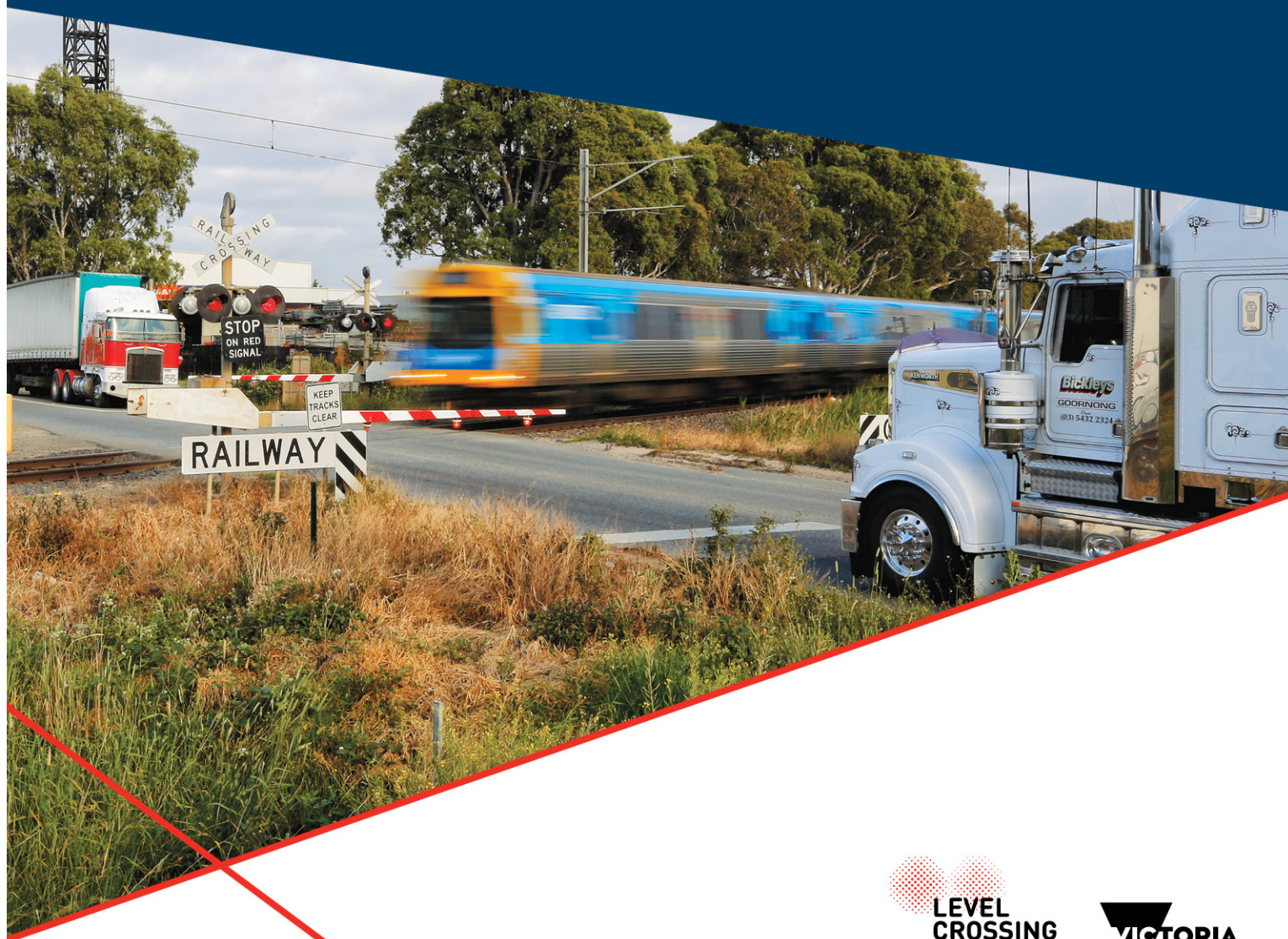


# ABBOTTS ROAD Consultation Report

December 2016



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# 1 Introduction

The Victorian Government is removing 50 dangerous and congested level crossings across metropolitan Melbourne, including the Abbots Road level crossing in Dandenong South. This crossing is one of the worst, having seen two fatalities and thirteen train passengers injured at the boom gates in the past seven years.

This document provides a summary of feedback and outcomes of community and stakeholder consultation for the Abbots Road, Dandenong South level crossing.

## 1.1 Project overview

In November 2015, the Victorian Government announced it would fast-track the removal of the level crossing at Abbots Road, Dandenong South.

In preliminary discussions with Council and Industry Groups, the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) were informed historical plans for a road link connecting Remington Drive and Pound Road West. This link had been sought by Council and local industry over decades to relieve congestion throughout the Dandenong South Precinct.

In February 2016, the LXRA sought community feedback on a proposed option to remove the Abbots Road level crossing by building an alternative road linking Remington Drive and Pound Road West and closing Abbots Road.

LXRA considered it important to seek feedback on this option, including how the closure of Abbots Road would impact businesses in the area. This consultation provided a stronger understanding of the issues concerning local businesses, in particular if Abbots Road was closed.

Following strong feedback from the community and local businesses regarding the option to close Abbots Road as part of the level crossing removal, LXRA changed its approach in March 2016 and embarked on a three phase consultation process, seeking feedback on an additional four options to remove the level crossing while continuing its analysis of the Remington Drive option.

Taking into account the feedback from this first phase of consultation, along with the results of a thorough multi-criteria assessment of each of the five options, in June 2016 the project team shortlisted two feasible options – building a road bridge over the rail line and building a rail bridge over Abbots Road.

The second phase of consultation, in July 2016, saw LXRA seek feedback on these options in order to further refine designs and select a preferred solution.

The design solution – a rail bridge over Abbotts Road - was announced to the community in September 2016, with the final design for the bridge structure to be determined by the constructors once a contract is awarded.

Award of contract will take place during 2017, with construction expected to begin in early 2018 and the crossing to be removed by 2019.

## 1.2 Project context

Dandenong South is a growing employment and innovation hub. It is currently the second largest National Employment Cluster in Victoria (2014), accommodating 55,000 employees. The cluster is a focal point for logistics and manufacturing, representing the largest single destination for imported containers across metropolitan Melbourne. In recognition of this, impact on businesses is a key consideration in selecting the final solution to remove the level crossing.

The local industry and workforce rely heavily on the local road network and connecting highways. Between 65-70 per cent of those who work in the area travel by car to work and 45-50 percent have a background in trade, manufacturing or labour.

An estimated 10,000 residents travel from other parts of the City of Greater Dandenong area to work in the precinct. The South Gippsland Highway, which runs further up past the suburbs of Hallam, Lyndhurst, Hampton Park and Lynbrook also runs directly between the Dandenong South industrial precinct.

The Cranbourne Rail Corridor serves one of Melbourne's most vital economic centres, as well as the vast and growing residential areas within the South Eastern Growth Corridor. Encompassing Dandenong, Frankston, Knox, Kingston and Mulgrave, this corridor currently serves a population of around 335,886 people supporting 86,000 jobs (2011)\*.

Understanding the surrounding area, its transport networks and industrial uses was vital in determining the best solution to remove the level crossing at Abbotts Road. It has also shaped the way LXRA has engaged with the community on the project.

\*<http://abs.gov.au/websitedbs/censushome.nsf/home/quickstats>, <http://www.mpa.vic.gov.au/planning-activities/employment-clusters/>

# 2 Community Engagement Approach

## 2.1 Snapshot of engagement

Approximately 325 local business owners, traders and property owners contributed feedback as part of the project's consultation program, which included nine community information sessions

held between February and October 2016, as well as two industry forums on 17 March and 21 October 2016.

More than 90 people, including landowners, business owners, local government representatives, residents, commuters and employees attended the first industry forum, to workshop and provide feedback on the five possible options to remove the level crossing.

Attendance at the second industry forum was much lower, with sixteen people. LXRA sought feedback from the attendees about two potential bridge structure designs and construction impacts, as well as project consultation and engagement.

LXRA established a Business Liaison Group to enhance community involvement in the planning and design of the project.

Throughout the engagement process, senior project staff also met one-on-one with more than 30 owners of properties and businesses in close proximity to the crossing, to discuss the potential impacts of each design option in further detail.

### **Abbotts Road phases one & two community engagement snapshot (December 2015 - September 2016)**



**Four community pop-ups at stations and shopping centres**



**Fourteen councillor briefings, meetings and workshops with local councils**



**Nine community drop-in information and feedback sessions since February 2016**



**More than 150 businesses door-knocked in the area surrounding the level crossing**



**Six email updates to over 1,800 subscribers to the Abbotts Road Level Crossing Removal Project**



**Two industry forums, attended by around 115 local business owners, workers and representatives**



**More than 30,000 community newsletters distributed to residents and local businesses**



**Six Business Liaison Group meetings with representatives from local industry**

## 2.2 Consultation overview

From December 2015 until February 2016, LXRA’s community consultation sought feedback on the option to remove the Abbotts Road level crossing by creating an alternative road link connecting Remington Drive and Pound Road West, and closing Abbotts Road permanently. Preliminary investigations and early discussions with the local council and industry groups indicated this option would benefit the Dandenong South Precinct by improving traffic flow through the area.

Community consultation (referred to in this report as **Phase 1a**) provided a stronger appreciation of the issues concerning local businesses and the potential impact to the surrounding area if Abbotts Road was closed permanently.

Following strong feedback from local industry, LXRA changed its consultation approach and in March 2016, embarked on an extensive three phase consultation program, seeking feedback on the Remington Drive option as well as an additional four options to remove the level crossing.

For the purpose of this report, phase one of the consultation program is broken into two sections: Phase 1a, when feedback was sought on the Remington Drive option, which involved the closure of Abbotts Road; and Phase 1b, when feedback was sought on five possible solutions.

### Phase 1a. ‘Tell us what you think about the Remington Drive option (February 2016)

Engagement purpose	Engagement activity
Listening to the community and industry to assist in the refinement of the Remington Drive option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletter</li> <li>Community information sessions</li> <li>Doorknock of local businesses</li> <li>Key stakeholder meetings</li> </ul>

### Phase 1b. ‘Tell us what is important to you’ (March – May 2016)

Engagement purpose	Engagement activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listening to the community and industry to assist in the development and assessment of the five possible options</li> <li>Identifying a short list of feasible solutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Community information sessions</li> <li>Doorknock of local businesses</li> <li>Key stakeholder meetings</li> <li>Industry Forum</li> <li>Establishment of Business Liaison Group</li> <li>One-on-one meetings with business/property owners</li> </ul>

## Phase 2. 'What do you think of our shortlisted options?' (July – August 2016)

Engagement purpose	Engagement activity
Sharing consultation summary	Community information sessions
Present feasible design options with more detail	Newsletters
Seek feedback to refine designs and finalise solution	Key stakeholder meetings
Highlight design elements that respond to community feedback so far	Business Liaison Group Meeting #3 and #4 Phone calls to all business/property owners met with in phase 1

## Phase 3. 'This is our solution?' (October – December 2016)

Engagement purpose	Engagement activity
Announce solution for removal	Business Liaison Group Meetings
Inform public of proposed Planning Scheme Amendment & seek feedback on amendment	Media release Newsletters
Bridge structure design refinement	Community information session
Present consultation outcome and next steps	Industry Forum
Inform community about the construction timelines and potential construction impact	Council and MP briefings Email updates

## 2.3 Overarching consultation objectives

- Demonstrate a commitment to genuine consultation with the community and other key stakeholders to deliver major infrastructure projects that improve safety and the transport network, while also meeting the needs of local businesses and the community.
- To provide clarity and inform community members and other stakeholders of the scope, timing and funding of the project.
- To present design options, including solutions involving rail over/under and road over/under, and to seek input from the community on these options.
- To gain a greater understanding of how the Dandenong South Industrial precinct is currently used by local businesses and commuters, and the potential benefits and impacts the level crossing removal options may have on them.
- To allow community members and other stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to the project design, development and selection of a shortlist of design options.

## 2.3.1 Community Information Sessions

### Community information session details

Date	Location
10 & 16 February, 2016	Hallam Recreation Reserve Hall, Hallam
25 February, 2016	AW Bell, Dandenong South
4 March, 2016	Nissan Casting, Dandenong South
28 April, 2016	Nissan Casting, Dandenong South
7 May, 2016	Dandenong Civic Centre, Dandenong
20 & 22 July 2016	AW Bell, Dandenong South
21 October 2016	AW Bell, Dandenong South

These sessions sought feedback from community and local businesses on the removal of the Abbots Road level crossing. The sessions also gave people an opportunity to ask questions and flag concerns directly with the project team.

Between six and eight LXRA staff, including project engineers, attended each session to listen to feedback, answer questions and discuss the design options in detail with the community.

The sessions were undertaken using a 'drop-in' format, where people could take part in informal discussions with project engineers and have their say in person or by completing a feedback form.

### The information sessions were promoted through the following channels:

- Project community updates mailed to approximately 5,200 local residents and businesses and distributed during a doorknock of approximately 100 businesses surrounding the level crossing
- Posters placed at train stations along the Cranbourne line and offered to local traders
- Advertisements in the two local newspapers for two weeks leading up to the sessions
- Postcards distributed at station and shopping centre pop-ups, at local cafes in the Dandenong South precinct and letterbox dropped in the lead up to sessions
- Online, including via the LXRA website, email updates to over 1,800 subscribers and creation of Facebook 'events' and Twitter

### The following materials were presented at information sessions:

- Annotated plot maps showing proposed designs
- Posters presenting information about the Abbots Road site characteristics, project timeline and artists images of initial potential designs
- Fact sheets presenting general information about the options available to remove level crossings, as well as site-specific information
- Feedback forms; postage paid envelopes were also provided to allow attendees to take time to consider their submissions prior to filling in feedback forms



- Presentation of the benefits and challenges of the design options to encourage people to consider the technical aspects of each option
- Video showing 3D animation of the design solution

Participants were encouraged to complete feedback forms at these sessions. The forms sought feedback on:

- What is important to the local community in relation to the removal of the level crossing at Abbots Road
- How people use the road network in the area
- How businesses access their properties and what types of vehicles they use
- Potential impacts of each design solution to the community and local businesses
- Consideration of the technical and construction challenges of the project site and how these may impact people or businesses

Feedback from the sessions helped the project team to:

- Identify feasible options for the removal of the level crossing
- Inform development and selection of a short list of feasible design options
- Select a design solution for the removal of the level crossing
- Compile key considerations to inform design finalisation and construction by an Alliance

### 2.3.2 Community newsletters

Since December 2015, LXRA has distributed four community updates about the Abbots Road level crossing removal project to surrounding businesses and residences via letterbox drops and mail-outs to landowners by council on behalf of LXRA.

Phase 1a saw the first newsletter letter box dropped to approximately 700 properties. Following feedback from the community and the Member for Dandenong, Gabrielle Williams, the distribution area for community updates was expanded to encompass 5,200 properties surrounding the level crossing. In addition, more than 1,500 landowners were contacted by post with the assistance of the City of Greater Dandenong Council (to comply with privacy constraints).

The expanded distribution area (map page 6) helped ensure LXRA increased community awareness about the project and reached as many potentially impacted stakeholders as possible, to invite them to have their say on the project.

### 2.3.3 Doorknocks

In February 2016, LXRA project engineers and communications staff doorknocked approximately 100 businesses in the area surrounding the Abbots Rd level crossing to introduce the project. Staff distributed a letter inviting people to attend a drop-in information session at a local Dandenong South business and talked to businesses in detail about the potential impacts of the proposed plan to remove the level crossing by connecting Remington Drive and Pound Road West and closing Abbots Road. LXRA staff asked business owners for information about how they

access their properties, what types of vehicles are involved, and the direction and times for deliveries to and from their businesses.

The information gathered during the doorknock provided invaluable understanding of the large variety of businesses operating within the precinct and their diverse access, traffic and delivery needs.

The doorknock was highly successful in engaging people, many of whom who had not heard about the project through prior means of engagement, such as the community newsletter, train station pop-ups, posters and newspaper advertisements. The doorknock prompted many people to come along to the next drop-in information session at a local business in the Dandenong South industrial precinct. Subsequently, more than 45 people attended the next session, which was a much higher number than at previous sessions.

The map on page six shows the distribution areas for the community newsletters; the area the project team doorknocked; and the businesses the project team met with one-on-one.

In October 2016, the project team doorknocked approximately 70 businesses directly abutting the rail corridor, where the majority of construction works to build the rail bridge will take place. The team highlighted the opportunity for these businesses to make submissions as part of the planning scheme amendment process. Staff also offered one-on-one meetings to all businesses they spoke with.

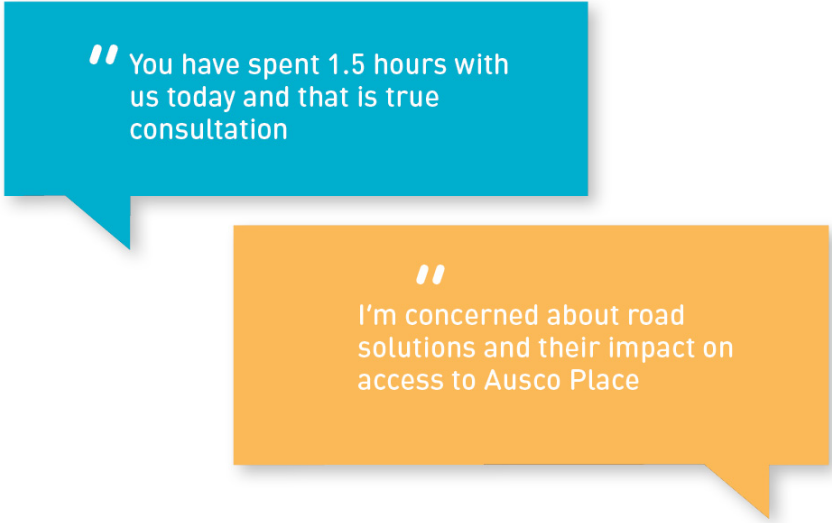
#### 2.3.4 One-on-one meetings

Since March 2016, senior members of the project team have met with more than 30 land and business owners and operators, to discuss the potential impacts different level crossing removal solutions may have on their business operations.

A three-pronged approach aimed to ensure the project team effectively reached the right people. This involved meeting with:

- Landowners whose properties would be impacted by either the road over or road under options to remove the level crossing.
- Significant and high profile businesses with interests in the Dandenong South industrial precinct.
- Land and business owners with a high level of interest in the project.

LXRA will continue to offer one-on-one meetings with stakeholders who contact us with concerns or queries about the project as it progresses.



“ You have spent 1.5 hours with us today and that is true consultation

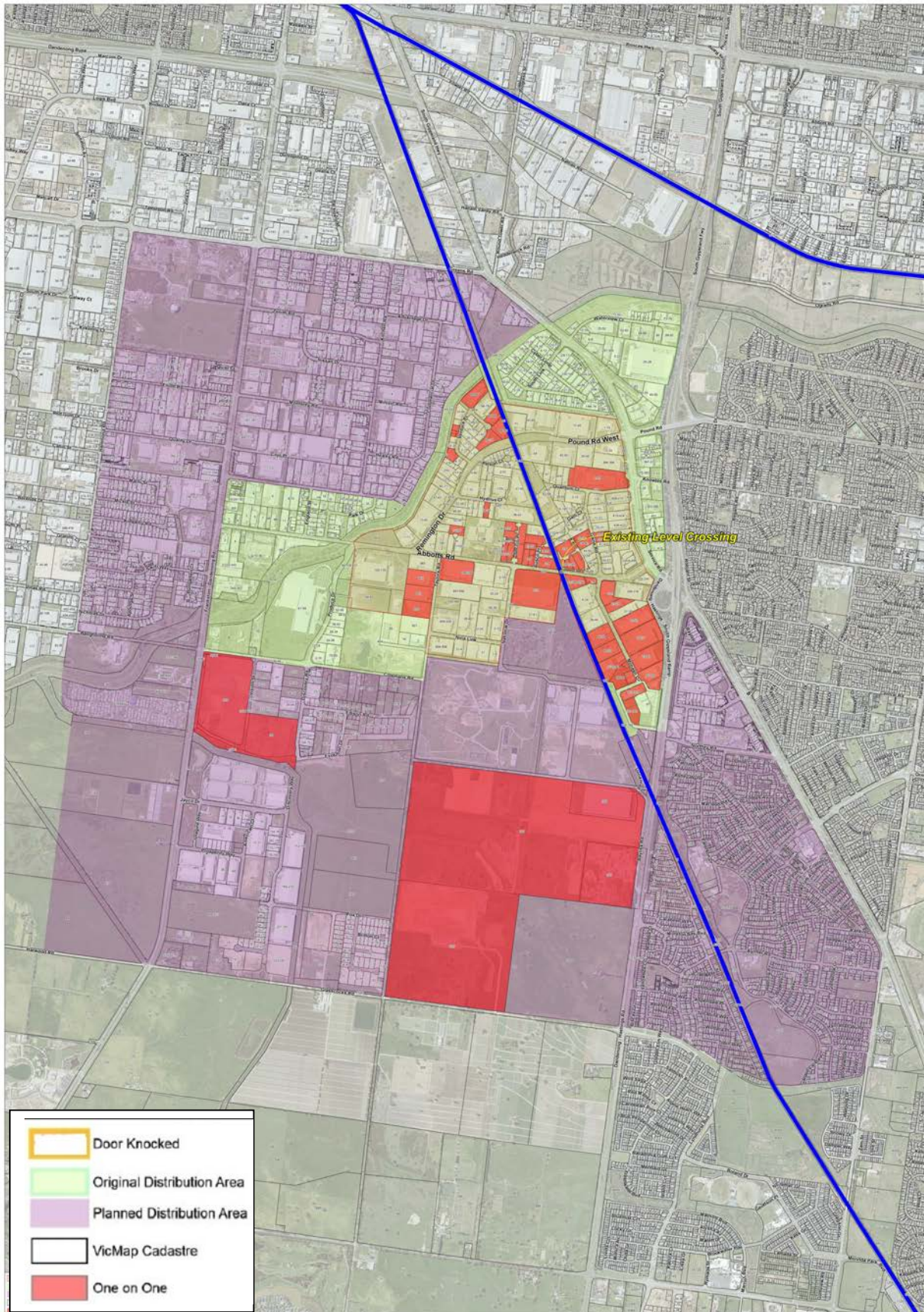
“  
I'm concerned about road solutions and their impact on access to Ausco Place

Feedback from these meetings indicated popularity for a rail bridge solution over Abbots Road, which would have minimum impact to businesses, both during construction and long-term.

A large number of land and business owners the project team met with stated that they would be significantly impacted by either a road over or road under solution at Abbots Road, due to necessary land acquisition that would lead to a loss of parking or business frontage and significant changes to vehicle access to properties. Some businesses indicated that may even need to relocate, if such solutions are chosen.

A large number of business owners that met with the project team said they were pleased to have the opportunity to discuss the project in detail, one-on-one with senior staff, with many commenting positively on the project's consultation process.

Figure 1. Map –Dandenong South community engagement



### 2.3.5 Web and email updates

Since the project began, more than 1,800 people have registered to receive email updates about the Abbotts Road level crossing removal project.

The first email update was sent to 1,100 subscribers on 22 April 2016. Of those recipients, 611 (56%), opened the update.

The second email update went to 1,303 subscribers on 24 May 2016 and was opened by 814 (63.45%) of recipients.

The third email update to subscribers, sent to 1,407 subscribers on 29 June 2016, was opened by 754 (54%) of recipients and generated an increase in traffic to the Abbotts Road webpage on LXRA's website.

The fourth email update, sent to 1,826 subscribers on 23 September 2016, was opened by 49% of recipients.

Further email updates, sent on 10 and 28 October 2016, were sent to 1,855 subscribers and opened by 51% and 46% respectively.

To date, since the dedicated Abbotts Road level crossing removal project web page went live on 7 January 2016, there has been more than 2,700 unique page views.

### 2.3.6 Consultation on the proposed Planning Scheme Amendment

Phase three consultation also involved contacting owners and occupiers potentially impacted by the project, as part of the formal Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) process.

As part of this consultation, LXRA sent letters to approximately 350 land owners and occupiers in close proximity to the proposed project area, inviting them to make a formal submission about the project and received nine written submissions in response from local business operators. A further submission was received from Greater Dandenong City Council who is the Planning Authority for the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.

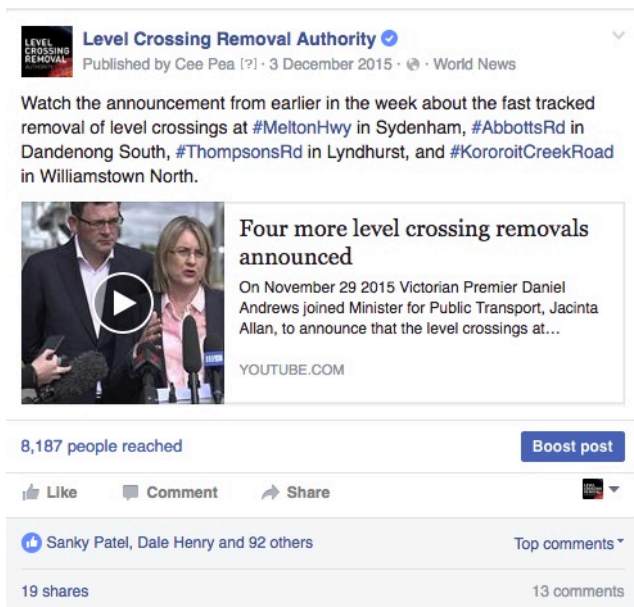
The feedback received during the PSA process has been incorporated into this report and will also form part of LXRA's formal application to the Minister for Planning, for an amendment to the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.

### 2.3.7 Social media engagement

Since December 2015, a total of six Facebook posts about the Abbotts Road level crossing removal project have reached an audience of more than 41,000 people. Details of these posts are below.

## Facebook

The first Facebook post about the Abbots Road level crossing removal was on 3 December 2015, when Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan announced the fast tracking of four level crossing removals, including Abbots Road in Dandenong South. The post reached an audience of 8,187 people, engaging 525 Facebook users.



**Level Crossing Removal Authority** ✓  
Published by Cee Pea [?] · 3 December 2015 · World News

Watch the announcement from earlier in the week about the fast tracked removal of level crossings at #MeltonHwy in Sydenham, #AbbotsRd in Dandenong South, #ThompsonsRd in Lyndhurst, and #KororoitCreekRoad in Williamstown North.

**Four more level crossing removals announced**  
On November 29 2015 Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews joined Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, to announce that the level crossings at...  
YOUTUBE.COM

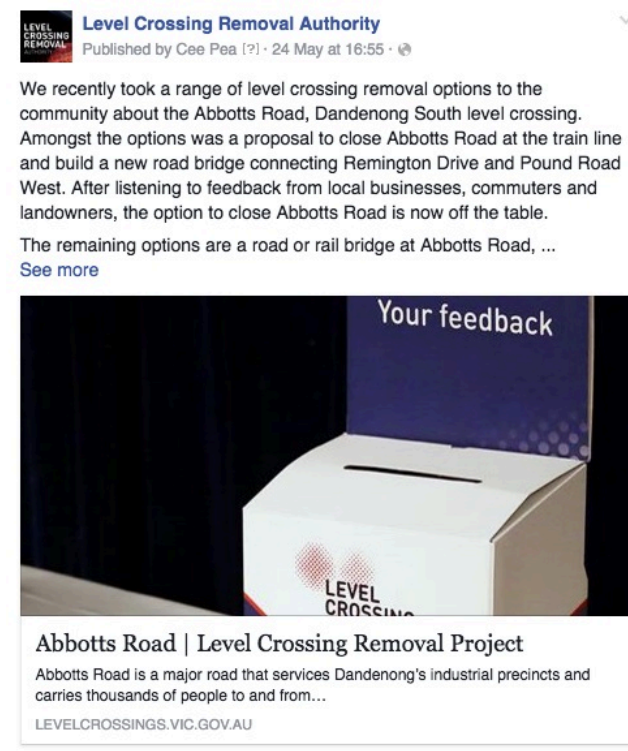
8,187 people reached [Boost post](#)

Like Comment Share

Sanky Patel, Dale Henry and 92 others [Top comments](#)


19 shares 13 comments

The below Facebook post on 24 May 2016, announcing that Abbots Road would remain open after the level crossing is removed, reached an audience of 4,349.



**Level Crossing Removal Authority** ✓  
Published by Cee Pea [?] · 24 May at 16:55

We recently took a range of level crossing removal options to the community about the Abbots Road, Dandenong South level crossing. Amongst the options was a proposal to close Abbots Road at the train line and build a new road bridge connecting Remington Drive and Pound Road West. After listening to feedback from local businesses, commuters and landowners, the option to close Abbots Road is now off the table. The remaining options are a road or rail bridge at Abbots Road, ...  
[See more](#)



**Abbots Road | Level Crossing Removal Project**  
Abbots Road is a major road that services Dandenong's industrial precincts and carries thousands of people to and from...  
LEVELCROSSINGS.VIC.GOV.AU

This post, on 12 July 2016, promoting the community information sessions seeking feedback on the shortlisted options, reached 1,000 people.

**Level Crossing Removal Authority**

Published by Cee Pea [?] · 12 July · 🌐


**1,000** People Reached

---

**14** Likes, Comments & Shares

We've got some community drop in sessions coming up for the Abbotts Road, Dandenong South level crossing removal project on:

- Wednesday 20 July, 1pm - 3pm
- Friday 22 July, 1pm - 3pm.... [See more](#)



**Abbotts Road | Level Crossing Removal Project**

The community will have their say on further aspects of the project in coming months, with the feasible design options to be presented in more detail at community drop in sessions in July.

[LEVELCROSSINGS.VIC.GOV.AU](http://LEVELCROSSINGS.VIC.GOV.AU)

✔ **Get more likes, comments and shares**  
Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

1,000 people reached

[Boost post](#)

[Adam Vogt, Andrew Krein and 7 others](#)

4 Comments

**9** Likes

9 On Post	0 On Shares
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---

**5** Comments

5 On Post	0 On Shares
--------------	----------------

---

**0** Shares

0 On Post	0 On Shares
--------------	----------------

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**106** Post Clicks

1 Photo views	25 Link clicks	80 Other Clicks
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

1 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

This post, on 20 September 2016, reached more than 14,000 people, announcing that Expressions of Interest had opened for a contractor to deliver the Abbotts Road level crossing removal as part of a package of works including five other level crossing removals in Melbourne’s west.

**Level Crossing Removal Authority**  
Published by Cee Pea [?] · 20 September ·

An Expression of Interest was released to the market today for two major packages of work for the removal of 11 more level crossings, including Camp Road in Campbellfield, Abbots Road in Dandenong South, and Kororoit Creek Road in Williamstown North, along with partial duplication of the Altona Loop.



**Expression of Interest released for 11 more level crossing removals | News**  
Expression of Interest released for 11 more level crossing removals [Back to news](#)  
20 September 2016 An Expression of Interest was released to the market today...  
LEVELCROSSINGS.VIC.GOV.AU

Get more likes, comments and shares  
Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

14,421 people reached [Boost post](#)

158 19 Comments 3 Shares

<b>14,421</b> People Reached		
<b>232</b> Likes, Comments & Shares		
168 Likes	152 On Post	16 On Shares
58 Comments	46 On Post	12 On Shares
6 Shares	3 On Post	3 On Shares
<b>1,123</b> Post Clicks		
0 Photo views	469 Link clicks	654 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
9 Hide Post	1 Hide All Posts	
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page	


On 28 September 2016, this post announced that the Abbots Road level crossing would be removed by building a rail bridge over the road. It reached over 8,800 people.

**Level Crossing Removal Authority**  
Published by Cee Pea [?] · 28 September at 17:30 ·

Good news for Dandenong South! After extensive consultation with local business owners and operators, commuters and landowners, and a full technical assessment, the decision has been made to remove the level crossing at Abbots Road by building a rail bridge over the road.

This will enable Abbots Road to remain open and connected to the industrial precinct permanently.

For more information on the project visit <http://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/cro.../abbotts-road-dandenong>



Get more likes, comments and shares  
Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

8,837 people reached [Boost post](#)

88 17 Comments 12 Shares

Like Comment Share


<b>8,837</b> People Reached		
<b>2,633</b> Video Views		
<b>165</b> Reactions, comments & shares		
98 Like	85 On post	13 On shares
2 Love	2 On post	0 On shares
1 Angry	1 On post	0 On shares
52 Comments	41 On Post	11 On Shares
12 Shares	12 On Post	0 On Shares
<b>1,228</b> Post Clicks		
250 Clicks to Play	29 Link clicks	949 Other Clicks
NEGATIVE FEEDBACK		
3 Hide Post	3 Hide All Posts	
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page	

This post from 12 October 2016, promoting the second industry forum, reached an audience of more than 4,170.



**Level Crossing Removal Authority**  
Published by Bob Crossings [?] · 12 October at 15:26 · 🌐

We'd love your input as we move into the next stage of the Abbotts Road Level Crossing Removal Project. We're hosting a forum on 21 October and you're invited to come along to provide feedback on potential designs and construction impacts.  
Click for more details and to register:  
<http://abbottsroadlevelcrossingremovalforum.eventbrite.com...>



👍 Get more likes, comments and shares  
Boost this post for \$4 to reach up to 1,100 people.

4,173 people reached Boost post

👤 Andrew Young, Fateh Jajan and 20 others    2 Comments 1 Share

**4,173** People Reached

---

**27** Likes, Comments & Shares

22 Likes	22 On Post	0 On Shares
4 Comments	4 On Post	0 On Shares
1 Shares	1 On Post	0 On Shares

**195** Post Clicks

81 Photo views	22 Link clicks	92 Other Clicks ⓘ
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**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**

4 Hide Post	0 Hide All Posts
0 Report as Spam	0 Unlike Page

## Twitter

Twitter is another platform to promote community consultation opportunities and project milestones or announcements, especially to media and other interested stakeholders. Below are the Tweets from the LXRA account relating to Abbotts Road.

### 12 July 2016

**Level Crossings** @levelcrossings  
Community drop in sessions for #AbbottsRd #levelcrossing removal project 20 & 22 July <http://bit.ly/2a1f9vC>

**Reach a bigger audience**  
Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

Get started

Impressions	1,074
Total engagements	12
Link clicks	4
Hashtag clicks	3
Retweets	2
Detail expands	2
Likes	1

### 19 July 2016

**Level Crossings** @levelcrossings  
Get along to an #AbbottsRd community drop in session this week. 1-3pm on 20 & 22 July. More info <http://bit.ly/2a1f9vC>

**Reach a bigger audience**  
Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

Impressions	772
Total engagements	7
Link clicks	4
Detail expands	2
Profile clicks	1

## 20 September 2016

**Level Crossings** @levelcrossings  
 An EOI was released to the market today for two major packages of work for the removal of 11 more level crossings  
<http://bit.ly/2dfmQCR>

 **Reach a bigger audience**  
 Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

[Get started](#)

Impressions	1,592
Total engagements	52
Link clicks	32
Detail expands	11
Profile clicks	4
Likes	3
Retweets	2

## 28 September 2016

**Level Crossings** @levelcrossings  
 After community consultation & technical assessment  
**#AbbottsRd** **#levelcrossing** removal to be rail bridge over road  
<http://youtu.be/gXArweNb6NU>

 **Reach a bigger audience**  
 Get more engagements by promoting this Tweet!

[Get started](#)

Impressions	1,153
Media views	4
Total engagements	52
Detail expands	22
Link clicks	17
Media engagements	4
Hashtag clicks	3
Profile clicks	2
Replies	1
Retweets	1
Likes	1
App opens	1

### 2.3.8 Key Stakeholder Briefings

Throughout the planning and development stages of the project, the project team has worked with a number of key stakeholders to keep them informed and involved in its progress, including:

<b>Industry Groups</b>	Committee for Dandenong South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance (SEMMA) South Eastern Business Network (SEBN)
<b>Local Government</b>	City of Greater Dandenong City of Casey
<b>State Government</b>	Gabrielle Williams MP, Member for Dandenong Victorian Office of the Government Architect
<b>Relevant agencies</b>	Public Transport Victoria (PTV) VicTrack VicRoads Metro Trains Melbourne
<b>Relevant planning authorities</b>	Heritage Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning Office of the Victorian Government Architect Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
<b>Utilities authorities</b>	APA Gas Elgas Melbourne Water South East Water United Energy Viva Energy
<b>Key businesses</b>	SALTA Pellicano

### 2.3.9 Industry Forums

#### *March 2016*

On Tuesday 17 March 2016, LXRA, with the support of Capire Consulting Group, held an industry forum to discuss options for the removal of the level crossing on Abbots Road.

The purpose of the forum was to better understand the importance of Abbots Road for local businesses and industry. LXRA also sought community input on five design options and key considerations that need to be taken into account when selecting a preferred design.

Approximately 90 people attended the forum, comprising landowners, business owners, local government representatives, residents, commuters and employees.

LXRA presented the five design options for the level crossing removal and highlighted factors to consider when determining the most feasible options. Participants were then given the opportunity to ask questions of a panel that consisted of Gabrielle Williams Member for Dandenong, Bernhard Held, Senior Project Manager LXRA and Kevin Devlin, CEO LXRA. Following the questions to the panel, participants had 30 minutes to provide individual comments on the five options in their feedback forms. Facilitators at each table, as well as LXRA engineers were available during this time to provide clarification and answer questions.

The presentation from the industry forum is publicly available on LXRA's website, as is the consultation report by Capire Consulting, which is also included as Appendix 1 in this report.

LXRA sought nominations at the forum for a Business Liaison Group. Those selected to form the group make up a balanced representation of the local industry and are assisting LXRA by providing input on the development and selection of design solutions for the Abbotts Road project.

### *October 2016*

On 21 October 2016, LXRA hosted a second industry forum to update stakeholders on the project, including the preferred design option for the crossing removal, present engagement findings so far and hear insights from a BLG member's perspective.

The project team also sought feedback from the attendees about two potential bridge structure designs and construction impacts. This feedback will be provided to prospective proponents to inform their bidding documentation to construct the project. Capire compiled the feedback from the forum into a report (Appendix 2 of this document).

Unlike at the first industry forum, where participants expressed dissatisfaction with LXRA's engagement approach, the nature of the discussions between the project team and participants were collaborative and focussed on improving the final solution. The atmosphere in the room was friendly and there were many two-way discussions between the project team and participants.

### **2.3.10 Business Liaison Group**

Following the first industry forum, in March 2016, the LXRA, with support from independent consultancy Capire, established a Business Liaison Group (BLG) to enhance community involvement in the planning of the level crossing removal, particularly in relation to minimising impacts on local businesses.

The group comprises of twelve members, representing a variety of big and small businesses within the Dandenong South Industrial Precinct.

The BLG, chaired by Gabrielle Williams, Member for Dandenong, held its first meeting on 05 May, where the members agreed on the group's terms of reference. The project team took the group through the multi-criteria analysis of each of the five possible options to remove the Abbotts Rd level crossing, seeking input from BLG members on each option.

At the second meeting on 23 May 2016, the members supported LXRA's shortlist of two options, indicating that the rail over option is preferred.

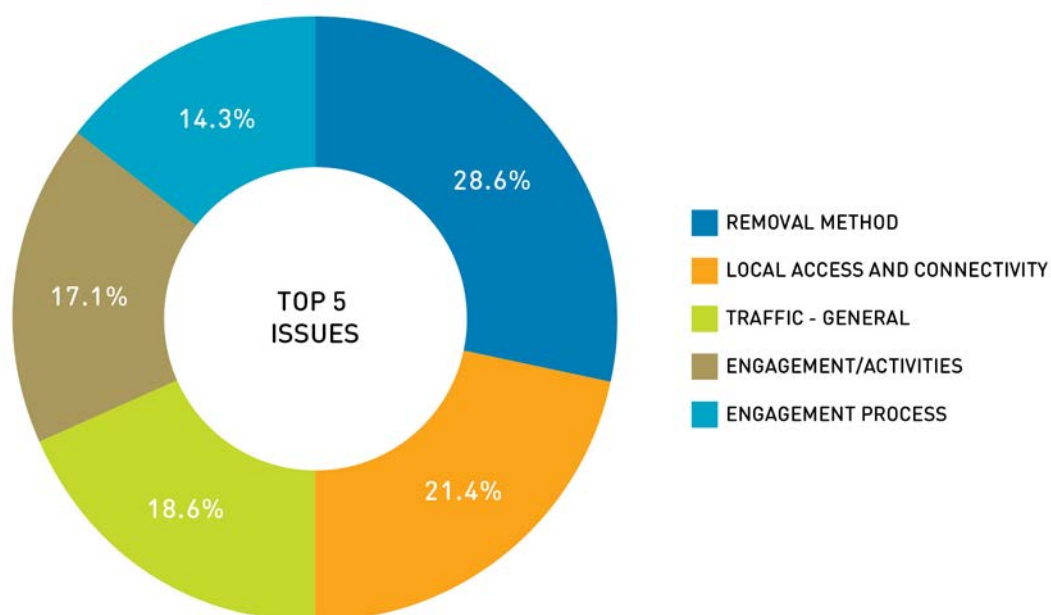
The BLG met twice during phase two of the project's consultation, on 12 July and 15 August, where the members helped the project team to refine the shortlisted designs and select a design solution for the Abbotts Road level crossing removal. Members unanimously supported the selection of the rail bridge solution.

The BLG met twice more, during phase three of consultation, to discuss different options for bridge structures, how they are likely to be built and the potential impacts to local businesses during construction. This feedback will help the contractor to determine the final bridge design and construction and will help inform their delivery of the project.

## 3 Feedback – what we’ve heard

Feedback during project consultation has come in two forms: qualitative feedback gathered during a doorknock of local businesses, one-on-one meetings, and verbal feedback at drop-in sessions; and written feedback forms providing a mix of qualitative and quantitative data from the community drop-in sessions. The project team also gathered feedback via the LXRA Facebook page, and from email and phone enquiries.

### 3.1 Overarching themes and key issues – phase one consultation



As the above chart shows, the overall feedback received during the first phase of consultation focussed on five key issues: removal method, local access and connectivity, traffic movement and changes to traffic and the project’s engagement process and activities.

#### *Removal method*

Local businesses and community indicated that they did not expect the initially proposed removal option would involve closing Abbots Road permanently.

Feedback gathered during this phase of consultation gave the project team a greater appreciation of the issues concerning local businesses, in particular the potential impact to the surrounding area if Abbots Road was closed to traffic, and the significant operational issues that an increased traffic volume along Remington Drive and Pound Road West would cause for businesses located in the streets running off it.

### *Traffic*

During phase one of consultation, 18.6 per cent of people told the project team they were most concerned about impacts to traffic, particularly if Abbots Road was closed and traffic was diverted along a new road connection.

Many people cited the delays at the South Gippsland Highway intersection with Pound Road as the cause of traffic delays in the area, rather than the level crossing on Abbots Road, and felt that this congestion point would only be worsened by diverting traffic from Abbots Road along Remington Drive and Pound Road. A large number of employees from the local area were concerned about additional travel time to and from work as a result of closing Abbots Road and rerouting traffic along Remington Drive. It became clear that while most were supportive of a Remington Drive and Pound Road West connection, they believed it must be in addition to and not instead of an Abbots Road connection.

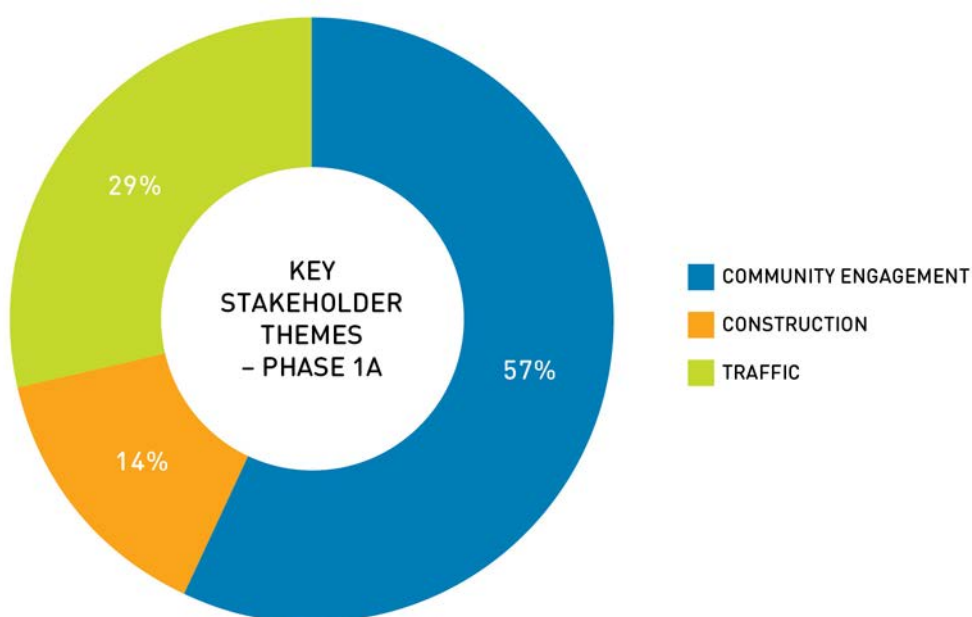
“ The frustration level of sitting in traffic on Abbots road is huge. It’s a crawl along there with traffic already heavy. Ausco place – difficult to get in and out.

“ Two of our staff have had bad car accidents trying to turn in and out of Soccio place off Abbots road.

## 3.2 Phase 1a consultation

From December 2015 until February 2016, during **Phase 1a** of the project's community consultation, LXRA sought feedback on the option to create an alternative road link by connecting Remington Drive and Pound Road West which would involve the permanent closure of Abbotts Road. Key issues, comments and themes that emerged from Phase 1a are outlined here.

### 3.2.1 Key themes

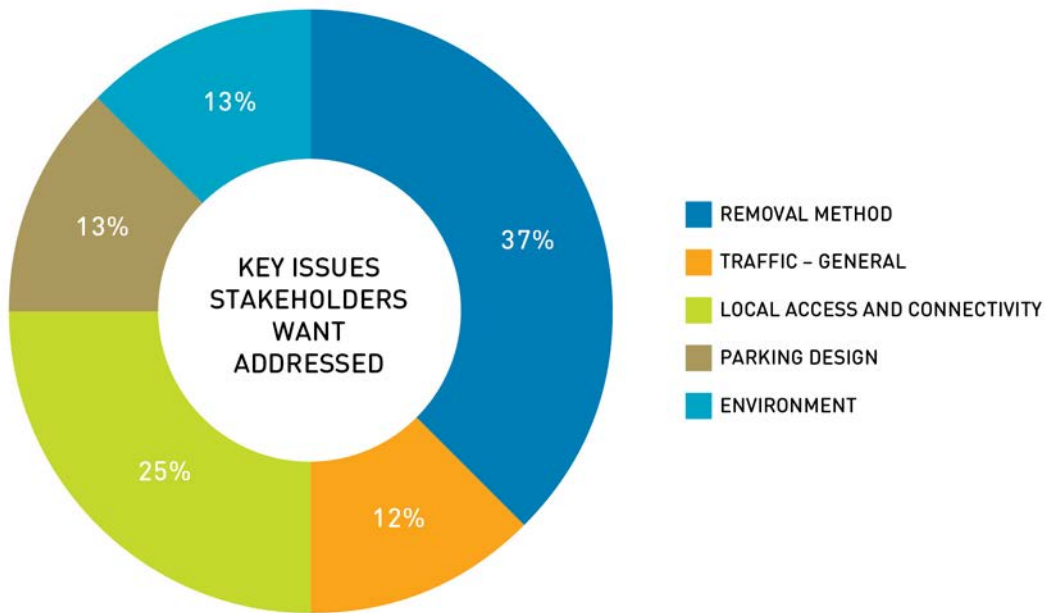


#### *Community engagement*

A large proportion (57 per cent) of the feedback from Phase 1a related to the project's consultation process, with many community members unhappy that LXRA was seeking feedback on only one option, rather than presenting all potential designs from the outset.

A project fact sheet was delivered to around 700 properties in the area surrounding the level crossing in December 2015, however, at community drop-in sessions in February and door knocks to local businesses in March, many people told the project team it was the first time they had heard significant amounts about the project.





### *Local access and connectivity*

A large proportion of feedback received as part of Phase 1a showed local access and connectivity to be an important issue for stakeholders.

Consultation revealed the variety of businesses operating in the industrial area surrounding the level crossing and their complex transport, vehicle and access needs. Many of them are large, logistics businesses with B-Double semi-trailers making deliveries and pick-ups throughout the day and night, for whom changes to vehicle access to their properties could have significant impact on their business operations.

Every business has unique requirements and each level crossing removal option has different implications for different businesses depending on their location, the type of vehicles they use and the way they conduct business.

Understanding the varied and complex access needs of local businesses and the potential impacts of each design option has been central to the project's design development so far and will be key in helping determine the final solution.

### 3.2.2 Feedback on the alternative option (to connect Remington Drive and Pound Road West and close Abbotts Road)

Local businesses, commuters and landowners told the project team they strongly opposed any option that involved closing Abbotts Road. A snapshot of their feedback about this option is presented here.

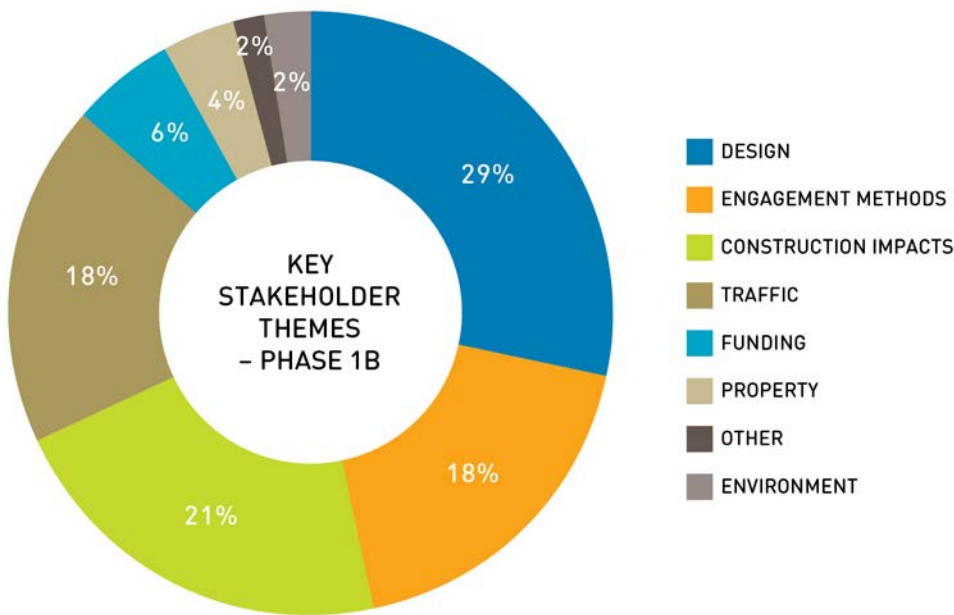


### 3.3 Phase 1b consultation

During **Phase 1b**, LXRA sought feedback on five possible solutions to remove the level crossing at Abbotts Road. A number of key issues, comments and themes that emerged during this phase are outlined below.

### 3.3.1 Key themes

Key themes from the feedback gathered in Phase 1b included concerns and comments about the project design, engagement methods and funding. Other matters raised related to impacts during construction, effects on property and property values, as well as environmental concerns.



### 3.3.2 Feedback on the removal options

#### *Rail options*

Feedback on the rail options – to build a rail bridge over Abbots Road or lower the rail line under Abbots Road – was predominantly positive, due to the minimal impact these options would have on businesses, both during construction and once the level crossing is removed. People quickly understood the difficulties involved in a rail under option due to the high water table and indicated a strong preference for a rail over solution. People were not concerned about the visual amenity of a rail bridge, given the industrial environment where the crossing is located.

“ We are not concerned about the visual impact of a rail bridge at all

“ It’s crazy to even consider options other than rail over

“ Why would you bother wasting time talking about these road options that will be a nightmare, when it’s clear that a rail over is the most feasible and only realistic option?

“ It seems, if you do a rail option, all the problems will be avoided

### Road options

Feedback on the two road options – to build a road bridge over the rail line or to lower the road underneath the rail line – revealed similar concerns about both. These centred around loss of business frontage, parking and significant changes to property access that would affect how businesses operate. Below is some of the feedback about these options.



### 3.3.3 Feedback on decision to rule out option to connect Remington Drive and Pound Road and close Abbotts Road

On 24 May 2016, Gabrielle Williams, Member for Dandenong, announced that LXRA had ruled out the option to remove the level crossing at Abbotts Road by building a road connection between Remington Drive and Pound Road West and permanently closing Abbotts Road.

The announcement was met with a positive response from the Dandenong South community, including local businesses and the Business Liaison Group. The Facebook post on LXRA's page attracted praise from members of the public, with 35 of the 37 comments supportive

of the move. Importantly, at meetings of the Business Liaison Group, representatives emphasised their ongoing support for a second connection at Remington Drive in the future.

### 3.4 Phase two consultation

Twenty people attended two drop-in community information sessions on Wednesday 20 July and Friday 22 July 2016 at local business in Dandenong South. Attendees at the July sessions provided feedback on the two shortlisted options for removal. The key themes that emerged from those sessions are below.

#### 3.4.1 Key themes

##### *Removal method*

There was strong support for the rail over road solution and indication from almost all attendees that there would be significant push back if a road over option was selected. A few people queried why a the road had been shortlisted, given the lack of support for this option and the difficulties involved, such as land acquisition and changes to property access. It being made clear that the rail option was preferred.

##### *Traffic*

A number of people wanted to know if there would be additional works, including full duplication of Abbotts Road, to address traffic congestion in the area. Most people accepted that this was outside the scope of the level crossing removal project.

##### *Timing*

Almost everyone who attended the session was keen to find out when the final design solution would be announced and when works to remove the level crossing would begin and finish.

##### *Remington Drive / Pound Road West connection*

Many attendees were interested to find out whether this connection would still be built at some stage now that it is not being built as part of the level crossing removal project.

### 3.5 Phase 3 consultation

Phase three consultation sought feedback on potential options for the design of the bridge structure and its construction at an industry forum on 21 October 2016 and a community drop-in information session on 25 October 2016, as well as through the PSA consultation process.

These sessions were a chance for local business operators, landowners, commuters, and other interested members of the community to provide input that will inform the final design of the bridge structure and the way in which the contractor builds it. Attendees were advised that the LXRA would be seeking a planning scheme amendment to facilitate the delivery of the project, and given the opportunity to make submissions as part of that request.

The industry forum, chaired by Gabrielle Williams MP and facilitated by Capire Consulting, was an opportunity for representatives from the Dandenong South business community to workshop

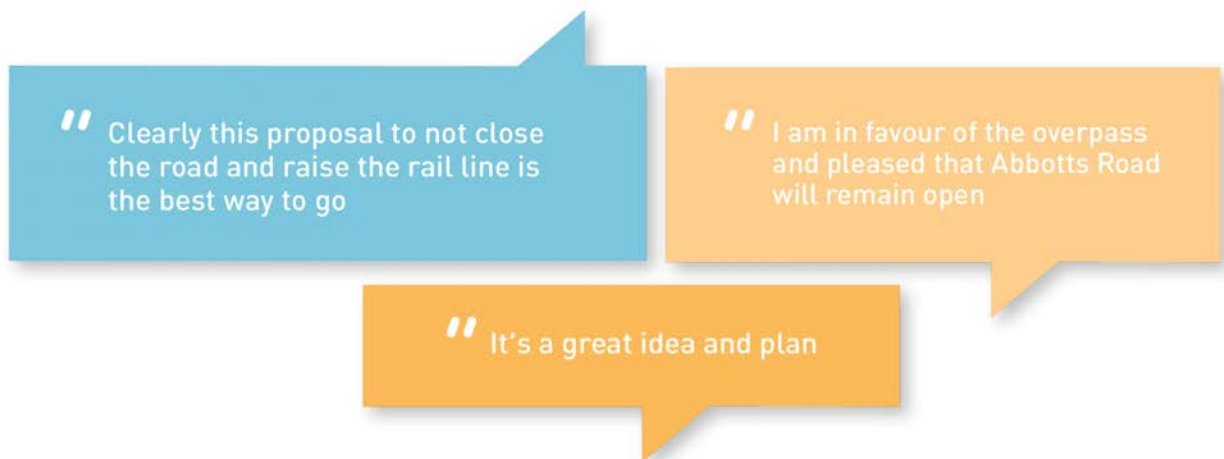
potential bridge structure designs and construction impacts and considerations in more detail. Capire compiled the feedback from the forum into a report (Appendix 2 of this document).

Feedback from the nine written submissions received during the PSA consultation process is incorporated below in this report and will also form part of LXRA's formal application to the Minister for Planning, for an amendment to the Greater Dandenong Planning Scheme.

### 3.5.1 Key themes

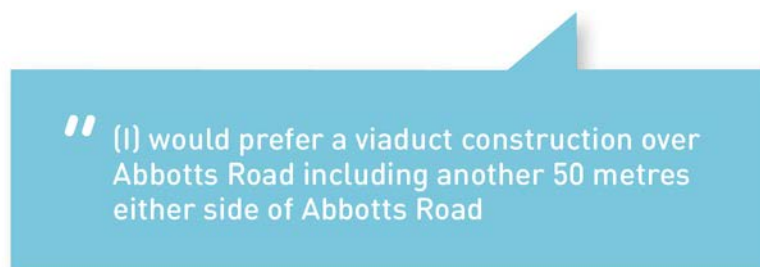
#### *Support for the project*

Feedback received during phase three consultation revealed strong support from the local community and businesses, for the project overall, as well as for the rail bridge design solution.



#### *Bridge design*

There was a commonly held view amongst those who participated in phase three consultation, that an Alliance should consider a design that combines both types of bridge structure – viaduct and retained earth - to create a hybrid bridge design. People generally agreed that the viaduct structure is more visually appealing, as there are more open spaces beneath the structure and it decreases the opportunity for graffiti.



One business operator suggested that the bridge opening needed to allow for views along Abbots Road and any bridge piers should be set back to allow for these views to be maintained. Another

highlighted the importance of bridge design allowing for future bicycle connections along Abbots Road.

When discussing the retained earth walls, it was noted that this has a cheaper construction cost than the viaduct and could assist in noise attenuation.

### *Construction impacts*

Feedback included comments about potential construction haulage routes, including potential locations for construction access, site offices and laydown areas.

Some businesses commented that local roads around Quantum Close become easily congested and that it would be preferable for site offices and construction access to be located within the undeveloped the Pound Road West reserve and achieve access via Pound Road West. One business queried what potential impact of construction movements would have on the operation of Abbots Road.

Another business located adjacent to the rail reserve and level crossing commented on the need to manage dust associated with construction works and avoid impacts on manufacturing activities.

### *Duplication of Abbots Road*

A number of people highlighted the importance of building a bridge structure that would allow for future duplication of Abbots Road, to address traffic congestion in the area.



“ Any rail bridge over Abbots Road must allow for a future duplication at the point the bridge crosses Abbots Road

### *Remington Drive / Pound Road West connection*

One submission raised the question of whether this connection would still be built at some stage now that it is not being built as part of the level crossing removal project.

### *Overall engagement process and activities*

Participants from phase three told us that they felt there has been a genuine engagement process since the project was reset in March 2016. There were greater levels of trust between the project team and the stakeholders in comparison to the first industry forum, because of the extensive engagement undertaken by LXRA.

Feedback from phase three also indicated that BLG has been a useful connection between the project team and the broader stakeholders in the project area. The BLG would like to continue as a group beyond the Abbots Road project.

## 4 Engagement outcomes

### Key outcomes and messages

The first three stages of consultation have established a positive working relationship between the LXRA and the local stakeholders who are impacted by the project. It is important that a future Alliance maintain this positive relationship throughout delivery and construction. Approximately 325 local business owners, traders and property owners contributed feedback as part of the project's consultation program, which included nine community information sessions held between February and October 2016, as well as two industry forums on 17 March and 21 October 2016.

#### 4.1 Phase one engagement outcomes

Community feedback, along with the results of a thorough multi-criteria analysis, helped the project team shortlist two feasible options: to build a rail bridge over Abbots Road; or build a road bridge over the rail line.

This first phase of community consultation provided a stronger appreciation of the issues concerning local businesses, especially relating to vehicle access to properties and potential impacts to the value of land and business viability as a result.

LXRA recognises the importance of Abbots Road to the Dandenong South industrial precinct and appreciate that it is a key connection, linking large and small businesses to the surrounding road network.

Local businesses, commuters and land owners told LXRA they strongly opposed the closure of Abbots Road. This was an important consideration in ruling that option out and a large proportion of submissions received during phase three consultation expressed satisfaction with the rail bridge solution, which will allow Abbots Rd to remain open.

#### 4.2 Phase two engagement outcomes

Community and stakeholder feedback from phase one and two of consultation was a key factor in developing and selecting the rail bridge design solution. Dandenong South is a growing employment and innovation hub, and in recognition of this, impact on businesses was a key consideration in selecting the rail bridge solution to remove the level crossing.

Feedback from both phases one and two of consultation indicated that land acquisition and changes to access were key concerns, especially for businesses and owners of property along



Abbotts Road, Ausco Place and Soccio Place, where the impacts to access of a road option would be significant.

Community feedback received during phase two consultation was far more positive in relation to LXRA's engagement process and activities. It indicated that people felt well-informed about the project, especially compared to at the outset of the project. The community told us that they felt LXRA has listened to what they had to say and acted on it.

### 4.3 Phase three engagement outcomes

Overall, there was a high level of support amongst phase three participants for both the project and the final design option. A number of written submissions expressed explicit support for the proposed rail-over-road option for removal of the level crossing.

Participation and engagement from attendees of the October industry forum was positive and involved greater levels of trust between the project team and the stakeholders in comparison to the first forum in March 2016, because of the extensive engagement undertaken by LXRA. None of the initial concerns discussed at the first industry forum, such as distrust in the process or lack of engagement, were raised in the second industry forum.

The feedback from phase three engagement has been incorporated into the below list of key considerations for an alliance to deliver the project.

#### 4.3.1 Key considerations for a future Alliance

The first three stages of consultation have established a positive working relationship between the LXRA and the local stakeholders who are impacted by the project. It is important that a future Alliance maintain this positive relationship throughout delivery and construction. In order to do so, it is recommended that the Alliance take into account the below key considerations.

#### *Design and construction*

When finalising the design of the rail bridge structure and building it, an Alliance should:

- Consider designing a hybrid viaduct and reinforced earth walls bridge structure.
- Maintain the trust with the community by providing an opportunity to obtain feedback on the final design and construction approach.
- In deciding the location for haulage and construction access routes, be mindful of the number of industrial vehicles and trucks making deliveries in the area.
- In determining where to locate site offices or lay down areas, consider using the green fields area between Pound Road West and Remington Drive.
- Consider ways to minimise dust during construction, as it could cause issues for some businesses close to the construction area.

## Engagement

When engaging with the community throughout delivery of the project, the Alliance will need to:

- Keep the two-way communication channels open and provides advance warning of any planned disruptions.
- Continue to work with impacted stakeholders during the construction to ensure property access and car parking are not impacted.
- *Consider the most effective methods to engage the local community* - the project team found letterbox drops to be not very effective in this primarily industrial area. The most effective way to engage with the businesses in the area is via direct communication, that is face-to-face meetings and emails. Promoting drop-in information sessions at train stations was less effective than for some other projects, as the vast majority of workers in the area drive to and from work, rather than catch the train. The best way to promote sessions to local businesses was to display promotional materials at the many cafes and roadhouses in the industrial precinct. This also provides an opportunity to speak to those businesses, who are information conduits in the area.
- *Consider carefully the timing and location of engagement activities* –the project team discovered a strong preference amongst the local community, the majority of whom are business owners or employees in the industrial precinct, for events to be held locally (within the precinct) and during business hours.