

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

Meeting – 20 May 2025

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)
David Proctor (DP)
Ross Kilborn (RK)

Observers

Cara Cunningham (Secretary)

1. Opening Formalities: (TP - Chair)

1.1 Welcome & Acknowledgement

Chair Topsy Petchey welcomed attendees, acknowledged the Bunurong people as Traditional Custodians of the land and waters and declared the meeting open.

1.2 Introductions

- Ross Kilborn introduced himself, noting a background in business and sport/recreation management and a long personal connection to Arthur's Seat.
- Cara Cunningham introduced herself as meeting note taker. Cara informed the meeting that she is not an employee of the Arthurs Saet Eagle but provides ASE with marketing and communications advice through her employer. Cara confirmed the session was being recorded for transcription and accuracy.

1.3 Apologies

- Jodi Vermaas – Local Community Reference Group member
- MPS Mayor Anthony Marsh and Deputy Mayor Paul Pingiaro
- Councillors Max Patton and Patrick Binyon
- Minsters Steve Dimopoulos, Sonya Kilkenny and Sam Groth
- Departments of Environment and Tourism
- Parks Victoria

1.4 Recording of Meetings

- Chair confirmed that the meeting was being recorded to assist with accurate transcription and representation of meeting notes.

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

- Members were reminded of their obligation to declare any conflicts of interest.
- Code of Conduct for RK to sign was noted.

3. Planning Presentation and O&A

3.1 Planning Context: Presentation by Ben Daly (Planning Consultant)

Ben Daly provided an overview of zoning affecting Arthur's Seat Eagle precinct:

- Arthurs Seat Eagle is within the Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ), which allows for open space and public recreation.
- This was contrasted against the zoning for the surrounding area within the Arthurs Seat State Park which is predominantly zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ), prioritising environmental conservation and protection.
- As the proposal is not submitted by the public land manager, a planning permit is required for the proposed land use (i.e. a Section 2 use).
- A permit is also required for buildings and works within the PPRZ.
- The ASE site is located within a precinct recognized as a high-use visitor precinct in the 1998 Parks Victoria Management Plan (amended 2014, 2016), occupying approximately 1% of the State Park.

A copy of Bens presentation can be found *here*.

3.2 Questions and Answers

Members asked several questions concerning vegetation, defendable space, luge placement and design. Ben provided the following information:

Vegetation, Net Gain, and Defendable Space:

- Arborists and ecologists have identified high-value trees, and the luge alignment has been moved in several locations to generally protect high value trees.
- Where vegetation removal is required, this is being offset in alignment with planning regulations, and the project is targeting a vegetation 'net gain' overall through its landscape design response.
- The existing cleared corridor beneath the gondola contributes to defendable space for bushfire management.
- Most ongoing vegetation management obligations will fall to ASE.

- Clarification was sought on the formal definition of a "tree" for planning purposes. There was discussion from members around classification being based on diameter at chest height. Ben deferred to the ecology report for this matter.

Barriers to Finalising the Luge Design:

- Finalisation of the exact placement of the luge framework has been delayed by the need for accurate mapping of a sewer line running down the escarpment, under South-East Water control.
- Accurate geotechnical data is required by Wiegand (luge designers, Germany) before design and track placement can be finalized.
- As a result, key planning documents such as landslide assessment reports, ecology assessments, and visual impact modelling are still pending.

Requests from Members:

- Public access to Ben Daly's Planning Presentation slides (Action item).
- Map of lease boundaries and impacted areas.
- Visual renders and elevations.
- Clarification on vegetation classification and removal processes.

4. Meeting Notes Distributed *(Introduced by TP – Chair)*

- Members discussed the turnaround time for meeting notes.
- Concern was raised that the notes from previous meetings did not fully reflect the breadth and detail of discussions.
- It was clarified that the group had agreed at the initial meeting to operate with "meeting notes" rather than formal minutes, consistent with community reference group best practice. These notes being an accurate record of points discussed — not a detailed record of discussions.
- Members agreed that meeting notes should be retained as a rolling record, showing both completed and ongoing actions to support transparency and continuity.
- An agreement was reached that members would be given three days to review and suggest corrections to future meeting notes.
- Members requested that notes be clearly dated and that any supporting visual materials presented (such as slides or maps) be circulated along with the notes.
- It was acknowledged that clearer internal processes would help reduce confusion and delay in finalising notes, and that all members should be notified when notes are released for review.

The importance of alignment between meeting notes and agenda content was raised under both these and later items.

5. Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

- Review of action items table from the previous meeting.
- Confirmed that completed items will be retained in the table to ensure transparency and track progress over time.
- Members reiterated their desire for accurate records and reaffirmed the process for reviewing meeting notes as discussed in Item 4.

6. Discussion Items

6.1 Functioning of the LCRG including Procedure and Meeting Content

(Introduced by LA – SoS)

- Concerns were raised about meeting frequency and the adequacy of communication.
- Suggestions were made to ensure that the reference group continues to have input into the agenda set for each meeting.
- Several members reiterated the importance of sufficient time for reviewing meeting notes, which was addressed in Item 4.

Survey Clarification *(Introduced by LA – SoS)*

- LA asked for clarification relating to the supplied community survey circulated in 2024.
- It was clarified that the survey in question was distributed in August–September 2024 and intended to gauge awareness and sentiment toward potential upgrades.
- ASE acknowledged the survey could have included more details and committed to involving the Reference Group in the framing of any future surveys.

6.2 Habitat Connectivity *(Introduced by CT)*

- Wildlife advocate CT presented data showing kangaroo strikes and roadkill hotspots.
- Proposed considerations for ASE:
 - Virtual fencing, noting Browns Road trial.
 - Road painting and wildlife signage
 - SAM signs (limited by regulation to 6 months' placement)
- ASE agreed to investigate virtual fencing and support for local road safety initiatives. - Action Item

- It was suggested that ASE work collaboratively with local organisations and the MP Shire to increase public education around local fauna movement, explore funding support for trials, and incorporate habitat connectivity into future landscape planning.
- Members expressed appreciation for Craig's contribution, noting that it provided a model for integrating lived experience and data collection with project responses.

6.3 Traffic and Parking *(Introduced by RK)*

- Members raised concerns, including:
 - Increasing vehicle congestion on Arthur's Seat Road
 - Safety of pedestrians crossing between car parks and the Summit area
 - Inadequacy of existing parking supply during peak periods
- ASE confirmed an updated Traffic Impact Assessment report is currently being finalized.
- ASE confirmed the report will use data obtained from traffic counts undertaken during peak and off-peak periods over the recent summer period.
- Early recommendations will likely include the introduction of a shuttle bus service on peak days, and ASE expressed support for this measure.
- ASE confirmed timed ticketing could be implemented through the current booking platform to help manage congestion and spread visitation throughout the day.
- Other parking expansion options are under investigation, although constrained by vegetation and zoning. ASE noted commercial sensitivities with respect to some parcels under consideration.
- Members emphasised the need for coordination with Peninsula-wide transport and safety planning. CT also encouraged the use of kangaroo road crossing data in broader traffic design.
- Discussion also included signage, lighting, and the importance of pre-visit education to support safer pedestrian behaviour and avoid frustrations.
- Members noted that traffic safety concerns had been flagged as far back as the 2014 VCAT hearings, highlighting the long-standing nature of this issue.

6.5 SOS Presentation *(Introduced by LA – SoS)*

- LA presented-on behalf of Save Our Seat (SOS), focusing on community concerns about landslide and bushfire risk.
- Referenced a 96-page landslide report outlining risks of rockfall, shallow soil movement, and landslip.
- Raised concerns about the cumulative effect of fire, panic, terrain, and traffic.

- Specific issues:
 - BAL ratings and adequacy of proposed construction
 - Emergency evacuation under extreme fire conditions
 - Accessibility of ASE as a community fire refuge
- Some members expressed appreciation for the information provided but noted the importance of respecting the scope and purpose of the LCRG. Several reiterated that technical assessments are the responsibility of referral authorities, not the LCRG.
- While acknowledging Lysette's lived experience and research, others voiced concern that meetings not become overly focused on expert interpretations and suggested that the group's energy would be best spent on practical feedback and identifying gaps in community understanding.
- It was noted by some members that ASE has a strong commercial interest in ensuring that the upgrades are constructed safely and in compliance with all relevant codes, and that the project may contribute positively to erosion control on the mountain.
- ASE confirmed:
 - Regular staff training with emergency services
 - Evacuation procedures are in place and practiced.
 - A community blog series has been launched to respond to key concerns, with fire, landslide, and ecology topics planned.
 - ASE to circulate blog posts to group members for review and further feedback – Action item

7. Distribution of Information *(Introduced by MM – ASE)*

Members encouraged to direct community questions directly to ASE to ensure information provided is correct and within context of the issue in question. Members and communities were also encouraged to identify and bring to the attention of ASE any areas not yet addressed.

ASE to circulate blog updates and relevant planning updates directly to Reference Group members at the time of release. - Action Item

8. General Business

Proposal for future meetings to include ecology and a site walk. This was introduced by CT during his presentation on habitat connectivity. As the meeting went overtime, it was agreed that CT will lead a site walk at the next LCRG meeting – Action item.

Noted that visual exposure to key areas would support better understanding of planning issues.

9. Next Meeting Date/s

To be scheduled as quickly as possible in line with ecology and traffic reports or other key updates.

Option to meet sooner if urgent matters arise.

10. Meeting Closed at 4:32 PM