

## **Arthurs Seat Eagle Local Community Reference Group (LCRG)**

### **Meeting Notes**

Meeting – 24 March 2026 @ 2.00 p.m.

Held at ASE Summit Board Room

#### **Attendees**

- Topsy Petchey
- Matthew Mulkearns (MM – ASE)
- Craig Thomson (CT)
- Susan McNab (SMc)
- Lysette Ashford (LA – SOS)
- Anne Shaw (AS)
- Ross Kilborn (RK)
- Jodi Vermaas (JV)
- Sarah Cottrill (SC – ASE)

#### **Observers**

Cara Cunningham (Secretary and presenter on item 5 of the agenda)

### **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 2.00 p.m.

#### **1.2 Introductions**

- Sarah Cottrill was introduced to the group. It was noted that Sarah works across trade, marketing, education programs, and communications at ASE.
- Sarah's attendance was requested to support discussion on communications and stakeholder engagement, given her involvement in PR and campaign development.
- Sarah noted her strong local connection to the area, both personally and professionally.
- Cara Cunningham introduced herself as the principal of Neue Media. Cara advised that she was attending the meeting as secretary and note taker and to also lead the presentation and discussion on ASE Communications.

#### **1.3 Apologies**

David Proctor

MM also advised members that due to the tight turnaround for the meeting it was not possible to invite MP's, Shire Councillors and other stakeholders to the meeting. However he noted a copy of the meeting notes would be forwarded to them.

### **1.4 Recording of Meetings**

Meeting recorded for transcription and accuracy.

### **2. Conflicts of Interest (TP – Chair)**

- Jodi Vermaas declared her volunteer role at Seawinds Native Plant Nursery in relation to Agenda Item 6.
- It was acknowledged that this represents a community contribution rather than a material conflict.

### **3. Actions Arising from Previous Meeting**

No new actions were presented for this meeting.

Ongoing items include:

#### Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism (MPRT)

- Engagement remains pending.
- MM noted that Tourism Australia, Visit Victoria, and regional tourism bodies are currently in peak reporting and conference season, limiting availability.
- It was reiterated that MPRT participation remains a priority once availability improves.

#### Business Roundtable

- No further progress to report at this stage.
- Updates will be circulated once confirmed.

#### General Communication Strategy

- This agenda item (Item 4) reflects progression of this action.

### **4. ASE Communications and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Presentation by Cara Cunningham (Neue Media).**

Discussion focused on post-permit communication strategy, stakeholder engagement, and community sentiment.

Key points:

- Shift from planning to delivery phase communications.
- Community interest remains steady with increased social media commentary.
- Permit approval has created anticipation regarding next steps.
- Luge remains key concern; shuttle service positively received.
- Need for clearer communication of zoning and allowable uses.
- Opportunity to increase local understanding through site familiarisation.
- Stakeholder groups identified: neighbours, businesses, broader community, authorities.

#### **4.2 Discussion Points**

- Awareness and Understanding of the Site
  - It was noted that many nearby residents have never experienced the gondola or broader site firsthand.
  - This lack of direct experience may contribute to misconceptions about:
    - Scale

- existing conditions
  - proposed changes
- A suggestion was raised to:
  - Offer targeted familiarisation opportunities for immediate neighbours.
  - Provide clearer visual or on-site explanations of proposed works.
- Community Reactions to Permit Approval
  - Several members reported that local residents were surprised that approval was granted.
  - This was attributed to:
    - Perceptions that environmental considerations would outweigh development.
    - Limited understanding of zoning and planning controls
  - MM clarified:
    - The ASE site is located within a zone that explicitly allows tourism and recreation uses.
    - This zoning has been in place for many decades.
    - ASE is not developing anything outside the existing leasehold area.
    - The proposal is consistent with permitted uses within the lease area.
  - Members noted that misunderstanding of planning frameworks is common across many zones, including Green Wedge and conservation areas.
- Key Issues Emerging from Community Feedback
  - Luge Component
    - Continues to be the most frequently raised concern among residents.
    - Concerns relate to environmental impact and alignment with the character of the area.
  - Shuttle Service
    - Widely viewed as a positive initiative.
    - Recognised for its potential to reduce parking pressure and traffic impacts.
  - Environmental Outcomes
    - Opportunities to improve vegetation management were identified as a potential positive outcome.
    - Members noted the presence of invasive species and areas of degradation within the broader site.
- Stakeholder Groups and Communications Priorities
  - Immediate Neighbours

- Discussion highlighted the need to clearly define ‘neighbours,’ potentially expanding beyond immediate proximity.
- Engagement Opportunities and Suggestions
  - Members encouraged continued direct engagement with community organisations.
  - MM noted extensive engagement has occurred to date, including one-on-one briefings and small group sessions.
  - MM confirmed willingness to meet with any group upon request and reiterated its openness to
    - Attending group meetings
    - Providing briefings
    - Responding to specific requests.
  - Members emphasised the importance of proactive outreach, rather than reactive communication, including sourcing and directly contacting ‘friends of’ groups listed on the Mornington Peninsula Shire websites.
  - Similarly, they spoke about the importance of defining stakeholder groups specifically so that ASE communications can speak directly to their concerns. For example - local neighbours within 500 meters of the summit or base stations are likely to have more particular concerns than the local community in Dromana.
  - Members noted that interest in the upgrade project is not strictly geographic – some individuals outside the immediate area might be highly engaged including people that have broader concerns about environmental management outside of the immediate Arthurs Seat zones.
  - It was suggested the communication strategies should recognise both proximity and level of interest.
    - MM confirmed willingness to meet with any group upon request.

## **5. Involving Local Groups in Planting Schemes (JV)**

JV lead a very productive discussion on Involving Local people in landscaping and planting strategies.

JV provided an overview of Seawinds Nursery as case in point example of local expertise and knowledge with the resources available to help ASE deliver plants and seedlings that are specific to Arthurs Seat and its immediate surrounds. During this discussion, the following potential benefits were identified:

- local propagation and supply of vegetation:
- leveraging local knowledge and expertise
- supporting community ownership of outcomes
- strengthening environmental outcomes

The discussion was positively received and identified as a priority area for further exploration.

Other opportunities such as local knowledge and storytelling should be considered as part of the content and development of the Gateway Experience Centre planned for the base station.

LA asked that she be given same opportunity as JV to speak about particular issues, in future meetings. TP encouraged all members to raise any issues as agenda items that were relevant in the context of the Terms of Reference for the LCRG.

**6. Next Meeting Date/s**

To be confirmed.

**7. Meeting Closed**

4.12 4pm