

Meeting Notes

Light Rail to Woden Community Reference Group

Meeting Date: 7 May 2026, 5:30-7:00pm

Location: 480 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra and online via Webex

Activity	Notes
Welcome	<p>Isabel Thompson, SEC Newgate facilitator opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country, ran through the agenda, housekeeping and administration items.</p> <p>The CRG was reminded of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting notes will now be published online (deidentified and consolidated). • SEC Newgate is taking over secretariat duties (logistics, outreach and CRG related questions). • The CRG meeting schedule for 2026 will include two mid-year meetings (likely online) and a Q4 meeting (likely in person). <p>Isabel outlined the 2025 commitments and asked the group if they felt anything needed to be amended or included. There were no issues or comments raised on this.</p>
CRG questions and comments	<p>Could meeting dates be provided as early as possible to allow members to schedule accordingly? This question was taken on notice.</p> <p>Could we please go around the room and introduce ourselves and what organisations we are representing? Each CRG member introduced themselves and the organisation or cohort they represent.</p>
Opening remarks	<p>Marcus Sainsbury, Project Director thanked the CRG for their inputs and suggestions over the past year and provided a brief update on the current status of Stage 2A. Marcus noted the importance of the recent announcement regarding the Stage 2B alignment.</p>
Stage 2A update and 2026 priorities	<p>Dan Keep, Project Manager provided an update on the progress of Stage 2A and the priorities for 2026.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026 has been a period of significant activity. • In January, a major construction program was delivered, which involved closing Northbourne Avenue between London Circuit and Barry Drive. This is one of the most complex intersections in the network, the quieter holiday period was utilised to minimise disruption. During that shutdown, crews worked 24/7 from 5 January through to early February. In that time, the team delivered underground services, installed track, poured concrete, and delivered new footpaths. Importantly, this approach avoided 8–9 months of disruptive weekend closures across the same intersections. • In February, a key milestone was reached with the Commonwealth Avenue bridge deck for light rail over Parkes Way. The dedicated rail bridge is now largely complete following works running since mid-last year. • Ongoing closures along Commonwealth Avenue have supported major under-road utility works, including installing continuous water mains. These had to be laid as single sections, requiring full road closures over a long weekend in February and March. • Along the corridor, light rail stops are now well advanced. Foundations and columns are in, and canopy installation is about to begin, which is providing a visible sign the project phase is moving into its final stages.

- Works near the QT Hotel show the progression clearly from the existing roadway to base construction, to track slab installation. Track slab installation is nearly complete in this section, with traffic arrangements to evolve in the coming weeks and months.
- While much of the track slab work looks straightforward from above, there is significant infrastructure beneath, including large stormwater culverts (in the area in front of the QT Hotel) and utilities on both sides of the road that need to be considered throughout this project.

Works set to occur this quarter:

- Canopy installation across City South and Commonwealth Park stops.
- Completion of verges along Sydney and Melbourne Buildings by June, including paths and tree planting.

Works set to occur in the second half of 2026:

- Partial reopening of London Circuit East (Northbourne to the theatre), with some areas remaining under construction.
- Introduction of green track sections.
- Overall, there is substantial work continuing through to the end of 2026, as the project progresses toward completion.

CRG questions and comments

Why are some of the pedestrian crossings near London Circuit and Commonwealth Avenue intersection still obstructed or seem incomplete?

Temporary pedestrian arrangements are in place during construction. While this intersection was updated as part of the Raising London Circuit project, some crossings remain incomplete or constrained (e.g. due to barriers) with the intention to finalise arrangements as part of Stage 2A works. As Stage 2A will redesign the intersection, the current layout operates as a standard intersection but will transition to a fully protected, light rail integrated design. The site remains operational but under construction, with further changes expected over the next six months. Design considerations must balance pedestrian, cyclist and vehicle movements, noting existing congestion pressures.

When complete, will the pedestrian crossing arrangements at the London Circuit and Commonwealth Avenue be straight across?

The crossings on the north and south of the intersection are offset (pedestrians will not be able to walk straight through) due to traffic signalling constraints and safety considerations.

Has the project encountered any surprises or challenges?

Yes, but nothing atypical to these sorts of works. For example, issues encountered have included:

- Utility conflicts (assets located differently to original records).
- Competing stakeholder works (e.g. Icon Water upgrades within the same corridor).
- Adjacent developments impacting traffic and access.

Noting that there are fewer unknowns along the raised London Circuit portion due to previous works. Existing assets, including trees and infrastructure, are being retained where possible.

Overall, delivery remains on track, with issues managed as part of standard construction conditions.

**Yarralumla
Nursery tour
reflections**

Isabel Thompson asked the nursery tour attendees to briefly reflect on their recent tour of Yarralumla Nursery on 29 April. Comments from CRG members are summarised below.

Urban landscape approach:

- Landscaping is a core design principle, with Infrastructure Canberra having a focus on intentionally prioritising a green, landscaped corridor.
- Tree stock is being carefully managed, with 40–50% surplus grown from seedlings to allow for selection of the healthiest specimens at installation.
- A dedicated irrigation system has been implemented to support tree health.

Design quality and species selection:

- Tree species and overall landscape design were well received by CRG members who felt the species choices reflect site-appropriate and considered selection.

Engineering integration:

- Significant engineering has enabled trees to be successfully integrated within and adjacent to the light rail corridor, including near and beneath track zones.
- Systems are in place to manage root growth and canopy shaping, ensuring trees do not interfere with light rail operations.

Research, testing and delivery:

- Soil testing of approximately 10 different soil compositions is being undertaken (for example, particle size, pH, moisture performance).
- Development of engineered soil systems to optimise growth conditions.
- Installation of structured root cells (modular support systems) beneath the surface to ensure the trees have the best chance of long-term survival and integration within a highly constrained urban corridor.

Stage 2B EIS update

Colin Maher, Planning and Approvals Manager provided an update on the Stage 2B Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

- The State Circle East alignment has been confirmed.
- The alternate National Triangle–Barton alignment which was assessed in the draft EIS will now be retired. Including this alternative alignment ensured the EIS process would not need to restart if State Circle East proved unfeasible.
- Infrastructure Canberra considered the below for both alignments:
 - project's concept design
 - environmental and social impacts and benefits
 - community and stakeholder feedback.
- A revised, final EIS is being prepared, incorporating:
 - feedback on the draft EIS
 - updated technical assessments and design updates
 - updated mitigation measures.
- A Submissions Report will be included in the final EIS that will outline key themes, issues raised and responses.
- The final EIS will be publicly released later this year.

Key design revisions between the draft and final EIS

Design revisions will be described in Chapter 3 (Project Development) of the final EIS. Some key examples were presented:

State Circle:

- Introduction of an 'inner running' track configuration between Sydney Avenue and Adelaide Avenue.
- The Melbourne Avenue stop will move from the median to the inner verge (Capital Hill side of State Circle), helping to:
 - retain on-street parking and loading zones
 - reduce disruption to local traffic and surrounding land uses.

TPS8 (Traction Power Substation 8):

- Location included in the final EIS will be on Denison Street, Deakin (a change from Guilfoyle Street, Yarralumla).
- The change was driven by community opposition to the Guilfoyle Street site, near residences and schools.
- The updated TPS8 location will also include a Kiss 'n' Ride facility to enable passenger drop-off

Next steps / approvals pathway:

- Final EIS to be lodged with the Australian and ACT governments in June with an outcome expected by the end of the year.
- If approved, the project will progress through detailed design to support further planning and development approvals

CRG questions and comments

Will the ACT Government's updated flood modelling for Yarralumla Creek impact the EIS?

The ACT Government is currently working on a revised flood model for the Yarralumla Creek catchment that incorporates Australian climate change guidance. To support a design objective of 'no worsening' of flood impacts, a project-specific flood model, including climate change allowances, was developed to inform the EIS. Initial comparisons between the project model and the wider Territory model have been undertaken to validate outcomes and confirm consistency in design assessment.

What will happen next with the State Circle and Melbourne Avenue design?

Design refinements will be assessed through the final EIS process. Further targeted stakeholder engagement is underway to discuss specific concerns and design impacts. The final EIS will be a public document, including updated design responses and justification. With the change to inner running between Sydney Avenue and Adelaide Avenue, the Melbourne Avenue stop will now be located on the inner verge of State Circle. This design is largely consistent with the Melbourne Avenue stop design proposed under the National Triangle-Barton alignment, with only minor refinements.

What is the likelihood of approval for the EIS?

To respect the integrity of the statutory process, the Project maintains a clear separation between project development and the assessment by regulators. The EIS assessment process will consider whether the revised, final EIS has adequately responded to the respective Commonwealth and ACT requirements as well as submissions received, ensuring stakeholders have the opportunity to be heard.

It would be interesting to understand how the parliamentary approvals process works. Who is assessing and what they are assessing against.

Since the proposal is located within the Parliamentary Zone and the Parliamentary Precinct (Capital Hill), it requires approval under the *Parliament Act 1974*. Under the Act, a summary of the proposal and key matters is prepared by NCA and then tabled in both houses of Parliament. The legislation is quite broad as to what matters Parliament may consider and there are relatively few examples of infrastructure projects considered under the Act that could establish what could be considered precedent for the Project. Further detail on the process taken on notice to be incorporated into future sessions.

How will any construction impacts and information sharing be communicated to stakeholders and the broader community?

The EIS addresses overall impacts in and around the project footprint. More detailed information will be provided at Development Application (DA) and Works Approval (WA) stages as well as when a delivery partner has been engaged to prepare construction plans.

Localised, targeted engagement with directly affected stakeholders may be necessary for future works. There is some uncertainty in some stakeholder groups who have recently been proximal to construction and are unsure of how soon they will be impacted by Stage 2B construction.

The Infrastructure Canberra team agreed and will take this into consideration, noting that the final EIS will provide a detailed, publicly accessible response to submissions. Localised, targeted engagement with directly affected stakeholders is ongoing. Updates will continue to be provided as the project progresses through planning and approvals.

Terms of Reference review

Isabel Thompson provided an overview of the CRG's Terms of Reference (ToR) review activity. Members were invited to review the existing ToR to ensure it remains fit for purpose and reflects the current composition and role of the group. To support this process, CRG members were asked to split into smaller groups and work through a set of proposed updates developed by iCBR. These updates were presented for testing and feedback.

While feedback was welcomed on all aspects of the document, discussion focused on four key sections:

- Purpose.
- Role.
- Principles and Ways of Working.
- Code of Conduct.

CRG members were asked to mark-up printed copies of the four sections, using notes, sticky notes or stickers to highlight areas they supported or felt required amendment.

Feedback captured during this activity is reflected in the updated draft Terms of Reference provided to members with these meeting notes.

**Thank you and
close**

Isabel Thompson closed the meeting and requested members fill in the feedback form.

Category	Group / Role	Attendance
Social/CALD/Disability support/Advocates	Council on the Ageing	Apology
	Carers ACT	Attended (online)
	Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing	Attended
	Australian Multicultural Advocacy Network	Attended
	Guide Dogs ACT/NSW	Apology
Transport Advocates Passive and Active	Living Streets Canberra	Attended
	Pedal Power	Attended
	Public Transport Association of Canberra	Attended
Individual Representatives	Individual Representative	Attended
	Individual Representative	Attended
	Individual Representatives	Apology
	Individual Representatives	Apology
Diversity Advocacy	A Gender Agenda	Apology
Resident Representatives	Capital Hill Apartments	Attended
	Weston Creek Community Council	Apology
	Woden Valley Community Council	Attended
	Yarralumla Residents Association	Apology
	Inner South Canberra Community Council	Attended (online)
	Greater Canberra	Apology
Conservation Council ACT	Apology	
Youth Representatives	CIT Students Association	Attended
SEC Newgate	CRG Independent Facilitator	Attended
	Notetaker	Attended
Infrastructure Canberra	Project Director, Delivery – Transport and Civil	Attended
	Project Manager, Light Rail Stage 2A	Attended
	Planning and Approvals Manager	Attended
	Assistant Director	Attended
	Graduate	Attended