

Meeting minutes

Date: 20 August 2025
Program: Suburban Rail Loop
Title: Cheltenham Precinct Reference Group (PRG)
Location: Highett Neighbourhood House
Meeting Number: 16
Chairs: Noel Jones & Ryan Batchelor MP
Minute Taker: Christine Concha, Suburban Rail Loop Authority

Attendees	Apologies
- Noel Jones, GHD, Facilitator, Acting Co-Chair - Ryan Batchelor MP for Southern Metropolitan region, Co-Chair - Julian Birthisel, Kingston City Council (KCC) - Rachael Hudson, Bayside City Council (BCC) - Gabby Bush, Highett Progress Association - Julie Olarenshaw, Friends of Sir William Fry Reserve - Derek Screen, Pennydale Residents Action Group - Ian Morgan, Kingston Residents Association - Brenton Shaughnessy, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA) - Christine Concha, SRLA - Kelsey Southwood, SRLA - Morgan Williams, SRLA - Simon Platt, SRLA - Andrew Bailey, AJM	- Daniel Czech, Community Representative - Frank Hellier, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Item	Discussion topic	Who
1.	Welcome and housekeeping Noel Jones (NJ) opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and noted the last meeting was a site tour with no minutes.	NJ
2.	Works update from SRLA including: - Upcoming works on 22 August 2025. Discussion - Derek Screen (DS) enquired if the left turn lane onto Nepean Highway from Bay Road would remain open. - SRLA confirmed it would remain open.	SRLA

3.	Structure planning update from SRLA, including: • Structure planning engagement timeline • Cheltenham submission feedback and key themes • Next steps and upcoming key dates. Discussion • DS noted concern some specific documents were not being released for structure planning. • SRLA noted the structure planning hearings are being managed by Planning Panels Victoria (PPV). SRLA encouraged community members to visit the PPV website for further information. • ACTION: SRLA to investigate the release of these specific structure planning documents and will provide a response to the PRG • Ian Morgan (IM) requested clarification on how the feedback received via submissions and public hearings will be used to indicate success. • SRLA provided details related to the structure planning process, confirming engagement activities completed so far, the role of the Standing Advisory Committee and the role of the Minister for Planning. • DS raised concerns that only a small number of community members have been allowed to speak at the hearings. • SRLA noted the hearings process is managed independently by PPV. • ACTION: SRLA to follow up number of community representatives tabled to speak at hearings • IM raised the government's determination to pursue high-density residential development. • Gabby Bush (GB) noted the PRG may not be the best forum for discussion about the planning system more generally. IM accepted.	
4.	SRLA presented on Sir William Fry Reserve (SWFR) new and improved open space, including: • Early concept design • Public consultation Discussion • PRG members noted concern the SWFR consultation factsheet was not distributed to the 1.6km planning area declaration area. • ACTION: SRLA to consider expanded distribution area in future engagement processes • DS noted there was some confusion within the community on Development Victoria's (DV) open space obligations given SRLA is acquiring a portion of the DV site. • Post meeting note: Public open space provision in DV's remaining site is subject to their requirements and will be in addition to the SRLA new permanent open space. • GB asked if the public toilet block will be upgraded or moved. • SRLA noted relocation and replacement of the toilet block is being considered, subject to confirming the final design. • The PRG requested amenities and landmarks including the Highett Gasworks chimney be included in consultation maps. • ACTION: SRLA to consider more detailed maps for consultation • IM suggested the lighting design for SWFR should consider potential impacts to flora and fauna at night. • GB asked whether the southern car park would be completely removed from SWFR • SRLA confirmed it would be removed as part of construction for the SRL station at Cheltenham. • DS requested confirmation on changes to topography, particularly related to the area where there is a large dip / bowl.	SRLA

- SRLA noted the earthen embankment west of the lake is intended to stay, however the amphitheatre bowl and areas south of the lake and within the station boundary, which are not part of the open space offset scope would likely be regraded.
- GB asked if SWFR will be renamed or will receive an additional Traditional Owner name.
- SRLA noted no plan to rename the Reserve but will raise this with KCC for consideration.
- DS asked if there would be community consultation for naming the SRL station at Cheltenham.
- SRLA advised expect a future consultation on the SRL East station names
- Julie Olarenschaw (JO) noted that while SRLA does not plan to improve the lake, community assistance or education on how the lake could be improved would be appreciated.
- IM noted preference for a 'swamp-like' lake.
- JO asked if the frog habitat will be maintained.
- SRLA advised local ecology including frog habitat is being considered in the concept design and the current lake arrangement would be maintained.
- IM asked what will happen to the space within the proposed station construction boundary.
- SRLA advised this area is required to build the SRL station at Cheltenham. Some of the land will be returned as public open space post station construction.
- DS asked if pedestrian access across Lyle Anderson Reserve will be delivered as part of this work.
- SRLA advised this is not within scope of the SWFR works.
- **ACTION: DS to provide email from Level Crossing Removal Project noting confirmation of the pathway across the rail line**
- IM asked how many trees would be removed to build the skate park.
- SRLA noted the skate park design will minimise impact to existing trees.
- SRLA advised a walking connection between the activity lawn and Remington Drive is being considered in the concept design.
- JO noted the area between the off-leash dog park and the existing lake acts as a lake filtering system.
- JO noted the off-leash dog park takes away open space.
- SRLA noted the activity lawn and events lawn will be incorporated and designed to provide enhanced open space within SWFR.
- DS asked how the SWFR works will integrate well with future SRL station at Cheltenham design.
- SRLA confirmed the contractor appointed to build the new SRL station at Cheltenham will need to develop a design which provides good integration between the Reserve and the SRL station at Cheltenham.
- A member asked whether the over station development is included in the offset open space calculation.
- SRLA confirmed this is correct.
- SRLA confirmed the next meeting on 12 November 2025.

Actions

#	Action	Owner
1.	Action: SRLA to investigate the release of these specific structure planning documents and will provide a response to the PRG. Response: The structure planning hearings are being managed by PPV. The PRG is encouraged to seek information related to the Advisory Committee process and the public hearings directly from PPV via Georgia Brodrick, Project Officer on (03) 9935 4196 or planning.panels@transport.vic.gov.au	SRLA
2.	Action: SRLA to follow up number of community representatives tabled to speak at hearings.	SRLA

	Response: As above; PRG members are encouraged to seek information via PPV directly.	
3.	Action: SRLA to consider expanded distribution area in future engagement processes. Response: The preference for materials to be distributed to the structure plan boundary for future consultations has been noted and will be considered for future consultations. Suburban Rail Loop mailed a factsheet to over 5,300 homes in the approximate 800 metre radius around SWFR. The new and improved open space at SWFR does not form part of the structure planning process. As such the distribution zone did not follow the exact structure plan boundary, however, was developed with the intention of informing and encouraging feedback from local residents and users of the park. To inform the broader community the factsheet distribution has been supported by • An eNews to over 4,000 subscribers including those specifically requesting information about Cheltenham • Posters and sticker decals in the Reserve itself with QR codes linking to Engage Victoria • Social media and local advertising • Advertising from local Councils • Pop-ups at the Reserve and Highett Library. Post meeting note: The final factsheet distribution number was confirmed to be over 5,300 homes. This has been updated and reflected in the meeting slides.	SRLA
4.	Action: SRLA to consider more detailed maps for consultation. Response: This has been noted for future consultations.	SRLA
5.	Action: DS to provide email from Level Crossing Removal Project noting the pathway across the rail line is confirmed for delivery. Response: Awaiting response.	DS