

Arthurs Seat Eagle Local Community Reference Group (LCRG) Meeting Notes

Meeting – 24th February 2026 at 2.00pm

Held at ASE Summit Board Room

Attendees

- Topsy Petchey (TP – Chair)
- Matthew Mulkearns (MM – ASE)
- Craig Thomson (CT)
- Susan McNab (SMc) (via Zoom)
- Anne Shaw (AS)
- David Proctor (DP)
- Jodi Vermaas (JV)
- CR Paul Pingiaro, Deputy Mayor (PP)
- Cara Cunningham, Neue Media (via Zoom)

Observers

- Erica Moloney (Acting Secretary / Note-taker)

1. Opening Formalities (TP – Chair)

1.1 Welcome & Acknowledgement

Chair welcomed attendees, acknowledged the Bunurong people as Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, and declared the meeting open at 2:08 pm.

1.2 Introductions

Round-table introductions were made.

TP welcomed Paul Pingiaro and thanked him for attending.

Erica Moloney confirmed she would take notes on behalf of Cara Cunningham

Zoom attendees: Susan McNab.

1.3 Apologies

TP/MM noted the short notice for the meeting and acknowledged apologies from

- Lysette Ashford and Ross Kilborn (LCRG Members)
- MPS Mayor Anthony Marsh, Cr Max Patton, Cr Patrick Binyon (MPSC)

- Georgia Kerr and Conrad Annel, Parks Victoria
- Tom McIntosh (MP)

1.4 Recording of Meeting

TP confirmed the session was recorded to assist accurate transcription and representation of meeting notes.

1.5. Conflicts of Interest (TP – Chair)

No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. Actions arising from previous meeting– (MM– ASE)

MM confirmed members had been provided with a running list of actions prior to the meeting. Updates included:

2.1 Shuttle bus considerations

- MM confirmed shuttle bus planning remains implicit in planning conditions and forms part of ASE’s intended approach (including identifying appropriate pick-up points).
- PP noted Council may be able to discuss and support route planning with DTP and like-minded operators/venues, and there may be an appetite for coordinated services to reduce traffic volumes.
- Members noted community support for shuttle bus solutions, including in the context of fire rated danger days and local road constraints.

2.2 Car parking considerations

- MM advised additional parking opportunities are still being investigated but noted it is a long-term consideration and far too early to discuss in any detail.
- AS and other members requested that, where appropriate, nearby residents should be used as informal sounding board to understand local impacts, particularly given their proximity to ASE and the constraints of limited access roads and parking availability. SMc volunteered to be the ‘initial’ local contact point as investigations progress.

2.3 Fire danger operations

- MM confirmed ASE maintains an Emergency Control Group and on days rated as Extreme fire danger operations are assessed on an hourly basis with input relevant authorities in CFA. ASE does not operate on days rated Catastrophic.

2.4 Community blogs/newsletters

- MM confirmed ASE has been sharing community blog drafts with LCRG prior to release as part of ASE's ongoing commitment.
- Members emphasized the importance of continuing regular communications throughout planned and future construction periods to inform local community and reduce surprise.

2.5 Mornington Regional Tourism follow-up

- MM noted the previous commitment to re-invite Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism (including a Visitor Journey Report briefing) remains outstanding and will be progressed.

2.6 LCRG involvement in industry collaboration / business roundtables

- MM confirmed ASE would like to include LCRG representation in relevant industry collaboration sessions and future business roundtables. He proposed as "first in, best dressed" approach, with members suggesting representation should also consider subject matter expertise (e.g., wildlife, local impacts). MM agreed rotating attendance based on relevance and expertise should be considered.

2.7 Acoustic fence details

- MM confirmed acoustic fence details will be shared when available (noting this sits within later detailed design stage).

3. Overview of ASE Response to Permit and Next Steps (MM – ASE)

MM provided an overview of the recently granted permit and what it means operationally.

3.1 What the Permit provides

- MM stated the Permit provides certainty for the development to progress, however considerable and significant additional work is required before any built works commence.
- MM confirmed the Permit contains a large set of conditions across multiple stages, requiring extensive documentation, updated reports, and approvals before building commences and stages become operable.

- Some LCRG members requested more detail on the Permit conditions. Permit conditions can be found at www.planning.vic.gov.au/planning-approvals. Application PA2403185

3.2 Staging described in the Permit

MM outlined four potential stages:

1. **Base Station upgrade** (Experience Centre and improved ticketing/visitor dwell area)
2. **Luge platform and track** (track placement substantially unchanged from current planning intent)
3. **Summit Station upgrade** (reconfiguration for improved circulation; slightly expanded café area including an internal kitchen capability to improve freshness and reduce reliance on plastic-wrapped brought-in items; not intended to operate as a full restaurant)
4. **Observation tower** (a separate stage that may be delivered alongside other works or separately)

3.3 Conditions and required reports (summary)

MM advised the conditions cover extensive requirements including staging plans and endorsed drawings, landscape and vegetation management, tree protection during construction, flora/fauna management, ESD requirements, landslide/erosion and stormwater management, acoustic assessment and waste management, traffic/parking and construction management plans, reflective glare assessment and lighting management, emergency management planning, operational management planning (including timed ticketing), engineering assessments and risk reports (including luge bridge / structural requirements), detailed design, tender documentation and commercial negotiations

3.4 Permit timeframe

MM confirmed the permit expiry conditions being 3 years from the permit issue if any stage has not commenced or within 8 years for completion subject to potential extension by the responsible authority.

3.5 Process and Responsible authority

MM confirmed that the responsible authority is the Department of Transport and Planning for endorsement, permit conditions and approvals.

3.6 Discussion: LCRG focus, staging and disruption

- DP acknowledged the substantial number of conditions attached to the permit and noted that staging can increase mobilisation/demobilisation cost and time, and that commercial considerations may influence staging choices.
- JV expressed that the least controversial elements are changes to existing buildings (Base and Summit) but community concerns remain about impacts on wildlife, habitat connectivity, erosion, noise, traffic/parking, and construction particularly related to tower, luge and external works. LCRG should be consulted on these key elements.
 - MM acknowledged the value of seeking LCRG input particularly where ASE wants feedback or views on community and environment facing detail.
- AS suggested, from a community perception standpoint, delivering less controversial elements first (existing buildings and tower) may assist confidence before moving to luge delivery.
- SMCN emphasised that whenever construction occurs, local traffic disruption may be significant due to limited access routes, and requested works be scheduled and delivered as efficiently as possible to minimise disruption

3.8 Ticketing approach

MM confirmed early modelling indicates the Experience Centre and tower would be integrated as add-on value with gondola ticketing (gondola plus Experience Centre; gondola plus tower; gondola plus both). The luge would likely be the only standalone ticketed attraction, priced to avoid cannibalising gondola revenue.

MM also confirmed timed ticketing is a requirement under the Operations Management Plan conditions and that implementing timed ticketing is expected more evenly disperse demand curves and assist concerns around peak traffic times`.

4. Communications and Community Information (TP/MM – Discussion)

4.1 Communication

Members discussed ASE community communications and recommended a forthright tone, acknowledging likely impacts and explaining mitigation steps whenever possible. Members suggested practical reassurance points (e.g., timed ticketing, shuttle bus work, waste management approach) would be well received

4.2 Blog review process and timing

- Members agreed the LCRG should continue to be provided with drafts prior to publication with enough lead time to enable meaningful feedback.

4.3 Using LCRG capacity

- DP suggested LCRG members could draft 'plain language' paragraphs on key themes important to residents as part of this process.
- TP and MM supported this as a proactive suggestion and noted the value of using the group's expertise more fully.

4.4 What the next blog should include (themes raised)

Members suggested priority messages included the next community updates should include clear explanation of 'what happens next' with respect to the project. Themes presented by ASE and accepted by the LCRG were that a permit is permission, not a guarantee of immediate works, realistic timeframes and explanation of the volume of condition approvals required before works begin. Others included ASE approach to traffic management commitments (e.g timed ticketing, shuttle bus exploration, parking considerations), wildlife and habitat mitigation approaches, including who ASE is engaging with (Parks, Landcare, experts) and what is within ASE's control, and acknowledgement of local fire risk concerns and how operating decisions are made on high-risk days.

5. Environmental Stewardship, Biodiversity and Luge-Related Concerns (Group Discussion)

5.1 Communicating achieved actions vs promises

CT suggested ASE communications should highlight what ASE has already delivered (e.g. offsets completed, stewardship actions on lease land, waste collection arrangements) and quantification where possible (e.g., where, what, how much, and how outcomes are being maintained).

PP supported the value of clear, accurate quantifiable reporting, noting that even Council programs can struggle to communicate specifics, and warned against publishing incorrect numbers.

5.2 Offsets and previous commitments

Members requested clearer public information on previous offset requirements and what has been completed (location, type of work, management actions, outcomes where known).

5.3 Wildlife sensitivity and noise

Members discussed that wildlife may be sensitive to noise and movement. MM noted ASE has engaged with independent operators to assess noise impacts.

Members suggested credible 'independent' testimonials may help counter misinformation, preferably from local residents adjacent to similar attractions, Parks/wildlife managers, or comparable operators without a direct financial interest.

5.4 Food, litter and feral species risk

- CT raised the risk of food/litter being carried onto a luge, potentially increasing feral bird activity (e.g., Indian mynas, blackbirds).
- MM noted ASE would look to implement mitigation measures (e.g., banning food and drink on rides, improved waste systems). Members shared examples from other attractions where loose items and food are restricted.

5.5 Net community benefit concept

Members discussed whether ASE could consider a 'net community benefit' approach that considers ecological, social and economic elements, potentially supporting communications and decision-making around additional initiatives beyond permit requirements

6. Role and Scope of the LCRG (TP – Chair)

TP restated the purpose of the LCRG:

- A forum for local residents, businesses and community groups to share views on the proposed upgrade, including impacts, opportunities and improvement ideas.
- The group provides listening, information sharing and constructive feedback through planning and delivery stages.
- Participation is voluntary; the group is not a decision-making body but supports community perspectives being heard and considered.

Members agreed the LCRG should remain ongoing beyond delivery stages, potentially meeting less frequently over time (e.g., every 6–12 months as needed).

MM confirmed ASE's commitment to the group continuing and noted this has been reaffirmed in recent community communications.

7. Next Meeting

Members agreed it may be most useful to hold a near-term meeting focused on communications framework and messaging cadence, rather than waiting for major design/document milestones.

MM proposed:

- ASE to confer with communications support and circulate a proposed meeting structure and date options.
- A meeting to be targeted in late March 2026 (noting a preference to avoid dates immediately after a public holiday).

8. Action Items (Summary)

1. ASE to continue shuttle bus due diligence in line with permit conditions and explore appropriate pick-up points and potential operator/council coordination.
2. ASE to continue investigating additional parking opportunities and consider informal resident input.
3. ASE to provide LCRG with blog/newsletter drafts with sufficient lead time (target ~1 week) to allow feedback and potential revisions prior to publication.
4. LCRG members to provide draft paragraphs / “plain language” inputs on priority community themes (traffic/fire risk, timelines, wildlife mitigation, stewardship achievements) for inclusion in future community communications.
5. ASE/LCRG to consider options for independent voices/testimonials from comparable attractions/residents/land managers to assist public understanding of luge operations and real-world noise/impact experience.
6. ASE to develop a communications framework proposal (themes, cadence, channels) and circulate to LCRG ahead of the proposed late-March meeting.

9. Meeting Closed

TP closed the meeting at 3:49 pm, thanking all attendees, and specifically acknowledging Cr Paul Pingiaro for attending and listening through the full discussion and offering to take learnings back to colleagues.