

Light Rail Stage 2A



ACT
Government

Major Projects Canberra

Community Reference Group (CRG) Minutes of Meeting

Date	Thursday, 25 June 2020
Time	17:30-18:30
Location	Online – via WebEx
Chair	Ashley Cahif, Light Rail Project Director

Members
Greg Tannahill
Rose Mackie
Margaret Pender
Steve Flora
Sumithri Venketasubramanian
Mike Watson
Luka Musicki
Rohan Burnside

MPC Attendees		
Ashley Cahif	AC	Light Rail Project Director, MPC
Marcus Sainsbury	MS	Director Light Rail Planning and Design, MPC
Michelle Dooley	MD	Communications and Engagement Advisor, MPC
Deborah Pobjie	DP	Communications and Engagement Advisor, MPC
Stacy Bruce	SB	Communications and Engagement Advisor, Light Rail

Agenda Items	Lead
1. Welcome and introductions	AC
2. Housekeeping	DP
3. What is a Community Reference Group?	MD
4. CRG Members	DP
5. Light Rail Stage 2A Key Stakeholders	AC
6. CRG Meeting dates and planning	SB
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Minutes

1. Introductions

The CRG members were introduced to Ashley Cahif (Light Rail Project Director), Marcus Sainsbury (Director Light Rail Planning and Design), and Michelle, Deborah and Stacy, and then gave their own short self-introductions.

2. Housekeeping

All CRG members gave permission for the meeting to be recorded for administrative purposes, noting that the footage would not be publicly disseminated.

3. What is a Community Reference Group?

A Community Reference Group is intended to gauge community sentiment and engage with diverse members of the community. They also talk to specific groups based on areas of interest, such as environmental or business groups.

A Business Reference Group will also be formed, as Light Rail Stage 2A does impact many businesses in the City West area.

The objective of this group is to bring together community members with a number of different interests so that they can share their views on different aspects of the project and act as a conduit back to the community.

This is intended to be a friendly session to stimulate informal conversation. As we progress the project does rely on us testing concepts and messaging with you, and you can provide us feedback on how we can better communicate with stakeholders.

We would like people to sign onto the Terms of Reference to make sure that this is a group that is respectful of each other's viewpoints, that people feel free to discuss issues that they feel are important, and that people can come forward with questions or concerns that they think are relevant to the community.

Success in this project means that we must ensure we are considering all the needs of the businesses and residents, and make sure we've got a two-way dialogue. We want to make sure you're getting the information you need to make informed opinions, which is why we might send out some pre-reading before a meeting or follow-up information.

No confidentiality agreement is in place, but often we'll talk to parts of project development that we need your input on which might not be part of our external messaging. Please be respectful of what we do or don't say, because often it's part of the development process. We would give the project team input from these CRGs to inform their decision making.

We will always have a chair, and a senior member of the light rail team will always attend these meetings. Someone will take minutes and send them out to you after the meeting.

4. CRG Members

This group was chosen based on the following criteria:

- Contribution to December 2019 CRG
- Local community and representation
- Population & age diversity
- Diverse range of views and opinions
- Diverse range of light rail users

The list was provided to an independent reviewer for transparency. The group was narrowed down to 15 people, 8 of whom are in attendance tonight.

5. Light Rail Stage 2A Key Stakeholders

Major Projects Canberra was formed in July 2019, and its main role is infrastructure delivery. One of the major projects is the delivery of Stage Two of light rail.

MPC works with other directorates of the ACT Government, and is the Territory's major infrastructure delivery branch. Some of our sponsor directorates, for example Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), are then responsible for operating light rail after the project is delivered by MPC. Stage 2A will be handed over to TCCS once we have delivered it.

City Renewal Authority (CRA) is another key sponsor. Raising London Circuit is a component of light rail Stage 2A project that CRA progressed before MPC was tasked with delivering as part of Stage 2A. MPC Light Rail Project reports to Cabinet, the Minister for Transport and the Project Board which has members across the ACT Government directorates and several independent members.

There are several Commonwealth stakeholders including, the Federal Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE) who are responsible for EPBC Act approval, and the National Capital Authority (NCA) is responsible for Works Approval over the project.

Outside of government we have the current light rail operator, Canberra Metro, who we are in negotiations with for the delivery and operation of Stage 2A. Having the same entity deliver and operate Stage 2A provides an integrated and seamless trip along the whole Stage 1 and Stage 2A alignment, meaning passengers won't have to change trams at Alinga Street.

CRGs and BRGs are also key stakeholders whose input can affect key decision making.

6. CRG Meeting dates and planning

CRG meetings will be held ad hoc initially with the intention of hosting them monthly going forward.

Meetings will run for 1.5 hours to go into more depth with time for questions and participation. The group agreed that any time between 5:30-7:30 works going forward, on either a Tuesday or Thursday.

YourSay private page setup – a place for information to live and for polls/Q&A's, minutes, videos, document library. Login details will be sent around once this is up and running.

Emails will confirm meetings details and update CRG members on what's happening on the private page. Private page can be used for discussion and topic selection.

The group agreed that a mixture of online and in-person meetings is preferable.

7. Environmental Approvals

7.1 EPBC Approvals

The EPBC Act is Commonwealth legislation that regulates matters of national environmental significance. Light Rail Stage 2A includes potential impacts to the golden sun moth population that live in the clover leaves and median of Parkes Way. This is an endangered species so has highest level of protection.

The project is also partly located on Commonwealth land and has some key heritage considerations such as the Parliament House vista and the Reserve Bank.

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment (DAWE), the Commonwealth Department responsible for administering the EPBC Act, has determined that the proposed action is a controlled action and that the project will be assessed through preliminary documentation. This documentation relates to environmental issues and implications of the light rail alignment, in particular where it impacts the Golden Sun Moth population.

The team are currently finalising the documentation, then DAWE will direct us to publish the information to the public. This will be a key milestone for our statutory consultations. The documentation will go on public exhibition for approximately 2 weeks, where we will be seeking feedback and submissions from the CRG and the wider community to tell us their concerns, what they like about the project, and what we can do better on.

We will consider these submissions and respond to them. This may result in changes to the project.

There is still some time to go before final approval, but the documentation is nearly ready and this CRG will be first in the community to know that the documentation is going live.

7.2 DA/WA

The project also requires a Development Application (DA) from ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) and a Works Approval from the National Capital Authority (NCA).

This short 1.7km project traverses both the ACT planning jurisdiction and Commonwealth planning jurisdiction multiple times along the route. The key DA and WA submissions will be put out on public exhibition through a similar exhibition process to the EPBC approvals.

We will be seeking as much feedback as possible and expect that there will be a range of views that come forward. We will then consider the submissions and respond, either in justification as to why certain decisions were made, or to take considerations on board and amend the project as needed.

Community questions and responses:

Question: What is the estimated timeline on the approvals?

Answer: It is difficult to say with certainty. There are still open considerations that we're working through in relation to design development and NCA requirements.

There will be a process promoting the fact that the approvals are going live, and we will engage with the community and key interest groups when that time comes.

This process is about trying to understand the issues as we design the project. This CRG group will be one of the first groups to understand what the submissions look like.

Question: Is the Sun Moth population also relevant to 2B or only 2A?

Answer: Yes, it is relevant to both 2A and 2B. There are some isolated patches of Golden Sun Moth habitat through the Barton area.

The Golden Sun Moths are still present in areas where there hasn't been land development or disturbance, which is why in the clover leaves, which are dominated by Chilean needle grass, these populations are still present.

The preservation of the Golden Sun Moth population is an important issue for the ACT Government, and we will look at biodiversity offsets and do what we can to manage and minimise the impacts, starting with a preference to avoid those impacts as much as possible.

Question: Is the move to wireless due to NCA heritage concerns or something else?

Answer: This was a decision made by government for a range of reasons.

Wire-free design will have reduced visual impact in areas of national significance, particularly on Commonwealth Avenue. There's been a commitment to take wire-free all the way across Commonwealth Avenue.

The technology is changing rapidly so we are reluctant to make a commitment to exactly where the wire-free extent will run. We are confident that we have a solution to go from Commonwealth Park to Alinga St stop and back running off batteries, and around Parliamentary Triangle in Stage 2B.

Question: Do you foresee that there will be a significant difference in plans for Stage Two than for Stage 1? Have there been lessons learned in the planning and operations from Stage One?

Answer: There are definitely lessons learned from Stage One that will be incorporated into Stage Two.

A big part is the customer experience outcome from this project. Being a public transport project it's important that the system is highly legible. We want to make sure Stage 2A still has the same look and feel, although it has some different and important features, particularly wire-free technology and on street running.

Also on Commonwealth Avenue, an area of national significance, it is proposed that further features will be included such as green tracks to replace concrete track form. Turf or planted landscape will also soften the visual impact, help manage urban heat islands and to reduce run off in that area.

Question: Is there a lessons learned document available for the public to read?

Answer: Mid last year we published a project delivery report, and within that document is a lessons learned section and a summary of the Stage One project delivery outcomes. The report is wide-ranging and includes commentary on numerous aspects of the project including costs, urban design, governance, land development impacts, delivery model and lessons learned.

Question: Obviously there's been six months between our last meeting and now. Between meetings, could you maybe send us a dot points of what progress / decisions have been made between then and now?

Answer: Yes, we can certainly do that in a summary. We are currently creating a project update document so will make this available to the group when it is published.

Additional question/feedback submitted via email for next meeting:

Two big factors are safety and accessibility, and gender and disability are key considerations that would make light rail more friendly to everyone. In this space, Women with Disabilities ACT may be good to speak to.

There may be specific considerations from school groups that could be useful for the planning of Stage 2.

Could commission Aboriginal art for the light rail vehicles rather than the plain red design (in collaboration with the artists). And perhaps at stations, info plaques about significant Ngunnawal/Ngambri sites nearby.

Will the operators for Stage 2(A) be up for tender, or does the ACT Government see Canberra Metro running Stage 2 as well?