



**SUBURBAN
RAIL LOOP
EAST**



What we heard

**Engagement Report – Early design for
Sir William Fry Reserve new and improved
open space**

November 2025



Table of contents

Introduction	2
Early design	3
Consultation approach	4
Who we heard from	6
What we heard	8
New open space and replacement facilities	8
Additional feedback	14
Out of scope feedback	16
Stakeholder engagement	18
Next steps	19

'Remembering Country'
Bitja (Dixon Patten Jnr)
Bayila Creative

Acknowledgement of Country

Suburban Rail Loop Authority acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, sky, and waters across Victoria and pays respects to their Elders past and present.

We proudly recognise the strength and enduring connection to Country as the world's longest living culture and the profound wisdom, resilience, and contributions of First Peoples and their communities.

We are committed to the ongoing journey of reconciliation by embedding self-determined Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing across the lifespan of the SRL project.

Introduction

Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) will connect our suburbs, slash travel times and deliver more homes and housing choice where people want to live – within walking distance of world-class public transport, services, schools, universities and quality open space. SRL East from Cheltenham to Box Hill will transform our public transport network, connecting major employment, health, education and retail destinations in Melbourne's east and south east.

The new SRL station at Cheltenham will be the southern gateway to the SRL network, providing faster and more convenient public transport to key destinations across Melbourne's suburbs.

New and improved open space at Sir William Fry Reserve

We understand open space is important to the Highett, Cheltenham, Pennydale and surrounding communities. We're making sure Sir William Fry Reserve continues to be a great place for people to play and relax while we build the new SRL station at Cheltenham and into the future.

To prepare for construction of the new station, we're delivering new permanent open space in the former Highett Gasworks site and improving other parts of Sir William Fry Reserve.

The new permanent open space will replace the parkland needed in the southern part of Sir William Fry Reserve to build the SRL station at Cheltenham and associated developments.

We will relocate and upgrade the existing skate park and basketball court.

New cycling and walking paths will be built to link Station Street, Highett to Sir William Fry Reserve. This will deliver a key part of the long sought strategic cycling and walking corridor along the Frankston rail line, increasing connectivity between neighbourhoods and improving local access to the reserve.

The new and improved open space will be ready to use in 2028.

A Public Open Space Management Plan (POSMP) is being developed to guide the changes to Sir William Fry Reserve. This is being undertaken in collaboration with the SRL East Public Open Space Advisory Panel, an independent panel with experts in open space, urban design, community consultation and landscape architecture. The POSMP is expected to be completed in early 2026.

Early design

Community and stakeholders were consulted on the early design for Sir William Fry Reserve as shown below, including new permanent open space in the former Highett Gasworks site, and new and improved facilities within the reserve.



Figure 1: Early design for new and improved open space at Sir William Fry Reserve as shown during community consultation

Consultation approach

From 5 August to 2 September 2025, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) collected community and stakeholder feedback on the early design for the new and improved open space at Sir William Fry Reserve.

We received feedback through an Engage Victoria survey as well as via face-to-face pop ups, emails and a workshop with the Cheltenham Precinct Reference Group (PRG).

We sought community and stakeholder feedback on:

- New permanent open space in the former Highett Gasworks site
- Relocated and upgraded skate park
- Relocated and upgraded basketball court
- Further improvements to the reserve
- Draft design principles.

Consultation was broadly promoted through:

- Distribution of more than 5,300 fact sheets to local residents surrounding the reserve
- Hosting pop-up information stalls at Sir William Fry Reserve and Highett Library
- Displaying posters at the reserve with QR codes linking to the Engage Victoria survey

- Displaying sticker decals on the existing skate park and basketball court with QR codes linking to the Engage Victoria survey
- Distribution of E-news to around 4,000 Cheltenham and SRL East subscribers
- Using social media and advertising to increase awareness and participation
- Undertaking a workshop with the Cheltenham PRG
- Hosting focus groups with local skate park users to inform the skate park design.

Additionally, from May 2025 we engaged stakeholders including the SRL East Public Open Space Advisory Panel, Kingston City Council, Bayside City Council, Development Victoria and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

A summary of feedback, and how it has shaped design development, is included in this report.

How community and stakeholders responded

- 241 Engage Victoria submissions
- 3 email submissions from community members
- 2 community group submissions including Highett Progress Association and Kingston Residents Association
- 2 council submissions including Kingston City Council and Bayside City Council

How we reached people

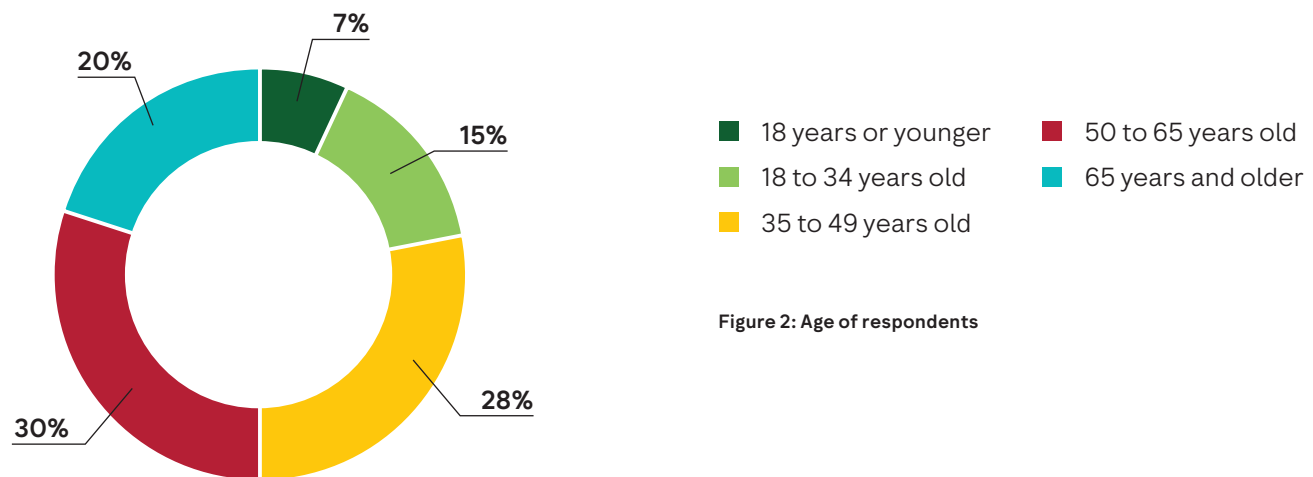
- 5,300+ factsheets delivered to mailboxes
- 5,200+ Engage Victoria page visitors
- 139,000 + impressions on Facebook and Instagram posts
- 440 + clicks on Facebook and Instagram posts
- 58,000 outdoor ad impressions
- 259,000 digital ad impressions on local websites
- 47 in-person conversations at pop-ups.



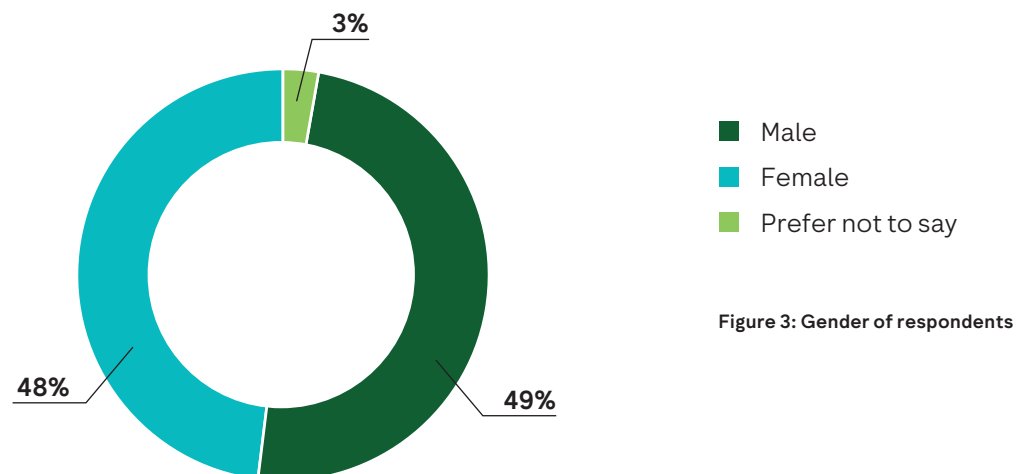
Who we heard from

This section includes data from Engage Victoria respondents only.

We heard from a range of age groups:



We heard from a balance of genders:



Where respondents live:

Respondents were from 44 different postcodes across Victoria.

The top three postcodes included

- Highett
- Cheltenham
- Beaumaris/Black Rock/Cromer.

Why people visit the reserve:

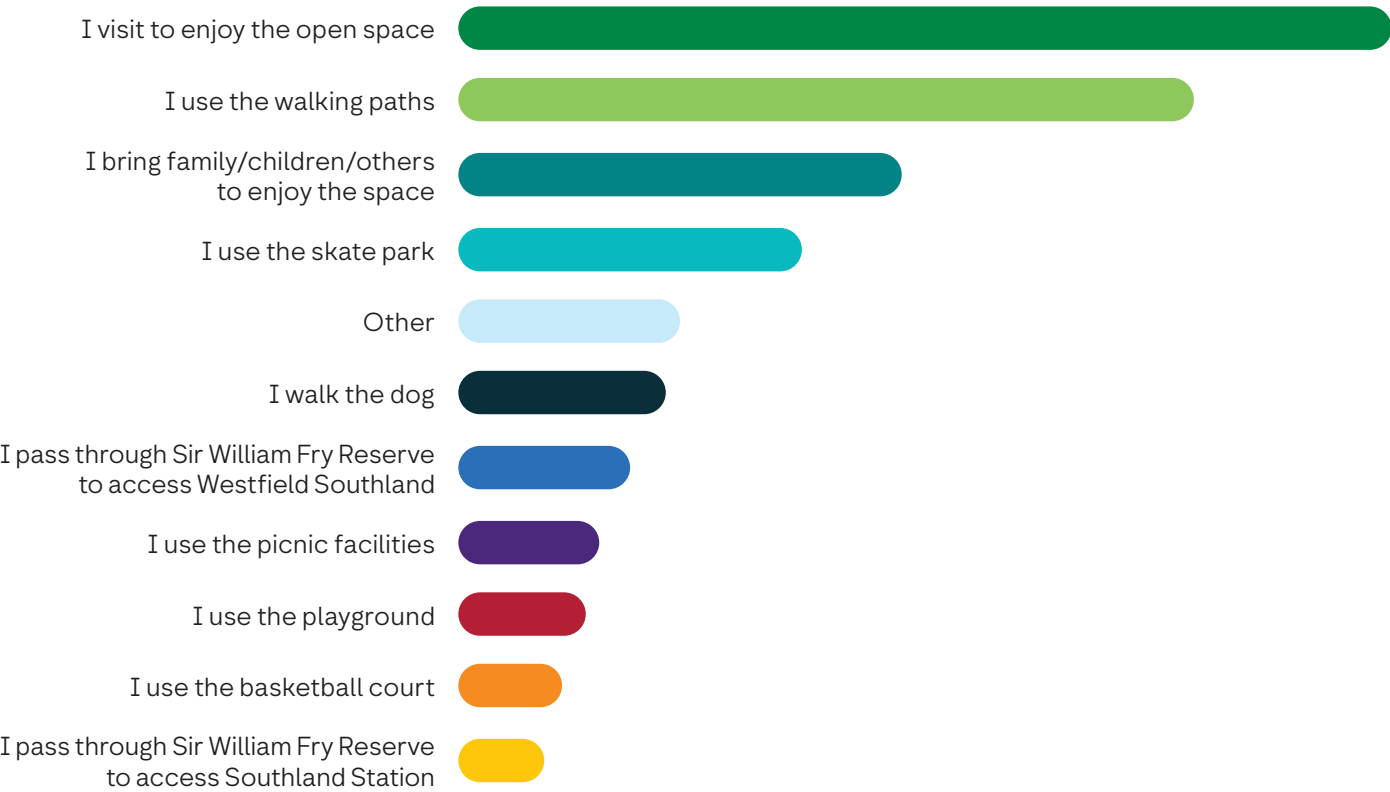


Figure 4: Reasons respondents visit Sir William Fry Reserve
Note: All Engage Victoria respondents provided feedback. Respondents could choose multiple options

How people get to the reserve:

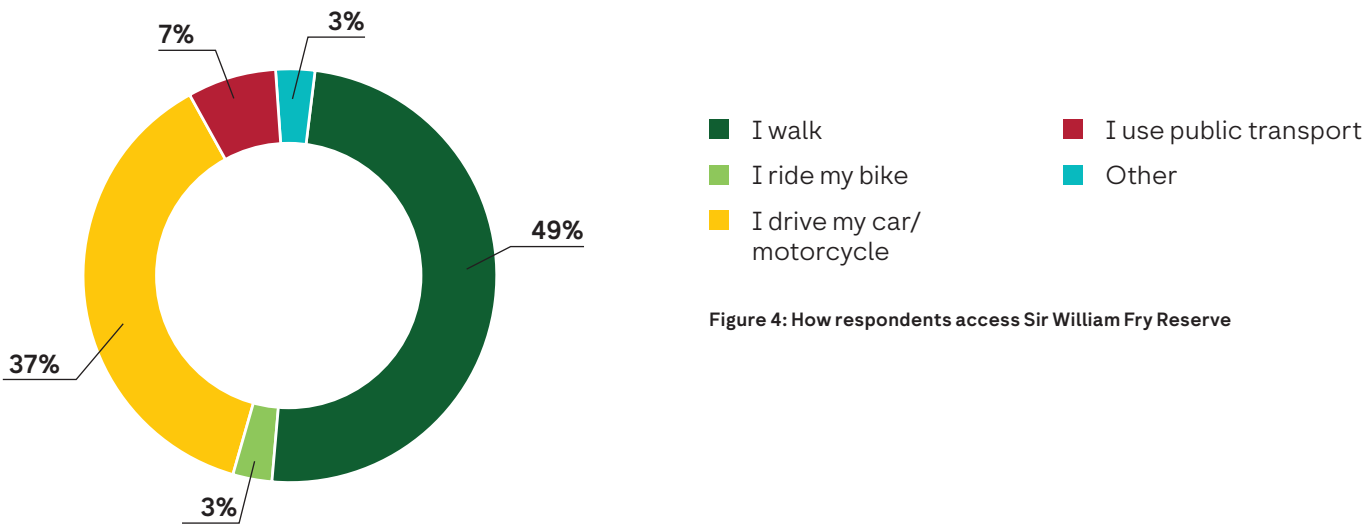


Figure 4: How respondents access Sir William Fry Reserve

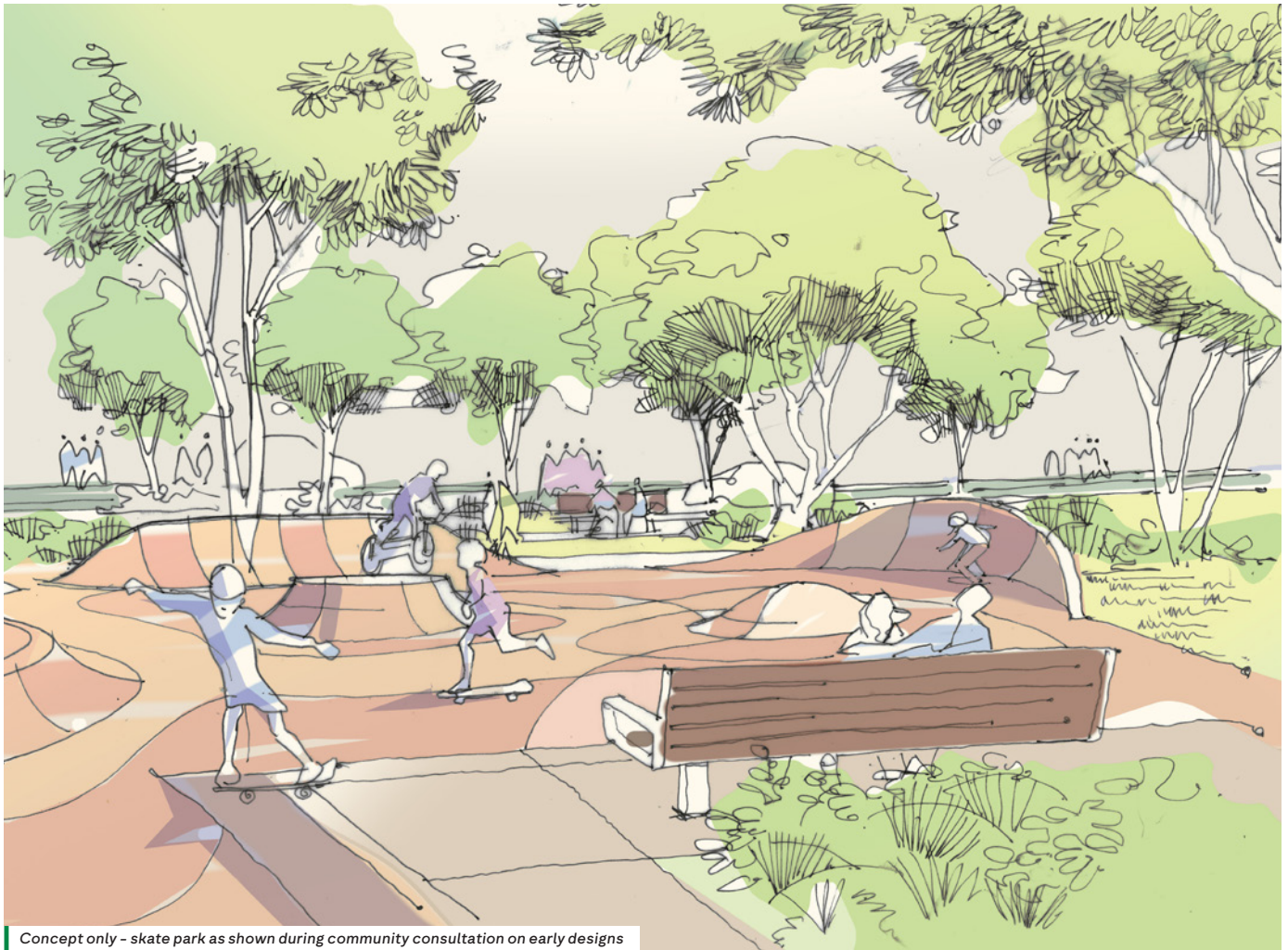
What we heard

This section summarises qualitative feedback from all 248 submissions received and outlines how it has been considered and incorporated into the design.

New open space and replacement facilities

To improve Sir William Fry Reserve, we are building new open space to replace the parkland needed to build the new SRL station at Cheltenham and relocating and upgrading the skate park and basketball court.

We asked for feedback on the design of these spaces to ensure they are great places for the community to enjoy and use.



Concept only - skate park as shown during community consultation on early designs

New permanent open space

What we heard

- Retain existing trees and vegetation where possible
- Plant more trees and vegetation, specifically indigenous
- Improve biodiversity and support local fauna
- Include shade, seating and benches
- Include safe walking and cycling paths with good north-south and east-west connectivity, including to the future Highett Gasworks development
- Separate the walking and cycling path along the Frankston rail line for safety
- Include green, open lawn spaces for relaxation
- Include drinking fountains, bins, toilets, tables and, picnic areas and barbecues.
- Provide cycle parking
- Ensure the area and has good passive surveillance
- Ensure the area is well-lit and has good sunlight access
- Consider including artwork
- Ensure spaces are inclusive for various ages and abilities
- Minor concerns regarding the shape of the new permanent open space.

Our response

- We are preserving trees and vegetation as much as possible
- We are proposing to plant more than 90 additional trees and enhance more than 9,000sqm of garden with new vegetation throughout the reserve. Most of these will be local indigenous species. This will continue to support the reserve's garden character and local biodiversity
- In the new open space the trees are proposed to be planted in clusters to allow for sunshine and shade
- The Station Street pocket park design has been updated to include cycle parking, picnic benches and children's nature play elements
- The new north-south walking and cycling path has been separated and overhead lighting has been incorporated to increase safety
- We have created spaces for relaxation and rest, including new seating, in the new permanent open space. These spaces include the pocket park, activity lawn and linear lawn next to the walking and cycling path
- The shape of the new open space was chosen because it:
 - Allows for a strategic north-south walking and cycling link connecting Station Street, Highett to Sir William Fry Reserve. Councils and community have strongly advocated for this link for many years
 - Provides several spaces for rest and relaxation
 - Allows for easy access to the reserve from Highett Station – a long sought connection that we will deliver.
- We are exploring opportunities for public artwork inclusion
- We are working closely with Development Victoria and the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) to facilitate an integrated approach to public open space across the future Highett Gasworks development site, SRL East and the Highett and Wickham road level crossing removal projects.

Skate park

What we heard

- Desire for a 'state-of-the-art' skate park which is bigger than the existing and visually draws people in
- Strong desire for a large, deep and functional bowl
- Desire for the design to be developed in consultation with users
- Include various elements such as ramps, rails, ledges, banks, flyouts, jumps and street style
- Include easy access to amenities including toilets, bins, drink fountains, seating and shade
- Ensure the skate park is safe and well-lit
- Desire for an inclusive skate park for various levels, ages and modes
- Consider including street or indigenous artwork
- Ensure the surface is not slippery
- Minor comments the skate park should be located away from residential, relaxation and play areas.

Our response

- The new skate park is bigger than the facility it is replacing, with the size increased from 700sqm to 1,300sqm
- Several focus group sessions with local users has shaped the designs
- The skate park design has been updated to:
 - Cater for various experience and skill levels through inclusion of a large bowl, box jump, mogul, extension hip and waterfall
 - Cater for various riders including skateboarders, scooter riders and BMX riders
 - Include seating, drinking fountains and bins
 - Incorporate lighting in accordance with Australian and council standards.
- A new toilet block will be built near the active recreation spaces - near the new skate park
- The skate park will be positioned next to Nepean Highway to reduce noise for nearby residents
- An artistic design reflecting the historical use of the site as a gasworks has been included in the updated design. We are exploring possible further opportunities for artwork inclusion
- We are working with Kingston City Council on graffiti management of the skate park
- The design will use furniture and skate elements to deter unsafe board riding behaviour.

Basketball court

What we heard	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Desire for a full-sized basketball court which allows for multi-sport use- Preference for functional and contemporary design- Include seating, shelters, shade and lighting- Some respondents suggested the need for fencing- Facilities are suitable for various levels and ages- Suggestions to include artwork- Minor comments the court should be located away from residential and quiet areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- We will provide a full-sized multi-sport basketball/futsal as well as a pickleball court, which is significantly larger than the existing basketball half-court- The design includes<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A shelter and accessible picnic tables beside the basketball court- Overhead lighting in accordance with Australian and council standards- Fencing will be installed around the court to help contain stray balls. The basketball court corners will be unfenced to allow for easy access and support a sense of openness and safety- The court spaces are positioned near Nepean Highway and the northern reserve car park to reduce noise for nearby residents- We are exploring options for artwork inclusion.

Other open space improvements and upgrades

In addition to the new open space and relocated and upgraded skate park and basketball court, we will be making further improvements to the existing reserve.

This will ensure the reserve continues to be a great place for people to enjoy both during and after construction of the SRL station at Cheltenham.

Engage Victoria respondents were asked which of the proposed improvements would be of greatest value to the reserve.

The top three responses included

1. New and improved walking paths including a path along the Frankston rail line
2. Activity lawn with walking track
3. Increased and improved vegetation.

Community and stakeholders also provided qualitative feedback on the proposed improvements. Feedback and how it has influenced design development is included in the table below.

Improvement	Feedback	Our response
Walking and cycling paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide good north-south and east-west connectivity throughout the park – Ensure walking paths are suitable for all abilities and are pram friendly – Include cycle parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cycle parking has been provided at the Station Street pocket park and in the future SRL station at Cheltenham – The design includes new and improved walking paths throughout the park. These paths are accessible.
Activity lawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Minor comments to increase the size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The size of the activity lawn will remain the same size as proposed. The design aims to seamlessly integrate the activity lawn and off-leash dog park to support passive use and increase connectivity to the the future Highett Gasworks development site and Station Street, Highett. The off-leash dog area will be signed.
Vegetation and fauna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preserve existing trees and vegetation – Plant additional trees and vegetation, specifically indigenous – Suggestions that vegetation should support local fauna and increase biodiversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We are preserving trees and vegetation as much as possible – We are proposing to plant over 90 additional trees and enhance more than 9,000sqm of garden with new vegetation throughout the reserve. Most of these will be local indigenous species. This will continue to support the reserve's garden character and local biodiversity – The design includes enhanced planting in the existing wetland treatment basins north of the lake.
Lighting and signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure good sunlight is available through the reserve – Ensure reserve is well-lit for safety – Include signage to assist with wayfinding. Minor suggestions these could include historical information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The design enables good sunlight throughout the reserve – The design includes overhead lighting to allow for safe park use during the day and night – Interpretive and informative historical signage will be provided throughout the reserve – We are exploring options with Kingston City Council and the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation.

Improvement	Feedback	Our response
Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide seating throughout, including shaded areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – New seating and trees will be planted to provide both shade and sunny areas to sit and relax – The court area includes sheltered seating for rest and socialising in all weather conditions.
Station Street pocket park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A request for a larger pocket park – Some comments in support of the location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The pocket park design has been updated to include picnic benches, nature play elements for children, cycle parking and seating – The size of the pocket park will remain the same.
Active recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Most feedback focused on the skate park and basketball court which is captured in other sections of this report – Requests for exercise equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The design does not include exercise equipment.
Events lawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Minor comments to increase the size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The event lawn layout has been shaped around existing trees and is not proposed to increase in size. However, the space has been improved to allow for easy access and a power connection for future events.
Drinking fountains and amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Requests for drinking fountains, bins, tables, picnic areas and barbecues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The design has been updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Additional drinking fountains – Additional bins – Picnic tables in the Station Street pocket park and active recreation area – The design does not include additional barbecues, but existing barbecues will remain.
Off-leash dog park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure it is safe for dogs, owners and other park users – Some suggestions it should be fenced – Include dog amenities such as dog bag waste dispensers and drinking fountains with dog bowls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Signage is proposed to be installed to clearly indicate when community members are entering or exiting an off-leash area – The off-leash dog park is located away from the playground and active recreation spaces to increase safety and ensure appropriate separation between different park uses – To improve cyclist and pedestrian safety the design includes a low fence between the cycling and walking path and the off-leash dog park. The fence will fit in with the park surroundings and will act as a deterrent without fully enclosing the off-leash dog park – The design has been updated to include dog waste bag dispensers and drinking fountains with dog bowls.

Additional feedback

Draft design principles

As part of the Engage Victoria consultation, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the draft design principles and any changes they would like to see.

Of the Engage Victoria respondents, 66 per cent generally supported or were not sure about the draft design principles.

Community and stakeholders provided minimal qualitative feedback on the draft design principles. Most responses provided feedback on specific elements of the early design such as the size of the skate park or shape of the new permanent open space. Comments related to other facilities have been responded to in the relevant sections of this report.

What we heard	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Suggestions to reduce the number of design principles and simplify them- Suggestions to include additional principles<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintaining sunlight and solar access to the reserve and the new permanent open space- Preserve the existing open space where possible including the ambiance- No net loss of open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The proposed principles address the feedback provided and have not been amended- Sunlight access, preserving the open space and existing character of the reserve has been covered through application of design principles including<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintaining the garden character of the reserve- Creating memorable places for people- The new permanent open space replaces public open space permanently required in the south of Sir William Fry Reserve to build the SRL station at Cheltenham and associated developments. This is being managed through the SRL East Public Open Space Framework, which outlines replacement requirements including the size of the new permanent open space.

Additional feedback on the early design

Several community and stakeholder submissions provided feedback on other aspects of the early design not specifically related to the skate park, basketball

court, new permanent open space or proposed improvements. Feedback and how it has been considered is included in the table below.

Item	Feedback	Our response
Car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ensure car parking provision is adequate for reserve usage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– There will be adequate car parking for the reserve still available for park users with the northern car park size reduction. This is supported by a Kingston City Council study on current and future car park demand and usage in the area.
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Preference for more detailed maps– Request for additional consultation once designs are further developed– Request for consultation factsheets to be mailed to a wider area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The request for detailed maps and a wider distribution zone has been noted for future consultations– Detailed designs have been shared with stakeholders and community in late 2025. We are seeking further feedback on the finer details of designs in late 2025. Final designs will be shared with community in 2026. We will keep the community updated as works progress in the reserve.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Undertake a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment– Undertake a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– We have undertaken a CPTED assessment– A GIA is underway and will be incorporated into the final designs.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Relocate the toilet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The design includes a new toilet near the basketball/futsal court. This will replace the existing toilet block.
Future population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Consider the future population forecasts in the concept design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The design has considered future population forecasts and increased public open space use. Improvements such as the event lawn, wider walking paths, durable materials, overhead lighting, a larger and improved skate park, a full-size multi-use basketball/futsal court, and a new linear park with an active transport corridor have been proposed to support long-term community use.

Out of scope feedback

Some submissions included feedback on items outside the scope of this consultation.

The proposal for new and improved open space for Sir William Fry has been developed in accordance with the SRL East Public Open Space Framework and through consultation with Kingston City Council.

Out of scope feedback included

- Design of the SRL station at Cheltenham, including car parking provision for the station
- Size of the new permanent open space. The size of the replacement open space we're delivering is outlined in the SRL East Public Open Space Framework which was approved as part of the SRL East Environment Effects Statement in 2022
- Draft Cheltenham structure plan
- Pedestrian crossing under or over the

Frankston rail line from Sir William Fry Reserve to Lyle Anderson Reserve

- Naming of the new SRL station at Cheltenham
- Renaming Sir William Fry Reserve
- Walking and cycling connections outside the reserve
- Design and development of the future remaining Highett Gasworks site.

In our ongoing engagement with Kingston City Council, we are investigating options for possible delivery of the following items currently out of the scope, but which community and stakeholders suggested we consider:

- Changes to the lake
- Upgrades to the playground.

We will update community and stakeholders on these items at a future date.



Stakeholder engagement

Kingston City Council and Bayside City Council

We have been engaging with Kingston City Council and Bayside City Council since May 2025 on the early design. We will continue to work closely with councils as the design develops.

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation

We have been engaging with Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation since August 2025 on the early design for the reserve and inclusion of Traditional Owner values and elements.

Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation have shared their feedback via various workshops and site tours. We have actively incorporated this feedback into the design and will continue to work closely with them.

Development Victoria

We have engaged with Development Victoria on the location of the new permanent open space. The new space was formerly part of Development Victoria's Highett Gasworks site.

Development Victoria is responsible for planning and delivering the the future development of the remaining Highett Gasworks site, including open space provision in accordance with their requirements.

We will continue to work closely with Development Victoria to ensure coordination, and the best outcomes, can be delivered for the local community.

Level Crossing Removal Project

We have been engaging the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) on the location of the new permanent open space and early concept design.

We will continue to work closely with LXRP as the design develops to facilitate an integrated approach to public open space across the SRL East and the Highett and Wickham road level crossing removal projects.

Next steps

All feedback has been considered and where possible incorporated into the Sir William Fry Reserve new and improved open space design.

The POSMP is expected to be completed early 2026 and will be verified by the SRL East Independent Environmental Auditor.

In November 2025 we shared updated designs with community and are seeking feedback on the finer details of the design before they're finalised.

Final designs will be shared with community in 2026.

We will keep the community updated about upcoming works at Sir William Fry Reserve and how disruptions will be managed.

Thank you again to everyone who provided feedback. Your insights are essential in shaping the future Sir William Fry Reserve as we deliver SRL East.

contact@srla.vic.gov.au | 1800 105 105 (call anytime)
suburbanrailloop.vic.gov.au

Please contact us if you would like this information in an accessible format.
If you need assistance due to a hearing or speech impairment, please visit relayservice.gov.au

