

DATE	LOCATION	START TIME	END TIME
15/4/2024	Lakeside Visitor Centre	5.30pm	7:20pm

<b>TITLE OF MEETING</b>	Puffing Billy Railway Stakeholder Consultative Committee	
<b>CHAIR</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tim North KC OAM (Chair &amp; PBRB Chair)</li> </ul>	
<b>MINUTE TAKER</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allison Johnson (PBR Executive Assistant)</li> </ul>	
<b>ATTENDEES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dianne Smith (Deputy Chair &amp; PBRB Director)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jacqui deKievit (PBRB Director)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peter Abbott (PBR CEO)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stefanie Straub (PBR GM – Business Services)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicoleta Giurgiu (PBR GM – Visitor Experience)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bret Butler (PBR GM- Infrastructure)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renee Nutbean (PBR Environmental &amp; Sustainability Specialist)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andrew Richards (PBR Volunteer Representative Group)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sheila Hampson (Friends of Emerald Lake Park)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne MacLeish (Puffing Billy Preservation Society)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pauline Murphy (Emerald Museum &amp; Nobelius Heritage Park)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joan Pepi (Gembrook Community Group)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catherine Gardner (Connecting Cockatoo Communities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trevor Budge (Emerald Village)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blythe Osborne (Menzies Creek Hall Committee)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cr Johanna Skelton (Yarra Ranges Council)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Shaw (Rotary Club of Emerald &amp; District)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emma Clark (Emerald Primary School)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Carter (All Aboard Network)</li> </ul>	
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bart Clingin (PBRB Director)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tom Sargent (PBRB Director)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Angela Jamieson (PBRB Director)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tiana Clayworth (Emerald Secondary College)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brooke Stafford (Mater Christi College)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kerri-Lin Drew (Gembrook Primary School)</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>John Wall (Eastern Dandenong Ranges Association)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cr Jeff Springfield (Cardinia Shire Council)</li> </ul>
<b>INVITATION</b>		

**STANDING AGENDA ITEMS**
**AGENDA ITEM 1**

Welcome &amp; Apologies.

The chair welcomed those in attendance & acknowledged apologies.

Traditional Owners Acknowledgement of Country was conducted.

**AGENDA ITEM 2**

Conflicts of Interest to declare.

All members of the Stakeholder Consultative Committee present confirmed that:

- The extent of the Stakeholder Consultative Committee members previous notifications of conflicts or potential conflicts have not materially changed and that no new actual or potential conflicts of interest have arisen; and
- They have no conflicts of interest in the subject matters of the proposed resolutions.

**AGENDA ITEM 3**

Welcome – Around the meeting Introductions

The Chair facilitated the introductions of everyone in attendance.

The Chair reviewed the Terms of Reference document attached to the papers – According to the Act, we are required to hold two of these meetings annually but will convene them as necessary. The purpose of the meeting is to delve into the future of the railway, its trajectory, sustainability, and success.

- We encourage committee members to share their comments ahead of the meeting for further discussion– fostering open communication.

The Gembrook Community Group expressed their viewpoint regarding the name of the consultative committee – they feel it's more ‘informative’ than consultative.

In response, the Chair acknowledged that the committee is relatively new and it's a learning curve.

The focus is on discussing business and strategic matters and we are willing and open to collaboration. Ultimately, we comply with the requirements of the Act, will continue to consult with members of the committee. It is noted that the committee receive information from the Board, and the PBRB will listen to ideas from members.

The PBRB are ultimately responsible for the operation of the railway and the act that governs its operations. The Stakeholders Committee Terms of Reference are supplied in each agenda of the committee for reference.

If there are any uncertainties regarding the Terms of Reference, we suggest reaching out to the Board for clarification which can be discussed.

**AGENDA ITEM 4**

PBR CEO Update – PBR Operations

The CEO of PBR updated the committee on the grants that have been applied for, outlining their purposes, which include:

**PBR Timetable**

- Securing funding for the upgrade of a Volunteer Crew Room at Lakeside.
- Developing a masterplan for the Belgrave precinct, with a focus on addressing accessibility issues. This involves not only meeting compliance standards but also surpassing them to ensure inclusivity for individuals with mobility, hearing, visual, or cognitive impairments. The aim is to create an environment where everyone enjoys equal access and inclusivity.
- Implementing measures to enhance efficiency for night operations, passenger facilities, connections to Belgrave village, and traffic management along Old Monbulk Road.

A video presentation was shown, hosted by volunteer conductor Sylvia, showcasing the fulfilling experience that volunteering offers and extending an invitation to others to consider joining the volunteer group to become part of the story.

The Group Manager (Visitor Experience) highlighted that while we are maintaining services, there is strain on our resources. Covering critical roles typically filled by volunteers poses challenges, making rostering difficult due to the lack of certainty in this model.

Consequently, we are reducing the timetable in July – Dec 24/25 Financial Year to optimise the workforce available. Increasing the number of volunteers would be beneficial, allowing us to add services as resources are confirmed. Like all Volunteer services – numbers to maintain these services are under stress (CFA, SES etc)

Recruitment efforts are active, and the training program ongoing, aiming to prevent train cancellations, which can harm our reputation. It is more advantageous to expand services rather than cancel them. However, this requires both a sufficient workforce and rolling stock.

Following the Train of Lights event, the timetable will be adjusted to two services on weekdays (currently 3) and three on weekends (currently 4), including trips to Gembrook on Fri, Sat, Sun.

Services will be added as certainty to resourcing them begins to improve.

The Polar Express will likely be discontinued due to high costs. There is consideration for introducing a Christmas-themed service in its place.

Lost Woods Market's (Operated by local private business) inaugural event was highly successful, and its sustainability will be assessed over time including the possibility of servicing trains to Emerald for future markets. Adding services isn't as easy as stopping the train – we need to resource Station Master, Ticket Sales etc. In Spring the available resources will be reviewed.

## Capital works updates

GM (Infrastructure) offered updates on key projects:

**Lakeside Running Shed** - emphasising the importance of aligning its appearance with the visitor centre. The proposed design aims for seamless integration with the environment, while accommodating a single locomotive that will allow the operational flexibility to operate services to Gembrook easier, as well as early morning special events.

**Emerald Yard Fencing** – While the fence may not be ideal, it is a necessary precaution to prevent vandalism. Efforts will be made to ensure the fence blends into the surroundings to minimise visual impact. Storing carriages at Emerald is an efficient approach which offers operational flexibility, potentially enabling more frequent openings to Gembrook. There's even a possibility of introducing an earlier morning service, subject to demand.

**Gembrook Boom Gate** - The health of the tree was assessed, and all council requirements have been met. The council has approved the installation of the boom, with VLine acting as the contractor. The project (funded by the Department of Transport as part of the initiative to remove higher risk level crossings) is expected to commence in the coming weeks.

## Telecommunications Towers

**Telecommunications Towers** – leases renewed at Gembrook & Emerald. Menzies Creek – PBR have been approached and will work towards this.

## PBR Carbon assessment project

The **PBR Environmental & Sustainability Specialist** addressed the group, discussing our environmental sustainability program and projects for 2023-2024 aimed at addressing carbon emissions and climate change.

*The first pillar* of our strategy involves playing our part in climate action by striving to become a net-zero carbon emissions organisation. This entails capturing, measuring, and understanding PBR's carbon footprint across all aspects of the business. Additionally, we aim to eliminate waste and collaborate with other community stakeholders to localise efforts.

*The second pillar* focuses on bringing to life the biodiversity story of the corridor and its potential to shape PBR's future. The corridor represents an untapped resource, and our goal is to unlock its natural capital value concerning carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancement, economic value, and providing enriching passenger experiences, ultimately contributing positively to our reputation as environmentally responsible.

*The third pillar* revolves around developing thriving networks within the environmental community, which is essential for PBR's sustainable future. We aim to collaborate on joint projects with local environmental groups to achieve greater outcomes for all stakeholders.

Presentation to be included in the Minutes and on website.

## RISK & SAFETY

**AGENDA ITEM 6**
**Storm event**

The Storm event on February 13<sup>th</sup> directly affected operations for a duration of 13 days, resulting in a financial loss of approximately \$600k.

Main issues were encountered with boom gates and communication systems, though fortunately, there was no significant damage to infrastructure.

Despite the corridor being essentially cleared up, we refrained from opening earlier due to the wider community not being back with power and not wishing to bring tourists into the area too early.

**Re-Railing Railway**

Re-railed 170m at “landslide” to withdraw speed restriction. More re-railing will occur as finance and resources permit.

**COMMUNITY**
**AGENDA ITEM 7**
**Community**

PBR remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting the Victorian community through various initiatives.

- Royal Children’s Hospital Good Friday Appeal 2024, raising an impressive \$8,910.58.
- PBR worked with Emerald and District Rotary to donate \$50k to the Monash Medical Centre Children’s Cancer Unit research fund through the Kids Fun Run with Puffing Billy Nov 23
- The Train of Lights event currently serves as a platform for fundraising for Rotary Emerald & District.
- ANZAC Dawn Service April 2024
- Variety Club Day – Railway closed for special invited families only. August

**Puffing Billy Park – Emerald**

PBR working with Cardinia to activate the space to use as a destination.

- The Park is managed by Cardinia and a master plan is currently in development by Cardinia.
- PBR attended a site tour with representatives from Cardinia. Public comments have been sought by Cardinia on what the community wants from the space.
- No funding or confirmation has been secured for the project.
- The PBR Emerald Station Precinct, although not directly part of the Cardinia Plan, aligns with Cardinia’s vision to connect Emerald Village and the Station Precinct.

**ITEMS RAISED BY COMMITTEE**
**AGENDA ITEM 8**
**General Business**

Gembrook Community Group addressed the group with the following:

*Train of Lights – Question was raised about the fencing surrounding the station perimeter.*

The primary purpose of the gates is to prevent the mixing of paying and non-paying passengers, thus aiding in efficient reboarding and ensuring timely departures. Passengers are often going to the Pizza Shop and FishnChip already. This won't change for 2024.

*Will Gembrook community groups be asked to assist with the sausage sizzle?*

The Emerald and District Rotary Club, which also encompasses Gembrook, manages the barbecue each evening for a span of 3.5 weeks.

The Gembrook Community group expressed that they are also enthusiastic about participating in the BBQ, and the Rotary Club is receptive to collaboration.

PBR's suggestion is to diversify the village's offerings, work together to make a feature of the village to capitalise on the many spectators who come to watch the train, not just ride it. Each train has 250 people, average group size is 3, so essentially, we are talking about 85 different bookings only.

PBR CEO noted that he has met with the Gembrook Community Group on several occasions with the same message – target the passengers that follow the train and give us a proposal of what you want to do and we can look to promote it.

If you have an idea, please reach out to us, and we will strive to support you.

*Gembrook Station Café – Why is there a need for a cafe at Gembrook station when there are various places in Gembrook that people can get refreshments?*

The station café generates limited revenue. On most days, passengers visit the village shops, contributing to spending in the local area. However, on certain days, especially public holidays, very few shops are open, necessitating the operation of the café to provide an offering for passengers for all days

PBR will be offering the station through an expression of interest process. Local business and others can apply to the criteria that PBR sets on this EOI. It is a remarkable building with potential for more than just serving train passengers. The goal is to have the station accessible not only to train visitors but also to other visitors exploring the village.

**Connecting Cockatoo Communities** requested an update on the redevelopment of Cockatoo station, expressing concern over its current state as an eyesore and a void in the community due to the lack of development. PBR advised that redevelopment of Cockatoo Station is not in the immediate plans but remains on the master plan projects. Additionally, they discussed the need for traffic management around the Emerald market.

**Emerald Village** also provided input on the traffic situation in Emerald, noting that the recent storm emphasised the isolation factors. The group is eager to collaborate with PBR to address traffic issues, particularly concerning the limited access and essentially only one road in and out of Emerald.

The Board emphasised that the market operates independently, and this feedback has been conveyed to the market organisers. PBR understand that adjustments to the parking plans are being submitted to the council and the market organisers are communicating this information

	<p>through their social media platforms. <i>(Post Meeting Comment – The market on 10<sup>th</sup> May occurred with updated traffic management and various operational changes conveyed by PBR and community directly to the organisers – PA)</i></p> <p>Cockatoo Township Committee suggested that PBR consider mandating the installation of a generator for any forthcoming telephone tower. PBR indicated that this proposal would be taken into consideration.</p> <p><b>Puffing Billy Preservation Society</b>  <b>PBPS – Asked about the community use of PBR facilities.</b>  This was raised in the last meeting – as long as we have suitable notice and it fits within PBR operational needs then we can supply PBR facilities for community groups with no or limited costs. As noted in the last meeting, PBR won't supply the building without supervision – as per the last meeting where the PBPS rep raised this issue. Supervision is a requirement in these circumstances. <i>(Post Meeting Note – Request and Operating Procedures are being developed to be clear to all groups – PA )</i></p> <p><b>PBPS - Minutes on the Website Couldn't Be Located</b>  GM VE helped PBPS rep find the minutes that were recently loaded to the website.</p> <p>Please Note – We rely on the Committee members to take details of this meeting back to their groups and seek clarification if you are unsure.</p>
<p><b>OTHER</b></p>	
<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 9</b>  <b>Volunteer – Staff recognition.</b></p>	<p>We acknowledge the volunteers and staff that saved, preserved, and continue to support Puffing Billy Railway to be enjoyed by future guests.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the commitment and contributions of the Stakeholder Committee in continuing to support the railway and enhance the future enjoyment of the railway especially for its local communities.</p> <p>Your feedback on creating a consultative approach is duly noted, and we are eager to engage in constructive discussions about the future.</p>
<p><b>AGENDA ITEM 10</b>  <b>Meeting Finalisation</b></p>	<p>There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.20pm.</p> <p>The above minutes represent a true and accurate record of the Stakeholder Consultative Committee Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> April,2024.</p>
<p><b>NEXT MEETING</b></p>	<p>Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.</p>