

Meeting minutes

Date:	11 June 2026	1pm – 2pm
Program:	Suburban Rail Loop	
Title:	Cheltenham Precinct Reference Group (PRG)	
Location:	Highett Neighbourhood House	
Meeting Number:	Out of cycle meeting – Project program changes and upcoming Public Open Space works in Cheltenham	
Chairs:	Brenton Shaughnessy, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA)	
Minute Taker:	Christine Concha, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA)	

Attendees	Apologies
- Alexander Wiltshire on behalf of Ryan Batchelor MP for Southern Metropolitan's office - Daniel Czech, Community Representative - Colin Duncan, Community Representative - Jenna Davey-Burns, Community Representative - Derek Screen, Pennydale Residents Action Group - Douglas Klein, Highett Progress Association - Gabby Bush, Highett Progress Association - Ian Morgan, Kingston Residents Association - Julie Olarenshaw, Friends of Sir William Fry Reserve - Luke Stack, Adviser for the Office of Hon. Nick Staikos MP - Melanie Starr, Kingston City Council (KCC) - Mitchel Abraham, Bayside City Council (BCC) - Simon Black, Suburban Connect (SC) - Gagan Sra, SC - Mark Lucy, SC - Nushara Mezzatesta, SC - Jasmine Kha, SC - Gareth Glover, SC - Adam Greenberger, SRLA - Brenton Shaughnessy, SRLA - Christine Concha, SRLA - Daniel Wall, SRLA - Hugh Rutledge, SRLA - Morgan Williams, SRLA - Sarah Moss, SRLA	- Frank Hellier, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Ryan Batchelor MP for Southern Metropolitan region, Co-Chair

Item	Discussion topic
1.	Welcome and overview of meeting - Brenton Shaughnessy (BS) welcomed attendees and introduced new members to the Precinct Reference Group (PRG) - community representatives Colin Duncan and Jenna Davey-Burns. - BS opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and noted the purpose of the out of cycle meeting is to go through the change of timing for the public open space works scope and provided an overview of the agenda.
2.	SRLA and Suburban Connect (SC) presented a Cheltenham works update, including: - An update on works for the new Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station at Cheltenham, with key construction activities being brought forward to start this year. This includes the delivery of the new and improved public open space from June 2026, with timing for site remediation and station box construction to be confirmed. - An overview of the revised program that would support the earlier delivery of public open space, allow more time for testing trains, rail and station systems, which reflects learnings from other major rail projects. This also results in public open space and enhancements to Sir William Fry Reserve to be accessible to community more than a year earlier than first planned. - SC provided an overview of the scope of works and the proposed construction schedule including site remediation works and station box construction with methodology and timing to be finalised, public access arrangements, tree removal requirements, construction impacts and available support measures. Some odour may be present during excavation activities, but this would not pose a health risk to community. - An overview of the new and improved parkland, noting the existing basketball court and skate park will remain open until the replacement facilities are opened. - SC noted works for the public open space are planned to occur during the day. - SRLA noted out of hours works may be required for SRLA managed activities, including service relocations. Works will be delivered in line with the Residential Support Guidelines. - An overview of the community engagement, including the distribution of around 4,600 works notices, door knocks to impacted residents, pop-up information sessions and local stakeholder briefings, SMS updates, 1 on 1 discussions with impacted residents and trader support options. Discussion - Derek Screen (DS) noted works related to the public open space and enhancements to Sir William Fry Reserve are starting much earlier than expected - SRLA confirmed works have been brought forward more than a year, which will mean the spaces will be available for the community more than a year earlier than planned. - Julie Olarens Shaw (JO) asked if permanent fencing for the construction of the station would also be installed earlier than expected - SRLA confirmed permanent hoarding would likely be installed earlier than originally planned, noting this would be after the new and improved public open spaces are delivered. Temporary fencing throughout the reserve will be in place to support public open space works and some early station box construction preparatory works. - Jenna Davey-Burns (JDB) asked whether consultation with local council, schools, businesses and other stakeholders impacted by the public open space works and any associated traffic impacts had occurred - SRLA noted extensive consultation was conducted to finalise the designs for the public open space and enhancements to the reserve, with over 260 submissions received over two phases of consultation in 2025. SRLA noted there are ongoing service relocation works occurring in the SRL East Cheltenham site that have traffic impacts, and SRLA are continuing to consult and inform the community and relevant stakeholders throughout works through measures such as works notices, briefings, door knocks and SMS updates. Further detail on engagement provided later in presentation. - DS asked if delivering works at Cheltenham earlier was expected to delay another section of the project - SRLA advised it would not. - Douglas Klein (DK) asked if the public open space works are going to be finished by end of 2026 - SRLA confirmed public open space works planned to be completed by early 2027, with areas to open as they are completed. - DS asked if the station box would remain open for longer than originally planned to allow for TBM retrieval - SRLA noted contractors will coordinate works programs and have a handover period to move from tunnelling to station construction.

- JDB asked whether the changes to the TBM retrieval site would impact the community in Heatherton
 - SRLA noted there is a separate reference group for the Heatherton/Clarinda community where works updates are discussed. Tunnel spoil removal for tunnels between Heatherton and Cheltenham was always planned to be removed from Heatherton, there has been no change to this.
- DS and Gabby Bush (GB) asked whether an acoustic shed or odour tent had been confirmed for upcoming works, particularly site remediation
 - SRLA noted the current methodology does not include the need for an acoustic shed or tent over the work site. Further information in presentation.
- JO asked what alternative mitigations would be used
 - SC noted there will be a range of different controls that will be implemented to manage works effectively without a cover
 - SC noted the upcoming works focused on the construction of the public open space and enhancements to the reserve. Remediation and station box construction methodology and timing are still being worked through. Further information will be provided to the PRG and community as details are confirmed.
- DK asked whether the relocation of the skate park and basketball court will be done before the station box construction starts
 - SC confirmed public open space works and the new skate park and basketball court are expected to be completed before decommissioning the existing skate park and basketball court.
- DK noted the updated design for the public open space released in December 2025 and final design released in June 2026 looked the same
 - SRLA noted phase two consultation focused on the finer details of the design including types of plantings etc. and there were only minor changes made to the final design map.
- JDB asked whether the final skate park design included facilities for younger users and those with less advanced skills, as the current skate park with the bowl does not cater to all levels
 - SRLA noted this was also raised in the consultation feedback received and there are flat areas included in the final design with skate elements for learners. SRLA noted will information on the skate park design to JDB.
- DK asked if the southern area of the reserve will be levelled with Bay Road and raised concerns about flooding and drainage
 - SRLA noted the area will remain elevated. SC noted drainage considerations are made throughout planning, design and construction.
- DS raised concerns about wind and dust impacts to the community, noting confirmed Category A materials in the soil at Sir William Fry Reserve
 - SC noted extensive assessments and modelling completed for the site to ensure works can be delivered safely. As works methodology is confirmed, site specific mitigations will be implemented to manage dust, including proactive measures such as polymer sprays and dust suppressants and reviewing weather forecasts and conditions to plan works accordingly.
 - SRLA noted investigations show the exposure risk for humans is 50x below the threshold for any potential health concern.
- JO asked if workers in the reserve will be in hazmat suits
 - SC noted the use of hazmat suits are a requirement when asbestos containing materials (ACM) are found. For the contaminated levels in the reserve, there is at this stage not a requirement for the use of hazmat suits, but they will be used if ACM found. SC reiterated there is no risk to community health however the team will continue to provide updates to community recognising there is community concern.
- JO requested information sessions for residents and community groups to go through upcoming works and impacts. Noted works notices are not being received by all apartment occupiers in Remington Drive due to access issues
 - SC and SRLA noted work notices and information have been sent to contacts of the building including building management and respective body corporations. Happy to meet with residents to discuss upcoming works and further sessions will be arranged as works progress.
- JO asked whether apartments facing Sir William Fry Reserve will have property condition surveys offered
 - SC noted they have offered property condition surveys for common areas and the exterior of apartment buildings facing the reserve.
- Daniel Czech (DC) noted advice provided in the SRL East Environment Effects Statement (EES) including recommendation for a cover or tent over the site during remediation. Asked how this had changed
 - SRLA noted the use of a cover was a recommendation pending further assessment. Further assessments show that with other control measures in place, cover is not needed.

- JO raised concerns about works at the Highett Gasworks site and the potential impacts on nearby apartments
 - SC noted stringent controls in place to manage any potential contaminated materials and ensure community and worker safety.
- Members discussed dominant wind directions at Sir William Fry Reserve and noted concerns about dust and odour impacts in the area
 - SC noted extensive modelling and monitoring is done, in addition to site specific mitigation measures. While there may be low levels of odour for periods of time as remediation works are completed, this would not present a human health risk. It just may be unpleasant.
- DS raised concerns about contaminated material from excavation and tunnelling at the Cheltenham site being transported to Heatherton and its potential impact on residents
 - SC noted strict requirements apply to the management of contaminated soil, including soil containing Category A to D contaminants, which is tracked and transported to authorised facilities only. Cheltenham station excavation materials will not be removed to the Heatherton site.
- Colin Duncan (CD) provided anecdotal feedback about the ground conditions of the former Highett Gasworks site and perceived contamination
 - SC noted very low levels of contaminated material is present within the site works area and site investigations are completed to inform works.
 - CD asked how wide the new linear reserve section of public open space is
 - SRLA confirmed the new public open space that will be built in the former Highett Gasworks site is 20 metres wide.
- DK asked whether the new open space could be doubled in size
 - SRLA noted that there are no changes to the size of the new open space being delivered as part of SRL East public open space requirements in Cheltenham. However, this does not preclude additional open space being delivered as part of any future development on the remainder of the Highett Gasworks site, which is currently owned by Development Victoria (DV). A consultation process for the open space will be required once DV has further details on their development plans for their site.
- SC noted the works to construct the new public open space will be staged and remediation of the site will be incremental. There are clear guidelines in place for works to be carried out safely.
- DK asked how project vehicles and trucks would access the new open space once works commence in this area
 - SC noted there are multiple access points, including via the Nepean Highway Service Road and through the former Highett Gasworks site.
 - CD provided feedback about the lake as shown in project collateral.
- DK asked if there were any updates on upgrades to the lake and playground
 - SRLA noted the works to the lake and playground are not part of the scope of works being delivered.
 - GB noted further discussion with council.
- CD asked why the new SRL station is named Cheltenham station when it is not in Cheltenham
 - SRLA noted the new station is referred to as the SRL station at Cheltenham for consultation purposes, and the station is yet to be formally named.
- JO raised concerns about access changes to Sir William Fry Reserve while areas are temporarily blocked off, noting engagement with residents should occur
 - SC noted works would be staged to maintain as much access as possible while ensuring works can be carried out safely.
- DS asked whether planting would occur during the construction of the new public open space or after
 - SC confirmed during, with public open space works expected to be completed by early 2027.
- DK sought clarity on works staging and access changes at Sir William Fry Reserve through to early 2027
 - **ACTION: SC to provide a breakdown of each stage of works in Cheltenham, from public open space construction to the station box construction, including what parts of the reserve will be open and what will be closed during each stage.**
- GB asked for clarity on the approach to tree removal, including whether it would occur all at once or be staged
 - SC noted tree removal would be staged and trees only removed if and when required. In the short term, any tree removal or trimming would be as part of public open space works in the northern part of the reserve. DK asked whether all 300 identified trees will be removed by the end of the year?
 - SC confirmed majority of tree removal required as part of SRL works at Cheltenham expected by end of year, though timing is subject to change.
- JO asked whether trees would be relocated or cut down
 - SC noted that the identified trees would be cut down, and that options for reuse and repurposing removed trees are being investigated.
- JO asked whether the established gum trees in the northern part of the reserve will be removed

	- SC noted the established gum trees in the northern part of the reserve should not be impacted by works. ACTION: SC to provide further details on tree removal, including which trees and tree types are proposed to be removed. - KCC noted they are working closely with SRLA and SC to retain as many trees on site as possible. - DK raised concerns about cumulative traffic impacts of upcoming traffic light installation and road resurfacing works separate to the SRL project which involve lane closures on Bay Road for up to three months - SC and SRLA are aware of the upcoming works and will continue to work closely with the Department of Transport and Planning to coordinate activities and minimise traffic impacts in the area. - JO asked whether the soil sampling results within the former petrol station site previously requested in PRG meetings will be provided and asked if excavation activities will begin before the next PRG meeting - SC noted that an update on soil sampling results and scheduled works will be provided at a future PRG meeting. Questions can be sent to the project team prior to the meeting for discussion. Excavation at this site will not occur ahead of the next PRG. - JO requested to take up offer to organise a briefing with residents in the apartments north of the reserve - SC and SRLA noted will discuss this with JO offline and organise accordingly ACTION: SC/SRLA to touch base with JO and others to organise further localised briefings with stakeholder groups - DK queried the rationale for the three-year delay for Highett and Wickham Road level crossings under Level Crossing Removal Project, noting the rationale in the budget papers referred to aligning synergies with SRL and reduced community impacts but the alignment remains unclear - SRLA advised investigations are underway into improving the connection between Southland Station and the new SRL station at Cheltenham, which may include works within the rail corridor. Meeting ended at 2:30pm. Next Cheltenham PRG meeting scheduled on 2 July 2026.
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Actions

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1.	Action: SC to provide a breakdown of each stage of works in Cheltenham, from public open space construction to the station box construction, including what parts of SWFR will be open and what will be closed during each stage. Response: Update provided in PRG meeting on 2 July 2026.	SC
2.	Action: SC to provide further details on tree removal, including which trees and tree types are proposed to be removed. Response: Update provided in PRG meeting on 2 July 2026. Ongoing arborist assessments as works progress to confirm tree removal requirements.	SC
3.	Action: SC/SRLA to touch base with JO and others to organise further localised briefings with stakeholder groups Response: Localised pop up event at Remington Drive, Highett held on 24 June 2026. SRLA and SC will continue to work with PRG members to arrange briefings as needed.	SC