

# Meeting minutes

<b>Date:</b>	27 November 2025
<b>Program:</b>	Suburban Rail Loop
<b>Title:</b>	Cheltenham Precinct Reference Group (PRG)
<b>Location:</b>	Highett Neighbourhood House
<b>Meeting Number:</b>	17
<b>Chairs:</b>	Noel Jones & Ryan Batchelor MP
<b>Minute Taker:</b>	Christine Concha, Suburban Rail Loop Authority (SRLA)

Attendees	Apologies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noel Jones, GHD, Facilitator, Acting Co-Chair</li> <li>Ryan Batchelor MP for Southern Metropolitan region, Co-Chair</li> <li>Rachael Hudson, Bayside City Council (BCC)</li> <li>Melanie Starr, Kingston City Council (KCC)</li> <li>Gabby Bush, Highett Progress Association</li> <li>Julie Olarenschaw, Friends of Sir William Fry Reserve</li> <li>Derek Screen, Pennydale Residents Action Group</li> <li>Ian Morgan, Kingston Residents Association</li> <li>Simon Black, Suburban Connect (SC)</li> <li>Richard Landrigan, SC</li> <li>Gagan Sra, SC</li> <li>Brenton Shaughnessy, SRLA</li> <li>Christine Concha, SRLA</li> <li>Kelsey Southwood, SRLA</li> <li>Morgan Williams, SRLA</li> <li>Clint Quealy, SRLA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daniel Czech, Community Representative</li> <li>Frank Hellier, Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce and Industry</li> </ul>

Item	Discussion topic
1.	<b>Welcome and housekeeping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noel Jones (NJ) provided an Acknowledgement of Country, noted the commencement on the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) East structure planning hearings and responses to actions from the last PRG meeting.</li> </ul>
2.	<b>SRLA updates, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRL East major work packages</li> <li>Preferred bidder announced for Stations North contract including next steps</li> <li>Community Projects Fund – round two</li> </ul> <b>Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gabby Bush (GB) asked who the preferred contractor for Linewide is</li> <li>SRLA confirmed the preferred contractor is TransitLinX including John Holland, RATP Dev, Alstom, KBR and WSP.</li> </ul>
3.	<b>Works update from SRLA including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Site establishment works and site investigations</li> <li>Biodiversity investigations</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suburban Connect (SC) noted the current works at Cheltenham are contained largely within the site, on the corner of Bay Road and Nepean Highway, Highett.</li> <li>SC noted upcoming site establishment works from December 2025 to January 2026 including site investigations and tree removal. Scope also includes ground improvement works to prepare for tunnelling at a later date.</li> <li>Ian Morgan (IM) asked if the soil at the site is contaminated.</li> <li>SC noted site investigations will be undertaken but being a petrol station the soil is expected to be contaminated. They noted the EPA is aware of the works.</li> <li>Julie Olarenschaw (JO) asked if there was a confirmed date when the remaining car service and repair business would be vacating the Cheltenham SRL work site.</li> <li>SRLA are working with the business and are expecting the business operator to vacate the site in the coming months.</li> <li>Derek Screen (DS) asked if petrol tanks will be removed or left in place.</li> <li>The petrol tanks will likely be removed but the timing of this and which contractor – SC or the future Stations South – will deliver the works is yet to be determined.</li> <li>DS asked what date the buildings will be demolished.</li> <li>SC noted no specific date confirmed but are expecting to begin demolition works from February 2026.</li> <li>JO asked if there will be communications sent out for updates on works.</li> <li>SC noted they will engage with the local community.</li> <li>DS asked where trucks would be entering and exiting from.</li> <li>SC advised the proposed primary truck entry/exit is via Nepean Highway. Expect to use Bay Road if Nepean Highway access closes for works.</li> <li>GB asked if soil testing for contamination would be across the wider site or only within the current worksite boundary, the corner of Nepean Highway and Bay Road.</li> <li>SRLA noted SC will undertake site investigations near corner of Bay Road and Nepean Highway, however, wider contamination testing across Sir William Fry Reserve was completed as part of the Environment Effects Statement (EES), with more recent further testing being undertaken also.</li> <li>PRG member asked if recent testing results can be provided to the group.</li> <li><b>ACTION: SRLA to investigate sharing recent land contamination testing in Sir William Fry Reserve with PRG.</b></li> <li>GB asked what methodology will be used for piling and raised the risks of contamination becoming airborne depending on the methodology used.</li> <li>SC noted they are proposing to use Continuous Flight Auger (CFA) piling – which is a drilled piling technique used for ground improvements and stabilising. However, the methodology will only be confirmed once further site investigations are completed.</li> <li>IM asked who owns the former petrol station and service repair centre site</li> <li>Advised SRLA now owns the properties.</li> <li>SRLA advised of upcoming site investigations for service relocations that will be managed by SRLA.</li> <li>SRLA confirmed work notices are available online to the group.</li> <li>JO enquired if site investigation locations within Sir William Fry Reserve can be marked up on future maps.</li> <li>SRLA noted will consider this feedback for future work notices.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Structure planning update from SRLA, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structure planning engagement timeline.</li> <li>Cheltenham submission feedback and key themes.</li> <li>Next steps and upcoming key dates.</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SRLA noted the hearings are publicly accessible and information can be found on the Planning Panels Victoria website.</li> </ul>

5.	<p><b>SRLA presented on Sir William Fry Reserve (SWFR) new and improved open space, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on the early design</li> <li>• Updated designs and design principles</li> <li>• Next steps and future engagement</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SRLA provided a summary of the feedback received for the SWFR early design consultation from August-September 2025 and noted how feedback has shaped the updated designs.</li> <li>• SRLA noted ongoing discussions with Kingston City Council regarding lake and playground upgrades.</li> <li>• DS asked if the new toilet block in the updated design will be replacing the existing toilets.</li> <li>• SRLA confirmed the new toilet block will be replacing the existing toilets in the reserve.</li> <li>• IM was concerned with size of new permanent open space.</li> <li>• Noted size of new permanent open space is to offset land permanently required to build the SRL station at Cheltenham. This requirement was determined from the SRL station at Cheltenham reference design presented as part of the EES process in 2022. SRLA noted that some parts of the construction area will be returned as public open space post construction. The location of the new open space was chosen as it provides new rest spaces, delivers the strategic cycling/walking path community and Council have long advocated for and provides opportunity for future linkages with the Highett Gasworks development.</li> <li>• IM was concerned the station construction area is not guaranteed to be returned as public open space. SRLA confirmed the areas of the construction site not required permanently for buildings or similar infrastructure will be returned as public open space following station construction. IM appealed to SRLA to advocate for 1 hectare of additional open space in the Highett Gasworks site with Development Victoria (DV).</li> <li>• <b>ACTION: SRLA to respond to request for additional open space from Highett Gasworks</b></li> <li>• SRLA noted the Highett Gasworks site development is a separate process to SRL with its own open space requirements.</li> <li>• DS and IM noted the C1 route along the Frankston rail line was already indicated to be developed as a cycling path by DV. It should not be considered as open space.</li> <li>• IM noted the active recreation area should not be considered open space and was concerned it will take up green space.</li> <li>• SRLA advised the active recreation will be primarily built in the reduced northern car park area, which is currently sealed with asphalt.</li> <li>• SRLA noted minimal feedback was received on the car park reduction in the consultation.</li> <li>• GB enquired why the off-leash dog park is not planned to be fully fenced, noting concerns with dog and child interactions.</li> <li>• SRLA noted KCC's preference for the dog park not to be fully fenced due to maintenance and reducing anti-social dog behaviour.</li> <li>• <i>Post meeting note: There is currently an unfenced off-leash dog area within Sir William Fry Reserve marked with simple signage, which is proposed to be located further north within the reserve as part of the improvements.</i></li> <li>• <b>ACTION: SRLA and Kingston City Council to provide response on fencing for off-leash dog park and proposed signage</b></li> <li>• DS requested tree planting along the cycling and walking path to offset the heat from the paths. DS asked if planting plans can be shared.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION: SRLA to investigate sharing planting plans along the walking and cycling path</b></li> <li>• DS asked if there will be cyclist wayfinding signage or temporary fencing along the lake during construction.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION: SRLA to advise proposed cyclist wayfinding signage and potential fencing along the lake during construction.</b></li> <li>• SRLA advised in the coming days SWFR updated designs and early design consultation report will be released. This will be accompanied by a community consultation on the finer details of the design including planting and materials palettes and proposed native vegetation removal. SRLA noted engagement activities to support this.</li> <li>• JO asked what vegetation would be removed.</li> <li>• SRLA noted proposal to remove native vegetation including small grasses and shrubs, primarily in the Highett Gasworks site and one small patch near the lake.</li> </ul>
6.	<p><b>Other business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DS asked what the purpose of closing the lane on Bay Road is for per the works notification.</li> <li>• SRLA and SC noted planned closures for hoarding installation, demolition works and site investigation works.</li> <li>• <b>ACTION: SC to confirm footpath closures during the demolition of the service station and detours</b></li> <li>• JO asked how the hazards from the demolition will be managed and if there is contamination that community will need to know about from this work.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SC noted there will be an exclusion zone during these works to ensure safety. They will advise community should safe removal of contaminated materials be required; noting this is dependent on-site investigations.</li> <li>DS requested VMS signage before Bluff Road to advise trucks and traffic of Bay Road closures.</li> <li>SC noted will consider this for upcoming traffic impacts.</li> <li>DS asked if the most recent traffic count results be shared to the group.</li> <li><b>ACTION: SRLA to follow up request to share the most recent traffic counts to the group</b></li> <li>NJ asked PRG members to consider topics they would like to discuss in 2026.</li> </ul> <p>Meeting ended.</p>
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## Actions

#	Action	Owner
1.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to investigate sharing recent land contamination testing in Sir William Fry Reserve with PRG</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Test reports for Sir William Fry Reserve are available as part of the EES - <a href="https://srleastees.vic.gov.au/assessment-of-impacts/cheltenham/contaminated-land">https://srleastees.vic.gov.au/assessment-of-impacts/cheltenham/contaminated-land</a>. Recent testing is in line with data collected at the time of the EES.</p> <p>SRLA will present further information on contamination and how it will be safely managed during construction in a future PRG.</p>	SRLA
2.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to respond to request for additional open space from Highbury Gasworks</p> <p><b>Response:</b> SRLA will pass feedback to DV for consideration, noting DV are yet to begin developing the masterplan for their site.</p>	SRLA
3.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to provide response on fencing for off-leash dog park and proposed signage</p> <p><b>Response:</b> SRLA is seeking to retain and replace the current off-leash dog arrangement at Sir William Fry Reserve with an unfenced area in a similar location. This solution has been discussed at length with Kingston City Council who have advised that an unfenced off-leash area is preferred in this location in line with Council's dog off-leash area guidelines.</p>	SRLA
4.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to investigate sharing planting plans along the walking and cycling path</p> <p><b>Response:</b> Community feedback on the planting types and material palettes, as provided through consultation during December 2025, will help inform the final planting lists and associated plans. SRLA will continue to keep the PRG updated as plans for the new and improved open space progresses.</p>	SRLA
5.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to advise proposed cyclist wayfinding signage and potential fencing along the lake during construction.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> No fencing alongside the lake is proposed, signage and possibly path markings will be in place for cyclists during construction.</p>	SRLA
6.	<p><b>Action:</b> SC to confirm footpath closures during the demolition of the service station and detours</p> <p><b>Response:</b> During demolition works, the footpath on the northern side of Bay Road (along the site) will be closed. Signage will be in place to guide pedestrians. Pedestrians will be advised to use the footpath on the southern side of Bay Road and cross at the traffic lights at the Bay Road and Nepean Highway intersection. A temporary pedestrian path will also be in place adjacent to the existing Nepean Highway footpath.</p>	SC
7.	<p><b>Action:</b> SRLA to follow up request to share the most recent traffic counts to the group</p> <p><b>Response:</b> SRLA to present an update on the most recent traffic counts in next the PRG meeting.</p>	SRLA

Previous Actions

	Action	Owner
Raised in August 2025 PRG	<b>Action:</b> DS to provide email from Level Crossing Removal Project noting the pathway across the rail line is confirmed for delivery. <b>Response:</b> Awaiting DS to provide this email.	DS