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

Meeting – 6th October 2026
Held at ASE Summit Board Room @ 2.00pm

Attendees

- Topsy Petchey (TP – Chair)
- Matthew Mulkearns (MM – ASE)
- Susan McNab (SMc)
- Anne Shaw (AS) (via Zoom)
- David Proctor (DP)
- Jodi Vermaas (JV)
- Sarah Cottrill (SC - ASE)

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 2:05 pm.

1.2 Introduction and Meeting Arrangements

Noting AS's advice that she must leave the meeting early, TP asked members for permission to change the agenda order to consider the project update and related business prior to AS's departure. Members agreed.

Zoom attendees: Anne Shaw joined remotely.

1.3 Apologies

- Ross Kilborn

Absent

- Lysette Ashford

1.4 Recording of Meeting

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

2. Conflicts of Interest (TP – Chair)

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. ASE Project Update

MM provided a project update specifically addressing questions raised by AS regarding modifications to the approved plans and the intended timeline for the project components.

- MM confirmed that Planning Permit for the proposed ASE Upgrade does not require changes or modifications to the plans presented in the planning application. He also confirmed that the Permit requires 103 conditions must be satisfied and approved before construction begins, whether it be staged or undertaken as a whole.
- He explained that the permit conditions apply to individual components and/or combinations of components and ASE is assessing these requirements before determining the preferred approach.
- MM advised that the Permit is valid for three years from the date of approval and construction must commence within three years of approval.
- He advised that no definitive timeline or sequence has been established and that ASE has deliberately decided not to rush decision making or implementation and take the necessary time to assesses the work and resources required, operational implications, disruption to the existing business, and financial modelling.

AS welcomed the clarification and requested that project updates remain a standing agenda item. Members supported communicating the current position to the community.

4. Meeting protocol and LCRG Code of Conduct

TP initiated a discussion on meeting protocol and the LCRG Code of Conduct. Members then discussed recent media coverage following the resignation of a member earlier in the year.

The value of diverse expertise and constructive discussion was reiterated. MM reaffirmed that differing views are welcome and help ASE consider issues it might otherwise overlook.

Members then discussed potential vacancies and expertise that might be required in the future. Members agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

AS departed the meeting

5. Growing the Future of Arthurs Seat Conservation Initiative

SC presented thoughts for an ASE conservation program for discussion.

- She explained that the concepts draw on previous LCRG suggestions and ASE's existing conservation and education activities.
- The proposed framework comprises four key pillars. These are to Restore, Protect, Connect and Learn about the Arthurs Seat environment.
- The purpose of the program is to support practical conservation, improve understanding of local wildlife, connect people with conservation activity, and strengthen environmental learning.
- MM confirmed that the program could progress independently of the development proposal.
- SC stressed no specific initiatives projects, funding commitments or governance arrangements have been finalized and that this conversation as will others, help establish priorities, governance and levels of expertise required.

Conservation Fund

SC spoke to potential funding noting:

- A dedicated fund was proposed to support local conservation work.
- Potential funding sources could include voluntary donations through online bookings and on-site ticketing, ASE contributions, and a contribution linked to ticket sales and supplier support. These were options for investigation; no amount or funding model was agreed.
- Members emphasized that public donations must be held and managed separately from ASE's business income and used for the AS Conservation Initiatives apart from conditions required under the Planning Permit obligations.

  Members agreed that governance, transparency, and accountability were essential. Suggestions included an independent legal entity, defined local objectives and a winding-up provision directing funds to compatible conservation purposes.

Wildlife Watch

- Members discussed AS wildlife and supported investigating camera monitoring to establish baseline information about wildlife presence and movement before works commence.
- Information could inform conservation priorities, help assess impacts over time and support education and visitor engagement, particularly with nocturnal species.
- Members suggested investigating night or motion-activated cameras would be beneficial noting the potential use of ASE's existing camera infrastructure.
- Partnerships with universities or research institutions was also briefly discussed.
- MM noted that existing cameras serve operational and security purposes. Camera costs and practical options were identified for further consideration; no purchase or research study was approved.

Indigenous Planting and Habitat Restoration

- Members discussed Indigenous Planting and Habitat Restoration as potential projects under this initiative.
- SC spoke to a potential project described as 10,000 Trees for Arthurs Seat to provide long-term restoration. SC clarified that the figure was illustrative. Members recommended referring to locally indigenous plants, including trees, shrubs, grasses, and understory species. Targets and locations should be guided by expert advice, with success measured through healthy, established habitat rather than planting numbers alone.
- JV offered to speak with Landcare about planting numbers achieved over the past five years to help inform realistic targets.
- Potential collaboration with Seawinds Nursery, Landcare and the Western Port Biosphere Foundation was also discussed.

Weed Reduction

- Members discussed targeted weed management with Parks Victoria and local groups, including methods that consider existing wildlife habitat and allow indigenous vegetation to recover.
- JV described existing Landcare experience and methods that retain treated trees in place while they die. No method was selected for a specific site.

Community Conservation Days

- Community conservation days were discussed that could involve supervised planting, weeding, and learning activities. Existing ranger-led volunteering at Seawinds was identified as an opportunity to support established work. Members stressed coordination with land managers and relevant expertise.

Further Development

- Members expressed support for developing this initiative further.
- ASE agreed to undertake further work including a more detailed business case and plan informed by LCRG feedback.
- Members were invited to bring additional ideas, priorities, and potential partners to the next meeting.
- Engagement with Parks Victoria, the Shire and relevant representatives was proposed to seek expertise and support at the correct time. No external commitments were recorded.

6. Local Community Letterbox Drop

- MM spoke to the draft of the seventh edition of the local neighbour's update and the feedback received from RK.
- Members recommended clarifying ASE's deliberate approach to staging, linking the conservation proposal to its four pillars and inviting feedback on both conservation and development.
- Members supported complimentary gondola rides for newsletter recipients, with eligibility and the ticket request process clearly explained.
- MM agreed to revise and recirculate the newsletter before its intended distribution the following week.

7. Draft Communications Plan

- MM spoke to the draft ASE Development Project Ongoing Communication Plan. He confirmed it remains a draft, with ongoing neighbour updates to address construction timing and potential disruption.

8. Peninsula Trail and Local Connections

- SMc introduced the Peninsula trail and potential connection of summit trails via an ASE uplift connection. She noted the Peninsula Trail network has been discussed for many years with progress made in some areas only. Members broadly discussed trail access and connection acknowledging cost, safety and congestion
- MM noted ASE maintains an existing mountain bike uplift service and current escarpment erosion from unauthorised riding. Members noted the distinction between mountain biking from shared recreational trails.
- The group will revisit connections with RK, considering the development, conservation program and coordination with relevant authorities.

9. Other Business

- In response to a question from DP, MM advised that construction including the proposed luge could proceed with minimal disruption to Eagle operations, subject to detailed assessment. Financial modelling continues; no staging decision has been made.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting date was left open and will be advised.

9. Meeting Closed

TP thanked members for their participation and constructive discussion. The meeting closed at 3.56 pm.