

Community Reference Group (CRG) Minutes

Meeting:	Minutes of the 4th Community Reference Group (CRG) Meeting
Date:	20 November 2025
Venue:	Sanctuary Inn on Westernport 126 Marine Parade Hastings, VIC 3915
Present:	Project team: Chantel Steele (Environment Manager) David Christodoulou (Design & Construction Manager) Liam Morkham (Senior Engagement Lead) Lyndel McLennan (Engagement Manager) Mitchell Wynd (Communications Officer) Natasha Reifschneider (Approvals Manager) Peter Watt (Major Projects Director) Thijs van Berkel (Engineering & Project Manager) CRG Members: Aled Roberts (Somerville Business Group) David Wright (Wellbeing & Health Organisation) Richard Cox (Rotary Club of Somerville Tyabb) Greg Johnson (Phillip Island Conservation Society) Ian Hales (Community – non-affiliated) Ian Coffey (Mornington Peninsula Labor Environment Action Network) Ian Stevenson (Western Port Seagrass Partnership) Jane Carnegie (Save Westernport) Jeff Weir (Dolphin Research Institute) Julia Stockigt (Westernport and Peninsula Protection Council) Kim Storey (Destination Phillip Island Regional Tourism) Mel Barker (UNESCO Western Port Biosphere Foundation) Rod Kerley (Community – non-affiliated) Shannon Hurley (Victorian National Parks Association) Terry Nott (Preserve Western Port Action Group)
Absent:	Axel Leonhardt (Community – non-affiliated) Joshua Sinclair (Committee for Frankston and Mornington Peninsula)

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Chair:	Louisa McPhee
Commenced:	1.00PM

1. Confirmation of Minutes

- 1.1 The Chair provided an Acknowledgement of Country.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chair ran through the agenda for the meeting.
- 1.4 The Chair confirmed minutes and that there were no outstanding actions from the previous meeting.
- 1.5 **ACTION:** PoHC to invite French Island Community Association (FICA) to join the CRG.

2. Project update

- 2.1 PoHC provided an update on the project, outlining the key milestones that have been recently achieved and others yet to come.
 - 2.1.1 The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) have exhibited the updated scoping requirements for public feedback, and finalised scoping requirements are expected to be released soon.
 - 2.1.2 Port of Hastings Corporation (PoHC) have recently completed another round of community engagement, with a roundtable session in Hastings, an online webinar session, and a community information session hosted at French Island.
 - 2.1.3 PoHC continues to close out various EES technical studies, and preparation is underway on the technical assessments and chapters that will be exhibited as part of the EES.
 - 2.1.4 The construction team continue to progress with the project design and development.
- 2.2 Answers to pre-submitted questions were provided to the group.
- 2.3 **ACTION:** PoHC to pass on feedback to Department of Transport and Planning about release of further information relating to the site selection of the Victorian Renewable Energy Terminal.
- 2.4 **ACTION:** PoHC to implement a process for future meetings and minutes with a timeframe on responding to time-sensitive actions.
- 2.5 **ACTION:** PoHC to reshare the Consultation Plan for VRET with CRG membership.
- 2.6 **ACTION:** PoHC to share how terminal capacity was determined, and what proportion of terminal capacity would be filled by individual projects.

3. Dredging

- 3.1 PoHC provided an update on the project dredging and compared the volume of dredging with other ports and projects across Australia and overseas.
- 3.2 PoHC presented an overview of a typical Dredge Material Management Plan, and its objective to ensure dredging works are carried out safely, efficiently, and without unacceptable environmental impacts.
- 3.3 PoHC outlined the proposed dredging scope, methods, and equipment to be used in the dredging program.
- 3.4 PoHC explained the types of operational controls that could be in place during the proposed dredging program.
- 3.5 PoHC introduced the adaptive management cycle and explained how it could be used to minimise impacts.
- 3.6 PoHC gave context to the dredging changes since the referral was made, noting the benefits resulting from the changes.

4. EES update

- 4.1 PoHC provided an update on the Project's field studies, including waterbird abundance and nocturnal surveys, waterbird tagging, and water quality monitoring.
- 4.2 PoHC received feedback regarding the statutory length of the public review period for the EES submission. CRG requested that the Department of Transport and Planning consider an extension to the public exhibition period.
- 4.3 **ACTION:** CRG and PoHC to discuss public exhibition period length at a future CRG meeting.

5. Traffic and transport (EES)

- 5.1 PoHC outlined the scope of the traffic and transport technical study, including the key issues relating to transport and the objectives of the Traffic Impact Assessment.
 - 5.1.1 PoHC noted that traffic and transport information was provided in the October webinar which is available on the project website.
- 5.2 PoHC provided a breakdown of the methodology and presented data outlining the existing baseline traffic conditions in the study area.
- 5.3 PoHC provided a proposed program of potential truck movements anticipated during construction and displayed a draft truck route.
- 5.4 PoHC summarised the initial draft findings of the assessment.
- 5.5 **ACTION:** PoHC to confirm the truck route that was taken for the settlement trial.

6. Social and business (EES)

- 6.1 PoHC provided a presentation on the Social and Business Impact Assessment, which will be submitted as part of the EES exhibition.
- 6.2 PoHC noted that the assessment considers people and businesses in the area that could be affected by direct and indirect impacts from the Project.
- 6.3 PoHC listed the impacts assessed as part of the study and the project benefits across construction and operation phases.
- 6.4 PoHC discussed how the social and business impact assessment was considering recreational boating and fishing, as well as environmental considerations.

7. Nature based solutions

- 7.1 PoHC defined 'nature positive' as a term used to describe circumstances where nature – species and ecosystems – is being repaired and is regenerating rather than being in decline.
- 7.2 PoHC clarified that 'nature positive' is a measurable, absolute improvement in the state of nature against a defined baseline – it is outcome-based rather than a verb or description of an action.
- 7.3 PoHC introduced the term 'nature-based solutions' which refers to actions that protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while providing benefits for people and nature.
 - 7.3.1 Examples of nature-based solutions include replanting mangroves for coastal protection or restoring seagrass to store carbon and enhance habitat.
- 7.4 CRG members were invited to provide their feedback on what a nature-based solution should look like in the context of the Project, via an email to be sent to members after the meeting.
- 7.5 **ACTION:** PoHC to request feedback on nature-based solutions from CRG members, with a workshop to be hosted in the new year.

8. Engagement update

- 8.1 PoHC provided an update on recent engagement activities.
- 8.2 PoHC provided a snapshot of engagement numbers across the year, including total number of in-person and virtual roundtables, social media impressions, e-news subscribers and webpage visits.
- 8.3 PoHC detailed the key topics covered at the October and November community sessions held at Hastings and French Island, and presented a summary of feedback that was provided during the sessions.
- 8.4 PoHC outlined the planned CRG agenda for 2026, including future session dates, agenda items, and noting the possibility of optional EES deep dive sessions.
- 8.5 **ACTION:** PoHC to send October webinar recording to members.
- 8.6 **ACTION:** PoHC to share "what we heard from community" slide in future CRG presentations.

- 8.7 **ACTION:** PoHC to develop a map delineating where the extend of offshore wind proponents, VicGrid and Port of Hastings scope of planning start and end.
- 8.8 **ACTION:** PoHC to invite Offshore Wind Energy Victoria (OWEV) representative to future CRG meeting.

9. CRG feedback and Q&A

- 9.1 The Chair offered members the opportunity to share feedback to the team and ask questions.
- 9.2 The Chair noted the next CRG meeting will be held in February, with final time and venue to be confirmed.
- 9.3 The Chair noted tabled agenda items for future meetings.

FINISH

This meeting concluded at **4:44PM**