spark

Apologies

Apologies			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Joe Carbone (JCa)	Community Representative	Milan Dhruve (MD)	Spark

Apologies			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Niamh Kenny (NK)	NEL	Sean Larkin (SL)	NEL
Clare Davey (CD)	Boroondara City Council	Christine Spencer (CS)	NEL
Judith Voce (JVo)	Community Representative	Nic Moore (NMo)	Community Representative
Otto Sargent (OH)	Community Representative	Alexander Law (AL)	Community Representative
Rachel Kamath (RK)	Whitehorse City Council		

Previous actions – short term

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
SC25 6-1	CD requested to understand if the cladding of the ventilation structure is reflective	MM	05/09/2025	Closed	MM provided a verbal update on the cladding of the ventilation structure.
SC25 6-2	Presentation on how all shared paths connect and coordinate across North East Link	NEL	05/09/2025	Moved	Moved to future presentations.

Previous actions – long term

No.	Owner	Topic	Status
SC24 6-8	MH	OS requests if a meeting can be scheduled upon the completion of the Doncaster Park and Ride UDLP to include a PTV representative	MH investigating internally
SC25 5-10	MRPV	Burke Road lighting	MRPV provided written response from DTP to RM on 8 April discussing its safety assessment on the current lighting on Burke Road.
SC25 5-4	LM	Site walk/tour of the northern end of the project	Spark to schedule in, will follow up with a date.

Future Presentations

Scheduled Date	Date Raised	Topic	Owner	Update
2025	Initially raised: 14/04/2023 Re-raised: 18/10/2024 02/05/2025 05/09/2025	Flooding considerations across North East Link	MHi & Spark	MHi and Spark to present more information on flood mitigation in future presentations when more information becomes available.
2026	05/09/2025	How do all the shared paths connect and coordinate across the North East Link project	NEL	NEL comms team will present on shared path connections

Key discussion points/decisions

Owner	Discussion
Jeni Coutts (JC)	Acknowledgment of Country
Jeni Coutts (JC)	Welcome and Introductions JC advised that Nic Moore has resigned from the Community Liaison Group due to personal circumstance changes and thanked Nic for the contributions he has made over the years as part of the SCLG. JC asked everyone to consider starting the meeting earlier or ending the meeting later in future for lengthier presentations. Short term actions SC25 6-1: MM said the cladding will be a low-reflective bronze with an aluminium finish. Assessment done as a part of the urban design process indicates that the cladding meets safety standards and will be a low bronze finish for divers passing, rather than a glare. ACTION CLOSED. RM: Cladding with a coloured finish has the tendency to not last long, so he will want information about the lifespan of the cladding. ACTION CREATED – SC25 7-1 (RM requested information on the lifespan of the cladding). SC25 6-2: Action has been moved to future presentations. Long term actions No updates Future presentations No updates
Christian Green (CG)	Hoddle to Burke UDLP Update <u>Presentation covered major works that will happen in Hoddle to Burke package, relevant project partners and public exhibition and submissions of Hoddle to Burke package UDLP.</u>

Owner	Discussion
	GJ and FF said 21 days is not enough for the community members to complete the UDLP consultation. GJ asked why the community was only provided 21 days for Hoddle to Burke package UDLP submissions while Tram to Springvale package UDLP submissions was extended by 7 days. AC: The contractor did not set this time frame, but they can take this on notice. MC: The State and the Minister for Planning set a number of conditions and requirements that must be satisfied as part of the UDLP process. The Tram to Springvale UDLP exhibition was extended due to an anomaly in distribution to meet the UDLP requirement that all directly impacted stakeholders within 150 metres of the project area are informed of the start of UDLP exhibition and are invited to provide a submission. The Tram to Springvale Alliance was not confident that all directly impacted stakeholders were adequately notified and, as a result, the UDLP exhibition was extended for 7 days based on advice from the State. GJ asked MC if they have the statistics of Tram to Springvale package UDLP submissions. MC: The statistics will potentially arrive today. RM said public exhibitions on planning are regularly extended to allow community consultation, so he disagrees that the extension of UDLP process should be an argument. RM said late 2025 is close to Christmas, which does not give people confidence to complete the UDLP submissions on time. JC added that people might miss the UDLP as they will be busy during Christmas. JC asked CG to take this feedback onboard. ACTION created – SC25 7-2 (CG to pass on the feedback regarding the timing and duration for UDLP submissions) RM said it takes time for them as a volunteer group in the community to share the UDLP information and gather feedback. The actual timing they have is only 7 to 14 days, which is not 21 days. FM: The Project is not targeting Christmas at this stage, the UDLP exhibition and submissions will be earlier. JC said 7 days extension was well received last time during the Tram and Springvale UDLP. RM added that 7 days extension is reasonable. GJ asked if the UDLP collateral is available in other languages apart from English as there is a high population diversity in the area. CG: CALD translating and interpreting service information is available on all collateral. The project has undertaken extensive research into language groups and identified a small culturally and linguistically diverse community within the project scope. CALD services will be enough to deliver information. They will also reach out to culturally and linguistically diverse network, such as Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre. GJ asked about the width of Roseneath bridge. CG: This bridge is outside of the project boundary, but it should be approximately 3 metres wide. GJ said the busway lanes end at Hoddle Street will finish almost a kilometre short at a pedestrian bridge for the cyclists. The outer circle of the project which runs from the Oakleigh area all the way across Chandler Highway is an historic rail bridge and a landmark of the whole corridor.

Owner	Discussion
	GJ also asked how the goat track that goes across to the Kilby Road underpass will be connected to the new walking and cycling bridge across the Chandler Highway. She said this goat track was a key project developed by John Monash, so people in Boroondara feel strongly about it. FM encouraged GJ to attend the UDLP exhibition to express her opinions. Eastern Freeways Burke to Tram construction update <u>Presentation covered updates on the construction progress in Bulleen/Balwyn North, Estelle Street bridge and Heyington Avenue bridge, improved wetlands design near Valda Avenue and Doncaster Park and Ride.</u> RM asked what has been done to minimise graffiti on the retaining wall across the whole project. JL: The texture of the retaining wall is not flat, which makes it less attractive as it does not make a perfect finish for artwork. The coating used is easy for graffiti removal. There is also buffer planting in other areas in front of the retaining wall to prevent people from accessing it. FF asked if the Doncaster Road bridge has been finished. DJ: Half-finished. FF asked if the improved design of the Valda Wetlands is a consequence of the UDLP (or subsequent to the UDLP submissions?). JL: Yes. FF asked if the increase in car parks is minor once the Doncaster Park and Ride is built. JL: There will not be a massive increase in car parks for the Doncaster Park and Ride. However, when the two park and ride facilities combined, the amount of parking doubles. RM asked if the Doncaster Park and Ride is extendable vertically. DJ: If the park and ride facility becomes higher, there will be overshadowing issues. RM said both the Doncaster Park and Ride and Bulleen Park and Ride will be full once they become accessible as one hub. DJ: The new pick-up and drop-off element will allow a better patronage as before it used to be in with the buses which was a bit haphazard. FF asked if charging for electric bikes will be provided in Doncaster Park and Ride. DJ: I will need to take this on notice. There will be bicycle secure facilities. MH: There might be provision of charging in the future. ACTION created – SC25 7-3 (DJ and JL to provide the information about electric bike charging in Doncaster Park and Ride)
Megan Cusack (MC)	Eastern Freeways Tram to Springvale construction update <u>Presentation covered the introduction to Tram to Springvale Alliance, updates on project progress from July to October and construction focus from October 2025 to January 2026.</u>

Owner	Discussion
	FF asked if the enhanced open spaces will be returned to the same area. MC: Yes. FF said Joseph Street, Blackburn North is a residential street with limited space for worker parking. MC: As an intro measure, the moving of office-based staff and designers from 1010 La Trobe Street to Joseph Street was delayed. There is currently only a selected number of staff in Joseph Street now as the workforce needs a space to do toolbox and starter (talks / briefings?) into shifts every night. They are doing a staged approach to mitigate the issue of worker parking. JC asked where the current office location of Tram to Springvale Alliance is. MC: 1010 La Trobe Street, Docklands. FF asked when Tram to Springvale Alliance will move into Joseph Street. MC: There will be a bigger presence of the staff from December, but the whole team will not move until April 2026. FF asked if there are any anticipated freeway closures. MC: It will be covered in the traffic updates later. JL: We will work together with Tram to Springvale Alliance as there are some extensions of closures to facilitate works. FF asked how different packages of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades will work together as a whole project. MC: JL and I are already planning for works in January to minimise disruptions. FF said Tram to Springvale Alliance should learn from the experiences of Burke to Tram Alliance in terms of pollution, noise and tree removals. GJ asked on behalf of Peter Carter about the safety and the tunnel-like atmosphere of the path between Jocelyn Avenue and the retaining wall. MH: Peter has already had a detailed conversation with the construction manager regarding the shared path at a recent Valda Wetlands community event. The project has a commitment to create a path to a safe standard with a clear line of sight. GJ asked about the width of the path between Jocelyn Avenue and the retaining wall. MH: At least 3 metres. MH said that the path will be compliant with all the design and safety requirements.

Mia McMahon (MM)

North East Link construction update

Presentation covered construction updates on Manningham Road site, tunnelling at Trinity Site, tunnel construction at Bulleen cut and cover and first permanent lining pour in the North Bound tunnel carriageway.

No questions were asked.

Mia McMahon (MM)

North East Link 2025 traffic changes update

Presentation covered a recap of the September campaign and the latest progress of TBM tracker.

No questions were asked.

Owner	Discussion
Jaimie Ledwidge (JL)	Eastern Freeways Burke to Tram 2025 traffic changes update <u>Presentation covered Eastern Freeway full weekend closure in November, Doncaster Ringwood bound exit ramp closure and High St closure, detour information, changes in Doncaster Road interchange and future freeway disruptions.</u> RM said the detour via Doncaster Road and Bulleen Road was hectic and people were avoiding the detour route during the weekend closure in September. JL: The Project received feedback from Westfield around 4.50pm on Saturday 6 September saying that they were struggling to get the traffic exiting from their car park into the detour. The Project worked with the Department of Transport and Planning to adjust signalling for Westfield for the last trading hour so there was extra time for the traffic to get out of the car park. MH: We heard that there was a massive reduction of traffic near the freeway. JC commented that the signalling arrangement is amazing.
Megan Cusack (MC)	Eastern Freeways Tram to Springvale 2025 traffic changes update <u>Presentation covered traffic changes between Tram and Middleborough roads, weekend closure of Middleborough Road citybound freeway entry ramp and upcoming freeway closures.</u> No questions were asked.
Mia McMahon (MM)	North East Link 2026 traffic changes update <u>Presentation covered future changes to traffic conditions in Bulleen and traffic changes on Manningham Road and Bridge Street in January 2026.</u> No questions were asked.
Rebecca Stewart (RS)	North East Link community engagement update <u>Presentation covered community interactions over the past two months and upcoming community events.</u> FF suggested that SPARK can use a presentation format similar to that of the Burke to Tram Alliance to show the breakdown of project interactions visually with a diagram. ACTION created – SC25 7-4 (RS to provide further detail of community engagement topics at next meeting)

Owner	Discussion
Jaimie Ledwidge (JL)	Eastern Freeways community engagement update <u>Presentation covered community interactions over the past two months, common issues raised by residents and community initiatives.</u> GJ asked if repeated callers for complaints are counted. JL: They are counted individually, so there will be some repeated callers in the statistics. GJ asked what is happening at Belle Vue Primary School as she saw some telecommunications works underway in the area and people entering the school oval. JL: Detour is currently in place in and around Belle Vue Primary School oval to get to Bulleen Road. The works were completed during school holidays. There were previous school pop ups with the school community to ensure they were aware of the changes. The Project received positive feedback from Belle Vue Primary School that they would like to keep the hoarding. MH said the Project explored three different detours to avoid impacting the school, but due to factors like steep gradients and heavy traffic on Bulleen Road, the detour near the school was found to be the best option. The hoarding is in place to separate pedestrians from the school while the school can still use its oval.
James Hamilton (JH)	North East Link environment update <u>Presentation covered August environmental monitoring summary, including surface water, ground water, noise vibration and air quality, and updates on Banyule Creek and SEM D-Wall hammering noise complaints.</u> FF asked what caused the concentrated blue colour of the Banyule Creek. JH: It is a polymer product designed to have a dye in it and was incorrectly discharged into the creek. FF said the bulk discharge of the polymer product sounds like negligence. JH: Discharging polymer is a very common process undertaken in projects around Melbourne and Australia. The incident took place over a shift with unexpected rainfall and was incorrectly discharged in this instance. The project worked quickly with the EPA to clean up the creek and have since strengthened controls on site. FF asked if the condition of the River Red Gum tree is better than before the work started. JH: The tree is well managed by the senior environment advisor at the Manningham site.
Jaimie Ledwidge (JL)	Eastern Freeway upgrades environmental update <u>Presentation covered August monitoring summary, including surface water, noise, vibration and air quality.</u> FF asked if there will be more piling in the future. JL: There will still be piling works in some areas, but they are trying their best to avoid night piling works. RM asked when they will get confirmation on flood preventions across the entire Eastern Freeway Project. What will the Project implement during rain events or other weather events such as the mini tornado that came down the Eastern Freeway and flooded the Bulleen Road in 2003.

Owner	Discussion
	Floods can cause huge damage to the TBM and the Project. MH: Flood plans are already in place. JH: We have spent a lot of time revisiting the temporary works to ensure a good understanding of the areas at risk. Five management strategies were developed and SPARK got covers in place for the SEM Tunnel at Trinity North and temporary protection for the Bulleen Cut and Cover, where the extension wall will prevent water from entering. RM asked how different packages of the Eastern Freeway Upgrades work as a whole project to mitigate flood during heavy rainfall. MH: Pumps are in place. JL: The Burke to Tram Alliance has a system that when weather forecast comes out with a significant rain event, the team will be notified, and an action plan will be triggered. There are also pumps in the creek. GJ said that Melbourne Water has recently completed the flood mapping for the City of Yarra. The flood data for Boroondara is currently under review. GJ asked will the Project look at these data. JL: We have ongoing dialogues with Melbourne Water as there has been works on the creek bed which require approval from Melbourne Water. The Project is aware of the data and will be informed when there are changes in flood management. JH said Melbourne Water is a major project stakeholder as flood modelling and review will have to be forwarded to them. CC said that Melbourne Water needs to sign off everything.

Jeni Coutts (JC)

Questions and open forum

JC said that Luke was going to arrange a tour of the northern section. JC asked about the process and progress of the tour. MM: There are some dates they are looking at in November. The tour will be similar to the last one which will start early in the morning with site tour in Manningham and Bulleen and then ends with lunch. Details to be confirmed.

LMc thanked the Burke to Tram Alliance for taking the Whitehorse City Council's feedback on UDLP onboard and make some changes.

GJ asked what is happening with the new driveway access that goes across the shared path at the existing project site on Burke Road. CG: Noticed and will pass this onto the team.

ACTION created – SC25 7-5 (CG to provide an update on the new driveway access that goes across the shared path at the existing project site on Burke Road).

Actions – new

No.	Owner	Topic	Status
SC25 7-1	MM	RM requested information on the lifespan of the cladding	Update to be provided in next meeting
SC25 7-2	CG	CG to pass on the feedback regarding the timing and duration for UDLP submissions.	Update to be provided in next meeting

No.	Owner	Topic	Status
SC25 7-3	DJ & JL	DJ and JL to provide the information about electric bike charging in Doncaster Park and Ride	Update to be provided in agenda
SC25 7-4	RS	RS to provide further detail about community engagement topics	Update to be provided in next meeting
SC25 7-5	CG	CG to provide an update on the new driveway access that goes across the shared path at the existing project site on Burke Road.	Update to be provided in next meeting

Additional information