

Engagement Summary Report – Improving pedestrian and traffic safety in Sassafras

Project overview

This project aims to provide a safe and accessible pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Mountain Highway and Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Sassafras. The crossing on Mountain Highway will also serve the future ngurrak barring | RidgeWalk trail.

Community engagement

The initial design (Figure 1) was open for feedback between 20 September 2023 – 25 October 2023. Feedback was also sought on a range of other transport topics in Sassafras, such as parking, road safety, speed limits, public transport and active travel.



Figure 1. initial design presented for community engagement

How did people get involved?



Key Themes

Traffic congestion

75% of contributors identified traffic congestion as an existing concern when travelling through Sassafras. Many felt that there needed to be a better balance between vehicle and pedestrian flows rather than providing full priority to one or the other.

“... signalling is required to create shared movement, shared priority and less congestion...”

Action

We will revisit previous options such as traffic signals and roundabouts, with the view of creating a treatment which balances peak traffic demand, but also provides maximum safety and accessibility benefits for vulnerable road users.

Accessibility

Existing footpaths, car parks and toilets were often identified as inaccessible. Many contributors also expressed disappointment that there is currently no safe place to cross the road.

“... we would love to come back to visit the area but due to these issues it is not safe ...”

Action

We will retain the raised crossing elements in our design to ensure safe and smooth access is provided for those with a disability. We'll also seek to upgrade existing gravel carparks to make them more accessible for everyone.

Additional pedestrian crossings

Many contributors said that the proposed crossing location is useful but also wanted an additional crossing near Prince Street. Some also wanted the Primary School crossing to be upgraded.

Action

Although this was not part of the original project scope, we will consider providing additional crossing points in high activity areas such as near Prince Street and outside the Primary School.

Speed limits

While there was strong support for a speed limit reduction of some sort (61%), many people felt the change is only needed during business hours (e.g. 9am-5pm) rather than a blanket 24/7 reduction.

Action

We understand and will investigate this further. If appropriate, we will update our proposal.

Next steps

We will update our design and scope based on community feedback. Although this means that project delivery will be set back later than anticipated, we believe that this will result in a better overall outcome. This project and community feedback will feed into the upcoming Sassafras Masterplan to ensure we achieve a holistic design outcome for the town.