

MINUTES

Horsham Bypass Planning Community Reference Group

Thursday 9 April 2026, 5:00 pm

Former Kindergarten, 23 Roberts Avenue Horsham

Opposite Council Offices

Attendees

CRG Members:

Brian Klowss	HRCC Mayor (Chair)	Leoni Heard	Community – South Rural
Angela Munn	HRCC Councillor	Rob Moir	Community – South Urban
Dean O’Loughlin	HRCC Councillor	Stan Ellis	Community – West Rural
Sheridan Clancy	Community – North Rural	Glenn Ryan	Community – West Urban
Shayne Keenan	Community – North Urban	Peter Moore	Industry – Agriculture Business
Jamie Sleep	Community – East Rural	Brian Watts	Industry – Retail / Service
June Liddy	Community – East Urban		

Staff:

John Martin	Director Infrastructure
Dianna Blake	Senior Project Manager – Planning

Apologies

Greg Schultz	Industry – Transport
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Agenda Items:

1. Welcome

- The Chair opened the meeting and emphasised respectful listening, openness to differing views, and constructive discussion.
- It was noted that the meeting was being recorded to facilitate preparation of the minutes.

2. Background to the Project

- Bypass Planning Panel – November 2015, did not lead to a clear outcome.
- Council confirmed this Bypass Planning process starts with “no lines on a map”.
- Ten years ago truck volumes through Horsham were about 2,000 per day. Currently we see around 3,600 trucks per day, with potential to significantly increase over the next 5–10 years due to proposed industrial, agricultural, renewable energy, and mining developments.
- Although funding and building a bypass is the responsibility of State Government, they are unlikely to proceed with this without a community-supported preferred option.
- The bypass is considered an issue of State and National significance, involving multiple highways.

3. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality (John)

- Explanation of Conflict of Interest and Form
- Conflict of Interest forms:
 - Required from all members.
 - Purpose is transparency, not exclusion.

- Confidentiality:
 - Most information intended to be public.
 - Confidential items (e.g. cultural heritage or financial matters) will be clearly identified when applicable.
- Forms to be returned by next meeting.

4. CRG Member Introductions

- Each member introduced themselves to the meeting.

5. Minutes and Action items from previous meeting

Date	ACTION ITEM	Who	Outcome
	Nil – First Meeting		

6. Project Activities

No.	Item	Details	Attachment
1	Project Plan	Outline of the Project Process Project timeline	6.1 6.2

Key stages discussed:

- **April–May 2026:**
Establish community engagement approach to understand issues relating to the Bypass that are important to the community. No routes identified at this stage.
- **June–July 2026:**
CRG reviews community submissions and develops evaluation criteria and weightings.
- **Mid–Late 2026:**
Indicative bypass corridors/options developed and evaluated.
- **Late 2026 – Early 2027:**
Second round of community engagement on evaluated options.
- **Early 2027:**
Final recommendation to Council.

Principles emphasised:

- Community values are the priority of this group, aspects like the engineering and design will be considered at a later stage.
- Cost should not be the primary consideration for the community, but clearly the cost of a bypass cannot be excessive.
- Avoid repeating past mistakes of premature route identification.

Discussion of potential involvement of consultant in the establishment of criteria as well as evaluation of route options.

2	CRG Terms of Reference	Key aspects for Members	6.3
• CRG members are asked to: ○ Engage openly with the wider community. ○ Listen to and reflect community views rather than advocate personal outcomes only. ○ Help shape how community engagement is undertaken. • Members may speak freely with the community unless information is specifically identified as confidential. • Media engagement is to be managed via the Mayor. • End goal is to identify a preferred outcome to recommend to Council. • If people need support to enable their attendance and participation – let us know.			

3	Engagement Plan	Proposed Approach Key engagement steps	Refer 6.1 Page 4
• Media releases after each meeting of the CRG (within 5 days of each meeting) • Inclusion of confirmed CRG minutes in Council meeting papers			

- Specific engagement with the community at key stages of the project, as per the project plan
 - Full transparency of public submissions (subject to privacy considerations)
- Guided by the CRG on how we do this. An agenda item at every meeting.

4	First Community Engagement	To discuss the purpose and method of the initial community engagement	6.4
General consensus: • No specific routes in first engagement. • Use broad concepts (e.g. arrows, traffic flows) if needed. • Focus on criteria, not corridor selection. Key questions supported: • Do we need a bypass? • What type (truck-only vs full bypass vs none)? • What matters most to you and why? • What impacts must be avoided or mitigated? Suggested and supported approaches: • Online survey (short, plain language, mobile-friendly). • Paper surveys (Council offices, drop-in points). • QR codes in public places. • Verbal submissions (phone / assisted). • Targeted outreach: ○ Businesses ○ Farming community ○ Schools (senior students) ○ Sporting and community groups ○ Tourist Information Centre • Promotion via: ○ Council website and newsletter ○ Community radio ○ Social media • Accessibility considerations: ○ Simple language ○ Voice/audio options where possible.			

5	Consultancy brief	Explanation of purpose, methodology Review of brief	6.5
Two options discussed: 1. Consultant assists with evaluation only. 2. Consultant assists with theme analysis and criteria development + evaluation. Decision deferred until: • Likely volume of submissions clearer • Consultant proposals received			

6	Background Material	Horsham Bypass Planning website	6.6
https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Our-Council/Projects-and-Works/Horsham-Bypass-Planning Contains background reports, links to media releases and Council reports			

7. Communications

Date	Item	Details
14 April 2026	Post-meeting media release	• CRG photo taken for publication. • Regular updates will be included on the Council website.

		• Meeting minutes to summarise issues (not attribute comments to individuals). • Ongoing communication to reinforce that this is a two-stage process ○ Criteria/values identified first ○ Potential lines second
14 April 2026	Website	Updated with media release Updated with meeting minutes when approved at next meeting

8. General Business

No	Item	Who	Details
	No additional business		

9. Next Meeting

- Key agenda items:
 - Review of Project Plan
 - Finalisation of First Community Engagement Brief, to present to Council
 - Finalisation of Consultant Brief
 - Communications
- Discussion of meeting schedule / time of day
- CRG Meeting 2 to be held 5:00 pm, Tuesday 28 April 2026

10. Meeting Close 7:00 pm

Chair

Cr Brian Klowss

Mayor