

Environment
Effects Statement

Attachment IV

Stakeholder consultation report

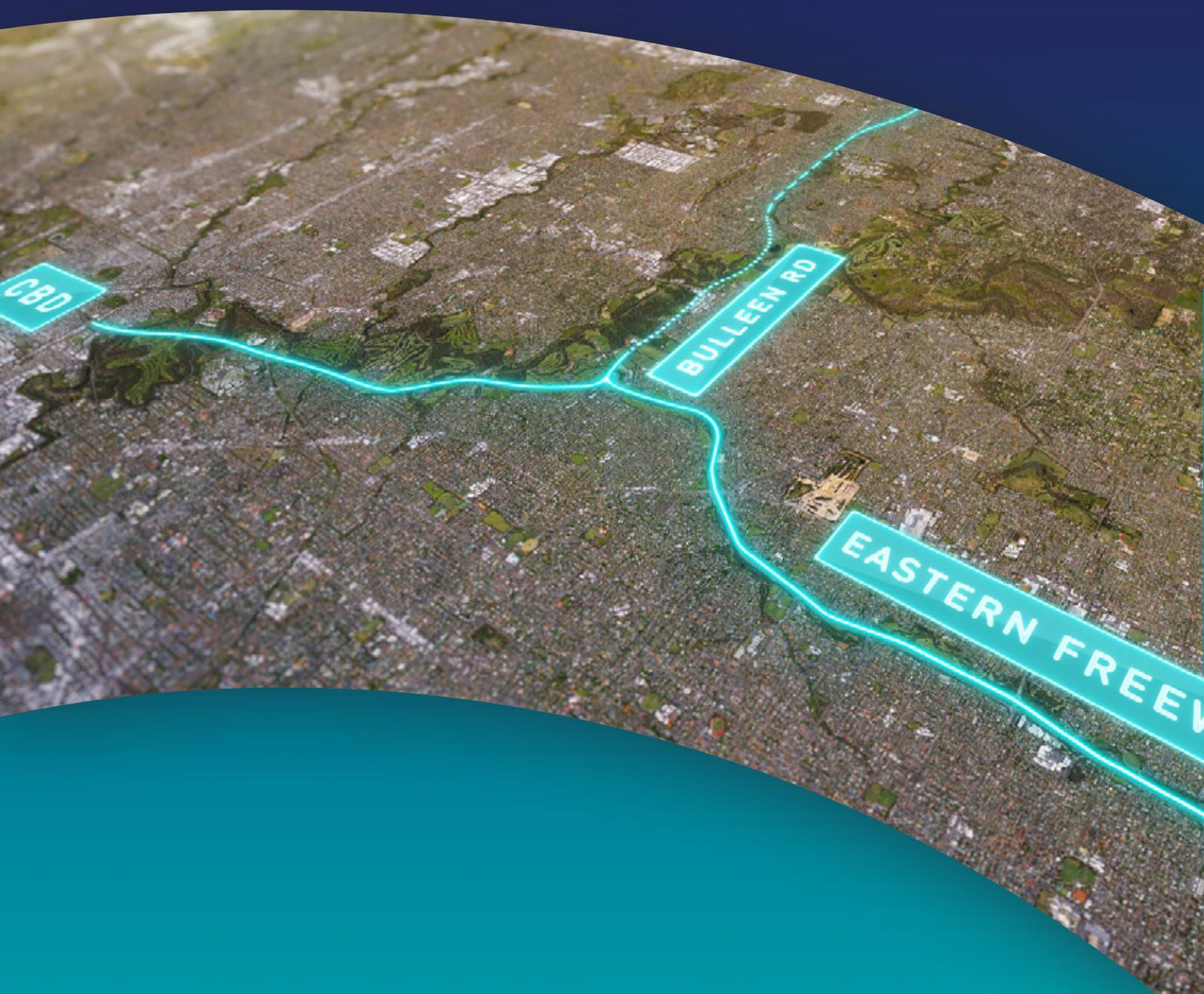


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Executive summary

This report is an attachment to the North East Link Environment Effects Statement (EES). It has been used to inform the EES required for the project.

North East Link ('the project') is a proposed new freeway-standard road connection that would complete the missing link in Melbourne's ring road, giving the city a fully completed orbital connection for the first time. North East Link would connect the M80 Ring Road (otherwise known as the Metropolitan Ring Road) to the Eastern Freeway, and include works along the Eastern Freeway from near Hoddle Street to Springvale Road.

On 2 February 2018, the Minister for Planning declared North East Link to be 'public works' under Section 3(1) of the Environment Effects Act 1978, which was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 6 February 2018 (No. S 38 Tuesday 6 February 2018). This declaration triggered the requirement for the preparation of an EES to inform the Minister's assessment of the project and the subsequent determinations of other decision-makers.

The scoping requirements for the EES published by the Minister for Planning describe the specific environmental matters to be investigated and documented in the project's EES. The EES allows stakeholders to understand the likely environmental impacts of North East Link and how they are proposed to be managed.

Section 2.4 of the scoping requirements require NELP to undertake consultation to enable stakeholder and community knowledge and views to be considered in project planning and formal decision making. GHD was commissioned to support NELP with community and stakeholder engagement for North East Link.

NELP has undertaken an extensive communication and engagement program to support development of the North East Link reference project and inform this EES. The EES was developed in consultation with the community and stakeholders and in parallel with the reference project development. The reference project has been assessed in this EES.

This report provides a summary of NELP's communication and engagement activities and responses to issues and concerns raised to date.

1 Introduction

North East Link is Infrastructure Victoria's priority road project. It would connect Melbourne's motorway network between an upgraded Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road, providing a safe and efficient connection for more than 100,000 vehicles a day.

1.1 About this report

The North East Link Project (NELP) has been engaging with communities and stakeholders since it was formed in late 2016 to investigate and recommend a project corridor and develop a business case for the project.

Public participation has been integrated into each stage of the project with conversations starting during early strategic planning – much earlier than for most major projects of this kind.

Communication and engagement activities over the last two years have built community and stakeholder awareness and understanding of the project and sought input from communities and stakeholders into project decision-making, planning and development.

This report summarises the communication and engagement activities to date and responses to issues and concerns raised.

It acknowledges feedback received from communities and stakeholders during the assessment of four different corridor options in 2017 which laid a strong foundation for more in-depth conversations in 2018 to inform and prepare an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the confirmed project corridor.

In keeping with NELP's commitment to ongoing engagement with communities and stakeholders, community and stakeholder engagement activities would continue through project delivery.

1.2 Project planning and approvals

North East Link is being assessed through an Environment Effects Statement (EES) process. The EES process is administered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on behalf of Victoria's Minister for Planning under the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.

The EES is a description of the project and assessment of its potential environment effects which provides a framework for the community and decision-makers to understand the likely environment effects of the proposed project and how they are proposed to be managed. The EES process is designed to be rigorous and transparent, with opportunities for input from stakeholders and the wider community.

North East Link is also being assessed through a Public Environment Report (PER) under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* ('EPBC Act'). The Public Environment Report assesses the potential for impacts on EPBC Act listed threatened species, listed migratory birds and Commonwealth land.

1.3 Scoping requirements

The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES are set out in the scoping requirements published by the Minister for Planning. The scoping requirements were finalised following public consultation.

Section 2.4 of the scoping requirements require NELP to undertake consultation to enable stakeholder and community knowledge and views to be considered in project planning and formal decision-making.

This includes preparation and implementation of a consultation plan with the purpose of familiarising the public and stakeholders with the project and EES investigations as well as providing opportunities for input and engagement on specific issues.

The EES scoping requirements for North East Link and the EES Engagement Plan are available on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) website at: planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/north-east-link

Section 3.2 of the scoping requirements requires NELP to provide a report on 'issues raised and suggestions made by stakeholders or members of the public, NELP's design, construction or other responses to these issues and an outline of community engagement during project implementation'.

Sections 3, 4 and 5 of this report outlines the community engagement during project implementation and key feedback and issues raised during key stages. Section 5.9 summarises the issues raised and suggestions made by stakeholders and members of the public and NELP's design, construction and other responses.

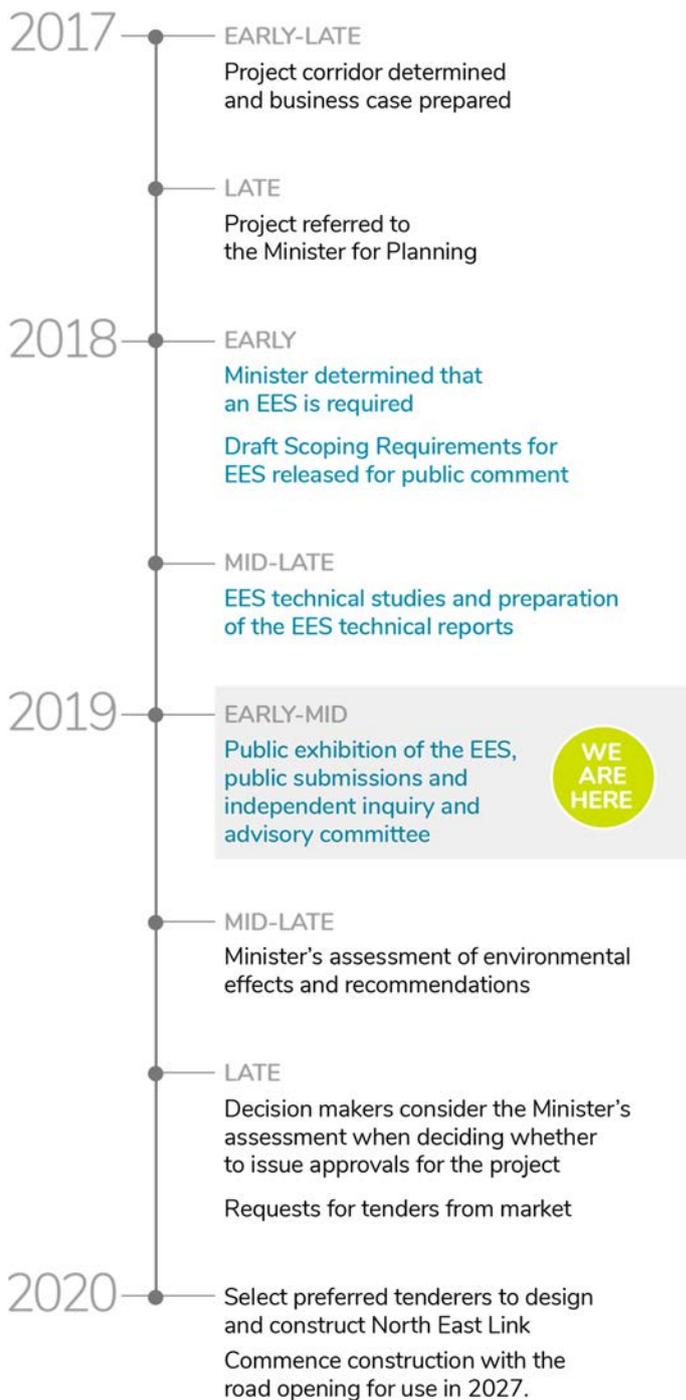
1.4 Technical Reference Group

In accordance with the Minister for Planning's public works order, DELWP has convened an agency-based Technical Reference Group (TRG) to advise it and NELP on a range of matters associated with the EES and statutory approval processes.

DELWP established the TRG for North East Link in February 2018. It comprises representatives from government agencies, regional authorities, councils and a representative body for the Traditional Owners of the land that have a statutory or policy interest in the project. Representatives included DELWP, the Department of Health and Human Services, Aboriginal Victoria, EPA Victoria, Heritage Victoria, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Public Transport Victoria, Transport for Victoria, VicRoads, Victorian Planning Authority, VicTrack, the Wurundjeri *Woi-wurrung* Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC), and Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse, Yarra and Nillumbik councils.

The TRG has provided advice to the project team on the design and adequacy of technical studies, as well as facilitated interaction between the project and key stakeholders. The TRG has also provided advice on appropriate stakeholder and community engagement activities for the project and reviewed the draft EES Engagement Plan.

Key steps in the project planning and EES process for North East Link



2 About North East Link

2.1 Project overview

North East Link is a proposed new freeway-standard road that would complete the missing link in Melbourne's ring road, giving the city a fully completed orbital connection for the first time. North East Link would connect the M80 Ring Road (otherwise known as the Metropolitan Ring Road) to the Eastern Freeway, and include works along the Eastern Freeway from near Hoddle Street to Springvale Road.

The North East Link alignment and its key elements assessed in the Environment Effects Statement (EES) include:

- M80 Ring Road to the northern portal – from the M80 Ring Road at Plenty Road, and the Greensborough Bypass at Plenty River Drive, North East Link would extend to the northern portal near Blamey Road using a mixture of above, below and at surface road sections. This would include new road interchanges at the M80 Ring Road and Grimshaw Street.
- Northern portal to southern portal – from the northern portal the road would transition into twin tunnels that would connect to Lower Plenty Road via a new interchange, before travelling under residential areas, Banyule Flats and the Yarra River to a new interchange at Manningham Road. The tunnels would then continue to the southern portal located south of the Veneto Club.
- Eastern Freeway – from around Hoddle Street in the west through to Springvale Road in the east, modifications to the Eastern Freeway would include widening to accommodate future traffic volumes and provision of new lanes for a dedicated busway. There would also be a new interchange at Bulleen Road to connect North East Link to the Eastern Freeway.

These elements are shown in Figure 2-1 and described further in Chapter 8 – Project description.

The project would also improve existing bus services from Doncaster Road to Hoddle Street through the Doncaster Busway as well as pedestrian connections and the bicycle network with connected shared use paths from the M80 Ring Road to the Eastern Freeway.

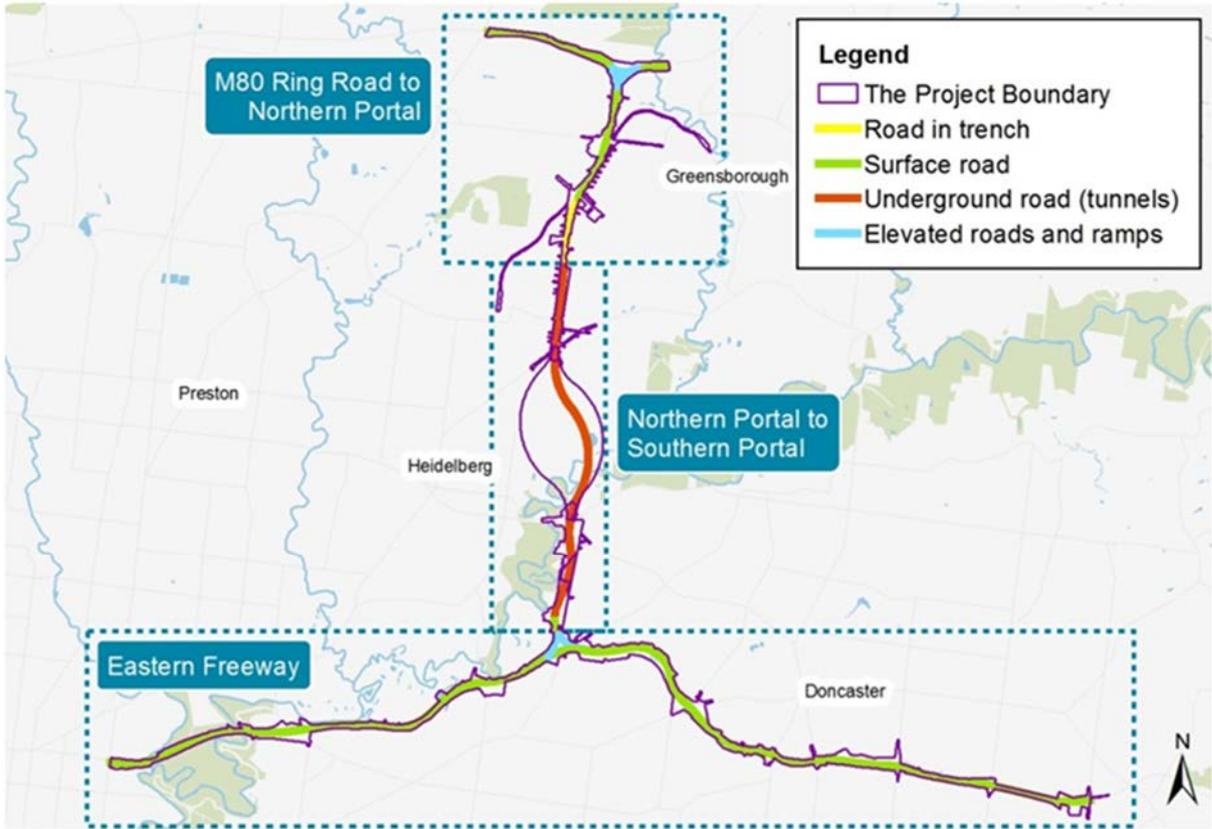


Figure 2-1 Overview of North East Link

2.2 Project benefits

North East Link presents an opportunity to address the increasing demands on Victoria's infrastructure by connecting two major roads, the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway.

- For businesses in the north, east and south-east of Melbourne, North East Link would connect key employment areas, reduce congestion and increase capacity for cross-city movements. This would provide a number of benefits to businesses including enhancing the efficiency of transport and reducing associated costs, enabling greater connection to residential areas and workers and enhancing the ability of businesses to share infrastructure and ideas to drive innovation.
- Businesses involved in, and which rely on, the physical delivery of goods would particularly benefit from North East Link by lowering business costs associated with transport and enhancing efficiency of supply chains. Increased productivity from these efficiencies would also promote investment and industrial growth around Melbourne, contributing to the city becoming a more attractive place for business start-ups, expansions and relocations. This would benefit the wider Victorian economy.

- By reducing congestion and enhancing connectivity, residents in Melbourne's north, east and south-east would have more job choices and greater ability to find work close to home. This would boost household incomes and support the development of suburban employment hubs to generate new economic opportunities.
- More efficient links between the north, east and south-east would reduce the reliance on local and arterial roads, reducing the number of private and heavy vehicles moving through residential areas. This would benefit residents and businesses by enhancing air quality, improving safety on local roads, reducing noise pollution and improving the ability for residents to connect with local facilities through minimising congestion.
- There would be improvements to walking, cycling and public transport networks through reduction of congestion on local and arterial roads and upgrades to facilities. The busway would provide new, dedicated bus lanes along the Eastern Freeway between Doncaster Road and Hoddle Street. Improvements to the existing walking and cycling network of shared use paths would create continuous and integrated off-road paths between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway.

3 Engaging on North East Link

3.1 Engagement principles

NELP recognises public participation provides the best project outcomes and engagement has been guided by the following principles:

- **Open communication** – being open and honest about project considerations, impacts and opportunities
- **Transparency and integrity** – sharing information broadly and establishing and maintaining agreed channels for communication
- **Collaboration** – working to seek mutually beneficial outcomes where feasible
- **Inclusion** – seeking to identify and involve a broad and diverse range of stakeholders in planning and decisions
- **Responsiveness** – acknowledging all feedback and demonstrating how and why decisions are being made
- **Accountability** – actively seeking diverse opinions and perspectives to broaden understanding of views and assist decision-making
- **Awareness** – communicating broadly to inform on the project and allow for meaningful community and stakeholder input.

3.2 Engagement approach

There are varying levels of public participation, ranging through:

- Informing people about decisions and actions being taken
- Involving them in decision-making
- Delegating decision-making to them.

Communication and engagement for the North East Link EES ranges from informing people about the project, to consulting and involving them in meaningful decisions about key aspects of project design and management of project impacts.

NELP's commitment to communities and stakeholders is that relevant specialists will consider all their comments, ideas, suggestions and issues raised and NELP will report back which have been incorporated into the project, which were not and why.

This report is part of delivering on that commitment.

3.3 Engagement stages

A staged engagement approach has been used for engaging with communities and stakeholders about North East Link, as shown in Table 3-1. This approach has allowed feedback and input to be considered at key stages in the project’s development.

Table 3-1 Stages of engagement

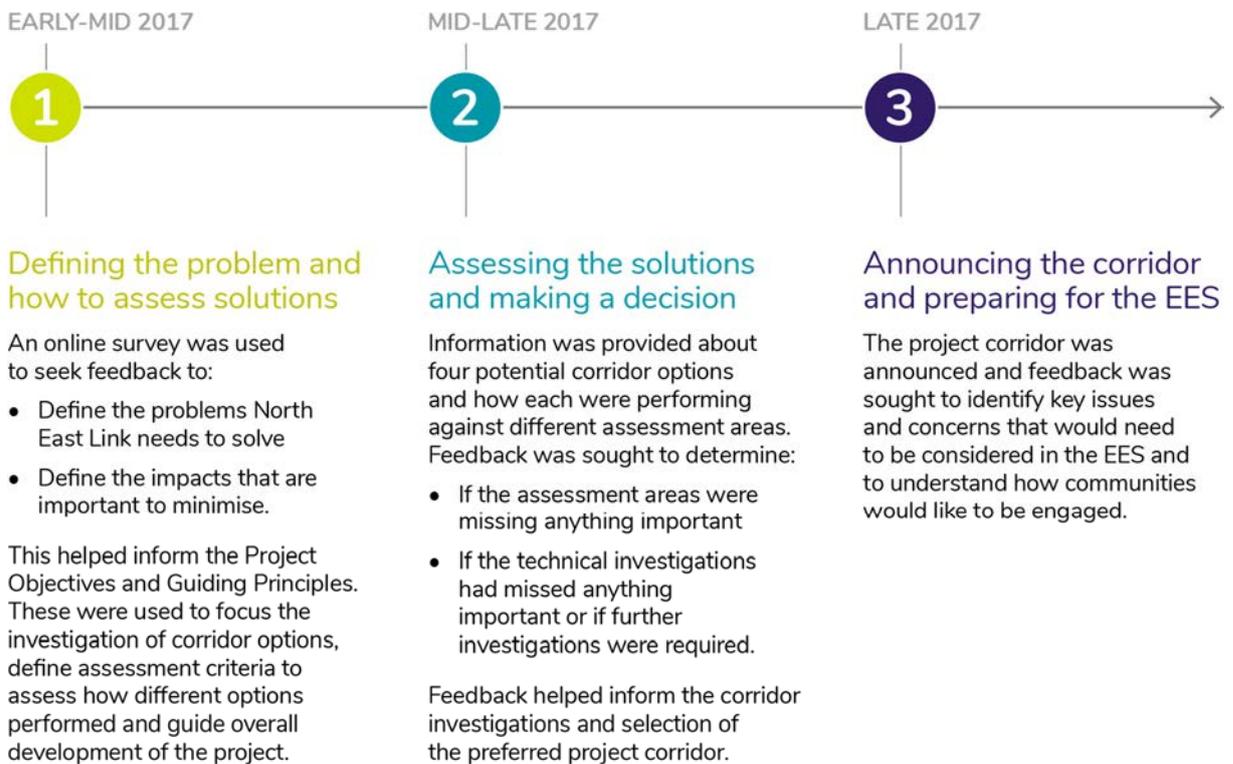
Stage 1 2017	Stage 2 2018 – Mid 2019	Stage 3 Late 2019 – 2027
Corridor selection and business case	EES preparation and exhibition	Procurement, early works, construction
<p>This stage sought to raise awareness of the project and seek input from communities and stakeholders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help define the problems North East Link needs to solve • Help define the impacts that are important to minimise • Source local information about conditions in the project area. <p>Feedback helped to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a project corridor • Inform changes to the project design • Identify key issues and concerns that needed to be considered in the EES. 	<p>This stage presented information about the project design, construction methods and the EES process as preparation of the EES progressed over 2018.</p> <p>Communities and stakeholders were encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give feedback and ideas to help improve the project design • Provide more detail about issues or concerns previously raised and to raise additional ones so specialists could consider them in the EES. <p>Feedback helped refine the project design and prepare the EES.</p> <p>In 2019, communications and engagement is supporting the formal exhibition of North East Link’s EES. Stakeholders and communities can view the EES and make submissions to the independent inquiry and advisory committee.</p>	<p>This stage would support commencement of early works, procurement and commencement of major construction works.</p> <p>Communication and engagement would continue with the community and stakeholders.</p> <p>Systems and processes would be established to respond to new and emerging issues in accordance with the environmental management framework and EPRs for the project. This includes developing and implementing a Communications and Community Engagement Plan.</p>

4 Stage 1: engagement – corridor selection and business case

4.1 Overview

Stage 1 communication and engagement activities were designed to rapidly raise high levels of awareness about North East Link and to encourage participation over three phases of strategic decision-making.

Stage 1: engagement phases



4.2 Engagement snapshot

The number of people who participated in engagement activities in 2017 is shown below.

AWARE

People aware of the project

1.2 million+
people reached
through
social media

308,000+
homes and
businesses received
2 newsletters

1,400+
adverts in local
newspapers, on
radio stations and
on roadside signs

5,500+
e-newsletter
subscribers
received 7
email updates

INFORMED

People interested in more information about the project

122,959+
visits to the
project website

313,200+
visits to online
project maps

2,300+
visitors to
12 information
displays

235+
questions
answered
through the
online Q&A tool

5
public forums
with local
councils

ENGAGED

People who provided feedback about the project

8,900+
responses
to 3 surveys

2,040+
pieces of
feedback
provided online

580+
emails and letters
to community
mail boxes

160+
calls to
1800 hotline

35+
written responses
from councils and
community groups

4.3 Phase 1: defining the problem and how to assess solutions Early-mid 2017

Phase 1 was used to help understand community expectations for North East Link, what problems communities want the project to solve, what impacts are important to minimise and discuss what else communities consider important to plan, design and build the project.

An online community survey was used to understand how communities travel around and through Melbourne's north-east, what they value about their neighbourhoods and their views on improving transport infrastructure.

The survey was promoted through print and online media, social media and email. A hard copy was available on request.

The survey was open for two months from May-July 2017. More than 7,400 people from over 350 postcodes across Melbourne and Victoria responded.



Feedback helped inform:

- The Project Objectives – what the project needs to achieve
- The Project Guiding Principles – how the road should be planned and designed including the impacts that should be minimised
- Assessment criteria for each Project Objective and Guiding Principle to assess how different corridors performed.

Closing the loop

The findings from the survey together with the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles were reported back to communities. A copy of the report is available online here: northeastlink.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/137565/North-East-Link-Community-Survey-Report-May-July-2017.pdf

Community priorities for North East Link

People who responded to the survey said key priorities for North East Link were:

- Easing congestion
- Getting trucks off local roads
- Protecting the environment and the look and feel of local areas
- Delivering a transport solution for all modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport
- Carefully planning to meet future transport and population needs.

People who responded to the survey also said investments in major transport projects should:

- Make it easier for people to access jobs and education
- Make it easier for goods to move around Melbourne and Victoria
- Limit traffic noise for local residents.



4.4 Phase 2: assessing the solutions and making a decision Mid-late 2017

Phase 2 involved reporting more detail about the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles (developed during Phase 1) back to communities to validate they aligned with public expectations for the project.

Information about four corridor locations being considered, and how each was performing against the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles based on technical assessments so far, was also provided to communities to elicit feedback on local issues, concerns and opportunities so these could be considered in further assessments and early design work.

Information about the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles, the four corridors being considered and findings from assessments so far was provided in print and online. Materials produced included:

- A newsletter posted to more than 308,000 homes and businesses across the project area
- Online maps, information and feedback and web pages
- Fact sheets and posters outlining the process and timeline to recommend the project corridor, including how input from communities and stakeholders would inform the decision-making process
- A 70+ page technical report outlining the studies to assess how the corridor options performed and key findings so far.

Twelve information displays were held across the project area as well as six pop-up stalls at local markets and community events so people could speak with specialists about the corridors and the assessment process.

63,000
VISITS TO
THE PROJECT
WEBSITE

2,300+
VISITORS TO 12
INFORMATION
DISPLAYS

4,390+
FEEDBACK
PROVIDED IN
PERSON, ONLINE,
BY PHONE AND
IN WRITING.



Feedback about the corridor assessment process

Overall community feedback confirmed that the Project Objectives, Guiding Principles and the assessment areas aligned with community expectations for what the project should achieve.

Of the 60 assessment areas presented for comment, communities considered 58 to be important or very important overall.

The most important measures to assess how the corridor options performed included:

- Getting trucks off residential roads
- Planning for population growth
- Improving travel times
- Improving public transport
- Minimising impacts on communities.

Communities did not suggest any additional assessment areas be used, or that any should be removed.

Some suggested that measures related to air quality, noise and visual impacts should be considered under community impacts rather than environmental impacts.

Key issues raised with the project corridor assessment process and findings at this stage included:

- Beliefs that for North East Link to provide an orbital 'ring road' function it should be circular in shape, or pass outside established urban areas
- Concerns the assessments had not adequately considered future population growth
- Concerns the assessments had not adequately considered freight movements between industrial centres in the south-east including Ringwood, Dandenong and Gippsland to the M80 Ring Road
- Concerns the assessments had not adequately considered increased traffic on the Eastern Freeway, particularly at Hoddle Street and through the EastLink tunnels
- Concerns the project corridor would be determined based on cost alone rather than overall benefits
- Concerns impacts on public open space, amenity and the environment had not been adequately considered.

Response to community feedback

All issues and concerns raised about the options assessment studies and process were considered and more work was completed where needed, particularly on the traffic and transport studies.

Assessment areas related to air quality, noise and visual impacts were assessed under community impacts instead of environmental impacts.

The project corridor that best met the Project Objectives, Guiding Principles and assessment criteria overall was recommended. These included:

- Easing congestion, cutting travel times and getting trucks off local roads – the project corridor best provides for where people and freight moves from and to between the city's south-east, east and north. It takes the most cars and trucks off congested roads in Melbourne's north-east and delivers the best travel time savings for freight.
- Aligning with future plans for how and where Melbourne will grow – corridor options that passed further east would have weaved through or passed outside the Urban Growth Boundary and had potential to work contrary to long-term strategic plans in place to manage and direct population growth.
- Providing significant public transport, walking and cycling transport outcomes – the project corridor provides the best opportunity to improve conditions for public transport and to connect and expand existing walking and cycling facilities.

Refinements were also made to the early design concept for the project corridor, including to 'design out' issues raised by communities and stakeholders. Key design outcomes included:

In response to community feedback the tunnel was extended further south towards the Eastern Freeway and further north under Lower Plenty Road.

- Extending the tunnels further south to pass under Manningham Road and Bulleen Road, minimising impacts on public open space and community facilities along Bulleen Road
- Extending the tunnel portals and entry and exit ramps further north past Lower Plenty Road to minimise impacts on communities and acquisition of homes
- Passing North East Link under local roads and land bridges in Macleod and Watsonia to keep local communities connected and minimise visual impacts
- Passing North East Link under Bulleen Road to keep the larger road low and minimise visual impacts
- Ensuring existing roads be kept for local, toll-free trips across the project corridor
- Including a busway along the Eastern Freeway in the project concept to deliver major improvements to public transport services in Melbourne's east.

Closing the loop

A summary of issues raised about the project corridor assessment process and how these were considered was reported back to communities. A copy of the report is available online here: northeastlink.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/140149/NorthEastLink-CommunityEngagementReport-Aug-Oct-2017.pdf

A copy of the business case for the project, including the findings from studies to compare the different corridor options and the process used to recommend the final project corridor is also available online here: northeastlink.vic.gov.au/project/businesscase



3

Project benefits and costs

1.3 BCR
Estimated project benefits

Total benefits after discounting for today's value	Total benefits for freight costs after discounting	Benefits minus costs after discounting	Total benefits over 50 years without discounting	Benefit to North and South Metro (State Regional Products)
\$15.1B	\$4.1B	\$2.2B	\$103.5B	\$7.5B

Estimated project cost (total project risk-adjusted capital cost)

Road P90 (\$B)	Road P90 (\$B)	Nonroad P90 (\$B)
11.9	10.7	18.8

4

Project Objectives and Guiding Principles

The North East Link Project has a strong focus on supporting business and job growth in Melbourne's north, east and south east, while also improving cross-city connectivity and helping to address critical traffic, freight and amenity issues. High-level Project Objectives and Guiding Principles reflecting this focus have been defined and were used to evaluate strategic and project options for North East Link.

Project Objectives			
Objective 1 Improve business access and growth in Melbourne's north, east and south east	Objective 2 Improve road-based access to employment and education in Melbourne's north, east and south east	Objective 3 Improve freight and supply chain efficiency and industrial growth across the north, east and south east	Objective 4 Improve access, amenity and safety for communities in the north-east

Guiding Principles			
Guiding Principle 1 Minimise impacts on communities	Guiding Principle 2 Minimise impacts on environmental and cultural assets	Guiding Principle 3 Minimise impacts during the construction phase	Guiding Principle 4 Optimise the efficient use of resources

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4.5 Phase 3: announcing the corridor and preparing for the EES Late 2017

Phase 3 was used to provide information about the project corridor and understand key issues and concerns that would need to be addressed in the EES and how communities would like to be engaged.

A newsletter was sent to 308,000+ homes and information displays were held in Greensborough, Viewbank and Bulleen so people could ask questions about the project, and give feedback about areas, issues and engagement opportunities they were most interested in.

Information about the project corridor and opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback were also available on the project website and social media channels.

Feedback received helped identify the most pressing community concerns and interests and inform planning engagement activities for the EES.



5 Stage 2: engagement – EES preparation and exhibition

5.1 Overview

A key objective of communication and engagement in Stage 2 has been to progressively build knowledge of the project design and the EES process with communities and stakeholders to support them to provide feedback on the design and raise issues for consideration in the impact assessments.

Communication and engagement activities have been developed to reach out to and consult with a broad range of interested people, groups and organisations – from local residents, Traditional Owners and councils to freight operators, government regulators, schools, local businesses and community groups.

Where possible engagement activities have been tailored so people could participate in ways that suited them, such as: coming to an information display to talk to specialists; having someone visit them in their home; viewing information, asking questions and leaving feedback online; or participating in small group workshops and discussion groups.

The project team was also available to talk, answer questions and listen to feedback throughout 2018 and continue to be available in 2019.

Stage 2: engagement activities phases



5.2 Engagement snapshot

The number of people who participated in engagement activities in 2018 is shown below.

AWARE

People aware of the project

797,000+

people reached
through social media

236,000+

homes received
3 newsletters

9,440+

e-newsletter
subscribers received
7 email updates

215+

adverts in local
newspapers, on
radio stations and
on roadside signs

INFORMED

People interested in more information about the project

111,985+

visits to the
project
website

45,940+

visits to
online project
maps

6,395

+ visitors
to 20
information
displays

300+

questions
answered
through the
online Q&A tool

2,175+

conversations
with land-
owners, tenants
and businesses

250+

meetings and
briefings with
stakeholders

ENGAGED

People who provided feedback about the project

1,370+

pieces of
feedback
provided in
person and
online

135+

people joined
45 workshops
and discussion
groups

585+

responses
to intercept,
telephone and
doorknock
surveys

20+

Community
Liaison Group
meetings

685+

calls to the
1800 hotline

545+

emails to the
community@
inbox

5.3 Community Liaison Groups

Two Community Liaison Groups (CLGs) were formed to involve the community and stakeholders in the planning stage for the project.

The two CLG groups represent the northern and southern parts of the project and have provided an opportunity for community members to participate in regular forums about topics important to them.

The groups of 15 to 20 people include local residents, businesses, community groups, environmental groups, education institutions, WWCHAC, VicRoads and local councils.

The CLGs are independently chaired and meet every six to eight weeks. Topics were determined based on discussion with members of the CLG and have included the EES planning process and community engagement, public transport, walking and cycling, urban design, traffic and transport, and construction and constructability.

The community and business representatives meet more regularly. Separate meetings have been held for environmental representatives to discuss key issues and concerns.

CLG members

Northern North East Link (M80-Bulleen Road/Manningham Road) CLG	Southern North East Link (Bulleen Road) and Eastern Freeway CLG
Four community representatives	Four community representatives
Representative for Macleod businesses	Two Bulleen business representatives
Representative for Watsonia businesses	Two representatives from the WWCHAC
Friends of Banyule representative	Representative from Boroondara City Council
Resolve Rosanna Road representative	Representative from Yarra City Council
Warringal Conservation Society representative	Representative from Manningham City Council
Representative from Nillumbik Shire Council	Representative from Whitehorse City Council
Representative from Banyule City Council	Yarra Riverkeeper
VicRoads representative	VicRoads representative
Youth representative (Marcellin College)	Youth representative (Greensborough Polytechnic)



5.4 Community Technical Discussion Groups

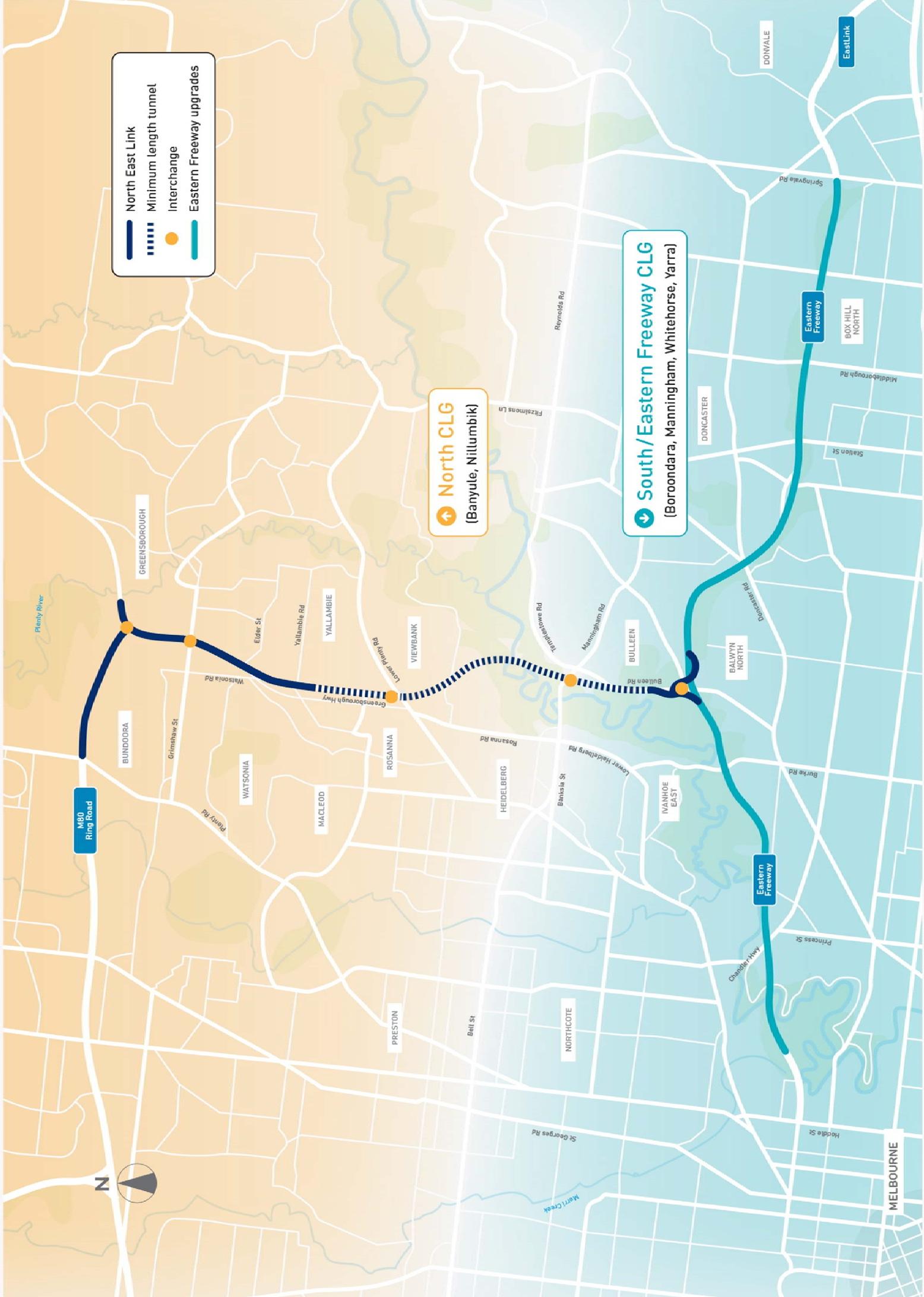
Two Community Technical Discussion Groups (CTDGs) were formed for community members with a deeper interest and level of technical understanding – one focused on design and engineering, and one on walking and cycling.

The groups aim to:

- Allow opportunities for specialists to better understand design issues, ideas and innovation
- Provide interested community members with access to project staff and information
- Provide insight into issues for consideration in the EES
- Provide insight for potential bidders
- Help project teams to gain a better understanding of issues raised and answer questions.

Community members who had shown a strong interest in project design and walking and cycling in previous engagement sessions were invited to be part of the CTDGs. The first group meetings were used to decide on the topics to be explored at each meeting and develop an initial framework for the groups.

[Map opposite: Northern and Southern/Eastern Freeway CLG locations](#)



█ North East Link
- - - - Minimum length tunnel
● Interchange
█ Eastern Freeway upgrades

↕ **North CLG**
 (Banyule, Nillumbik)

↕ **South/Eastern Freeway CLG**
 (Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse, Yarra)



Case study – cycling and walking for North East Link

The walking and cycling Community Technical Discussion Group brings together cyclists and walkers from across the project area, including Bicycle User Group members, recreational cyclists and walkers, commuters, and parents of young children who ride and walk to school and on weekends.

The group was brought together to gain views and feedback on the North East Link reference project, using lessons learnt from previous projects and real-life experience from members.

Engagement has included a ride through the project area with members to experience existing issues first-hand, workshops to understand issues and ideas from the group, meetings and discussions on how to incorporate this feedback into various stages of the project, as well as an online portal for ongoing discussions, ideas and lessons learnt.

Feedback from the group has been incorporated into the design for the reference project. A key issue the group brought to the table was the steep grades up to Belford Road in Kew. After assessing a number of options, a new 500-metre bicycle path on the north side of the Eastern Freeway at freeway level (separated by a crash barrier and screen) and under the Belford Road bridge was included in the reference project.

The group has further input to provide and NELA would work with them to develop a report outlining their priorities for walking and cycling.

Following these initial planning sessions, NELP and the community members extended invitations to additional members of the community who were understood to have a keen interest to participate and to broaden representation. This included some people who had applied to be part of the Community Liaison Group but were better suited to the CTDGs due to their technical knowledge/interest and specific interest in project design. For the design and engineering group this included a range of retired engineers, planners, academics and architects. For the cycling and walking group, this included local bicycle user groups and people who walk and ride in the project area.

The groups were chaired and supported by NELP team members. Attendance at meetings by specialists was determined by the topics selected by the planning group.

Meetings took place in line with design and planning milestones. Online portals and interactive maps were used to support members to discuss issues and ideas, raise questions before and after meetings and record proposals. The maps were also used by NELP team members to report back on how these were being considered in EES studies and project design.

5.5 Stakeholder and community engagement

The project team has worked to understand local issues and priorities by seeking information and input from individuals and stakeholders directly affected by the project as well as people, groups and organisations within the broader community who have local or specialised knowledge, suggestions and advice to share. Communities and stakeholders include:

- Local residents and land owners
- Businesses
- Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
- Government agencies and regulators
- Councils

- Industry groups and peak bodies
- Culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Community and environmental groups
- Community clubs and organisations
- Community sporting clubs
- Early learning centres, schools, TAFEs and universities.

Local residents and land owners

The project team has spoken with thousands of local residents and land owners to share information, answer questions and record feedback. Engagement with local residents and land owners has included:

- Street meetings, door knocks and visits to homes
- Information displays and pop-ups

Case study – engaging with local residents about changes to local roads

The proposed project design includes entry and exit ramps for the Lower Plenty Road interchange off Greensborough Road.

To provide a further buffer between the interchange and residential properties and prevent local streets from being used as rat-runs, the reference project includes changes to local access to Greensborough Road.

Residents turning left from Greensborough Road onto Edward Street, Strathallan Road and Sydney Street would use a new service road separated by a physical barrier from the main carriageway. The service road would prevent right hand turns from or onto Greensborough Road.

In September 2018, NELA doorknocked a sample of residents in the local area who were considered to be potentially affected by the project. The focus of the doorknock was to seek information about how they currently move about the local area and to provide feedback on the proposed changes.



- A detailed project website, dedicated feedback website and active social media channels
- Toll free 1800 telephone hotline and community email enquiry inbox
- Email updates and print newsletters
- Two Community Liaison Groups.

Residents potentially directly affected by the project have been assigned a single point of contact within the project team who has kept them up to date with the project, worked to understand their individual concerns, issues and circumstances and raised these with relevant specialists.

Businesses

Local businesses directly affected by the project have a single point of contact in the project team who works with them to understand issues and concerns.

Local traders, particularly at Watsonia shops (Watsonia Traders Association) and the Bulleen Industrial Precinct, have been encouraged to participate in the EES business impact assessment (EES Chapter 14 – Business).

In addition to the engagement with land owners (listed above), additional meetings and briefings have been arranged for businesses potentially affected by North East Link. Watsonia, Macleod and Bulleen precincts have business representatives on the Community Liaison Groups.

Case study – engaging with businesses in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct

There are approximately 110 businesses currently operating in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct. The precinct in Bulleen is located at the proposed site for a new underground interchange at Manningham Road.

The interchange is complex to construct and would likely need to be built from top down then covered once complete. It is also one of the options to launch two tunnel boring machines to construct the North East Link tunnels.

Since November 2017 NELA has engaged with businesses and land owners in the industrial precinct that are potentially impacted. Key engagement activities have included:

- Regular meetings with dedicated case managers to provide project updates and understand key issues and concerns
- Briefing and information sessions with specialists, planners and engineers at major project milestones
- Administrative support funding
- Inviting local businesses to join Community Liaison Groups
- Encouraging businesses to participate in the EES business impact assessment
- Providing business mentoring through Small Business Mentoring Service (SBMS), an independent, not-for-profit organisation.

Issues and concerns raised have been escalated to technical specialists to help inform refinements to the design for the Manningham Road interchange and impact assessments for the EES.

An alternative design for the Manningham Road interchange has been developed for the reference project. While the area of land required for construction would remain the same, the smaller footprint included in the reference project may allow for potential return of land once construction is complete. Potential relocation options in the area for impacted businesses are also being investigated.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation

The vast majority of the North East Link project area is within the boundary of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP). The WWCHAC have been appointed as the registered Aboriginal Party for this area under the provisions of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006. North East Link requires approval of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) by WWCHAC. In the small portion of the project area which falls outside the WWCHAC RAP boundary, Aboriginal Victoria has statutory authority to approve the CHMP as there is no registered Aboriginal party appointed for this area. CHMP investigations with WWCHAC have been ongoing throughout 2018 on standard and complex assessments and will be completed in 2019.

As part of the EES process, NELP has been working in collaboration with WWCHAC on multiple levels. This has included involvement in the development of the EES, Urban Design Strategy, Cultural Values Mapping, attendance at TRG and related meetings, workshops and walks on Country.

The WWCHAC are the first Traditional Owner group to become a member of an EES TRG for a major project in Victoria and are regularly briefed by NELP on key issues related to the EES.

A range of activities including workshops and field visits with Elders and specialists from disciplines including cultural heritage, historical heritage and anthropology have been used to record tangible and intangible cultural values of Wurundjeri in the project area. This work has informed the Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment for the EES (Chapter 20 – Aboriginal cultural heritage), the Cultural Heritage Management Plan and the project's Urban Design Strategy (EES Attachment II – Urban Design Strategy).

Government agencies and regulators

The project team's key point of contact for government agencies and regulators is the TRG, as described in Section 1.4.

In addition to TRG meetings, members of the project planning, technical and stakeholder engagement teams have met regularly with the agencies (and their relevant stakeholders, such as public transport operators and VicRoads) to discuss specific areas of interest in more detail.

Extensive stakeholder consultation also supported developing the Urban Design Strategy. This included NELP establishing an Urban Design Advisory Panel (UDAP) and facilitating a series of landscape character area workshops.

The UDAP was formed with the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA). The purpose of the UDAP was to provide ongoing expert design guidance and advice, and advocate for high quality design outcomes for North East Link. The UDAP is chaired by NELP with members representing the OVGA, VicRoads and NELP. Other key stakeholders such as councils and public authorities were represented at location-based workshops and meetings on specific issues to provide input and feedback.

A series of meetings, briefings and workshops were facilitated for three landscape character areas; Ridgeline, Yarra River Valley and Koonung Creek Valley. These were attended by the Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse, Yarra and Nillumbik councils, the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP), Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, WWCHAC, the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA), VicRoads, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), Transport for Victoria and Public Transport Victoria (PTV).

Councils

NELP has engaged with councils in the project area (Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Nillumbik, Whitehorse and Yarra) on a regular basis through a range of forums, including:

- Meetings with NELP technical teams (fortnightly)
- Briefings with the NELP CEO
- Meetings with communication and engagement team members (every two months)
- Preview sessions of materials for major information displays
- Workshops on urban design and sustainability
- Councillor briefings.

These meetings allowed teams working across a range of areas to share upcoming opportunities and milestones with councils and for councils to flag issues and opportunities for project improvements.

Councils were also invited to participate in forums with communities and other stakeholders including:

- Community Liaison Groups
- Community Technical Discussion Groups
- Bulleen Park planning with sporting clubs (discussed further in this section).

Case study – engaging with councils through targeted workshops

Workshops with councils were organised to seek feedback on key areas of the project that have a strong focus on local planning and community outcomes.

Urban design workshops

NELA's urban design and engagement teams ran workshops with councils to gain a better understanding of council plans relevant to urban design, landscape strategy and planning. The workshops were designed with the intent that North East Link would support these plans where possible.

Workshops included discussions around:

- Statutory planning
- Strategic planning and urban design
- Council works that may be relevant to the North East Link landscape and visual impact assessment
- Significant landscapes and potential sensitive receptors (from a landscape and visual impact perspective)
- The structure and some specific content of the draft Urban Design Strategy and how it would be used to guide the design of North East Link. This included discussion around the urban design principles and objectives as well as the three design character areas, issues and opportunities, plans for each and supporting images.

Industry groups and peak bodies

NELP has engaged, through meetings and briefings, with a range of peak bodies and industry groups which represent businesses or community members with an interest in the project. These include the Victorian Transport Association, Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Victorian Planning Authority, RACV, Bicycle Network, Victorian Farmers Federation and North Link.

Culturally and linguistically diverse communities

NELP has made contact with cultural leaders and support agencies including Expression Australia (formerly known as VicDeaf) and Blind Citizens Australia to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, communities with targeted needs and vulnerable and hard to reach communities.

Engagement with CALD communities has been facilitated via cultural leaders in the project area. Materials about the project and how to get involved were translated into the top five languages other than English in the project area: Chinese, Greek, Italian, Arabic and Farsi. Materials were also translated into other languages requested by cultural leaders including Burmese, Hindi and Macedonian. Interpreters were available at all community sessions on request. Mandarin and Cantonese translators were provided at Box Hill sessions and a free telephone translation service was promoted on all materials.

Following engagement with Expression Australia in 2017, NELP promoted major information displays through Expression Australia's channels, including online and social platforms and its subscriber database, and provided Auslan interpreters at agreed displays.

Community engagement activities were promoted through Blind Citizens Australia's online mailing list and teleconferences on the project were offered to interested community members. Guide Dogs Australia and Blind Citizens Australia were also invited to nominate participants for the Community Technical Discussion Group on walking and cycling.



Community and environmental groups

The project team has been meeting with various groups since NELP was formed to better understand concerns, answer questions and resolve issues where possible. Ongoing conversations have been held with groups such as Resolve Rosanna Road, Friends of Banyule, and Warringal Conservation Society. These groups are also represented on the Community Liaison Groups.

Community clubs and organisations

NELP has engaged with community groups and clubs including Scouts Victoria, Guide Dogs Victoria, Rotary and Probus across the project area through project briefings, face-to-face meetings and emails. Groups have been encouraged to ask questions and to raise issues, concerns and opportunities.

Community sporting clubs

NELP has continued to raise awareness about the project with community sporting clubs throughout 2018 to understand localised issues. The project team has spoken with more than 40 sporting clubs across the project area including by providing project updates, attending club committee meetings and inviting members to participate in workshops. Sporting clubs based at parks or reserves that could potentially be temporarily impacted or permanently acquired to construct the project were encouraged to participate in the EES social impact assessment (EES Chapter 17 – Social).

Case study – engaging with a cultural icon

Heide Museum of Modern Art, located near the proposed interchange at Manningham Road in Bulleen, is one of Australia's most important cultural institutions.

Its rich architectural, cultural and social history was recognised by communities and the project team early on as important to consider when planning North East Link.

NELA engagement, urban design and landscape teams held two workshops with Heide in August and October 2018 to seek input from the Museum about how they would like to be considered and referenced in the Urban Design Strategy.

The workshops helped the teams gain a deeper understanding of the Museum's history, values and vision for the local area, particularly protecting sites and landscapes with cultural significance for the Wurundjeri and celebrating Heide artists. This feedback has helped inform the development of the Urban Design Strategy for the project (EES Attachment II – Urban Design Strategy).

The workshops also provided an opportunity to better understand concerns the Museum had about traffic disruptions and access during construction and for a follow-up meeting with relevant specialists to discuss these issues and potential management approaches.



Early learning centres, schools, TAFEs and universities

NELP has engaged with more than 40 primary and secondary schools, early learning centres (ELCs), TAFEs and universities to seek feedback on the project.

The project team has attended meetings and provided briefings to school staff, councils and groups to give parents, teachers and the wider school community information about the project.

In response to issues raised by some schools, fact sheets have been developed to answer common questions about general construction impacts such as air quality, noise and vibration and potential management approaches. Technical specialists have attended meetings to discuss these in more detail. ELCs, primary and secondary schools near the project were also invited to participate in the EES social impact assessment (EES Chapter 17 – Social). Each Community Liaison Group includes a student representative studying in the project area.

Case study – engaging with sporting and community groups and clubs at Bulleen Park

Bulleen Park is located within the City of Manningham and borders the City of Boroondara near the Boroondara Tennis Centre and Freeway Public Golf Course. The Bulleen Park area provides sporting and recreation facilities for football, soccer, cricket, golf, archery, aeromodelling, tennis and swimming as well as open space and bushland reserve used by community members, groups and clubs.

The potential impacts on council land and facilities at Bulleen Park are a key consideration for North East Link and NELA has met regularly with councils, community and sporting groups during project planning and preparation of the EES to discuss issues and opportunities.

Where recreation facilities would be displaced by the construction or operation of the project, NELA would collaborate with local councils and relevant government authorities to identify relocation opportunities where practicable.

NELP has also engaged with La Trobe University, Melbourne Polytechnic (Fairfield and Greensborough campuses) and Box Hill Institute by arranging face to face meetings and attending stakeholder led events. Meetings with post-secondary education providers have focused on career opportunities for students, campus master planning, traffic impacts during and post-construction, and public transport opportunities from the project.

5.6 Phase 1: existing conditions investigations and scoping requirements, Early-mid 2018

Phase 1 was used to understand community values at a project-wide level, present information about the project design, and introduce and explain the EES process. Feedback was sought to inform project planning, refine the project design and identify issues and concerns for consideration by specialists in the impact assessments.

5.6.1 Workshop series 1

Workshops were held in February and March 2018 to:

- Gain community feedback on design elements such how the project could look and how elements could work together, as well as gaps or issues for technical staff to consider
- Understand community issues and gain local knowledge relating to areas communities had expressed a strong interest in during engagement activities for the project corridor announcement in late 2017 (urban design, walking and cycling and the environment)
- Create a sense of opportunity around the project and build confidence for members to participate.

The workshops were promoted through direct engagement with key stakeholders including councils, schools, universities, community groups and cycling and walking groups as well as the project website and social media channels, an email broadcast and paid advertising in local papers.

Each group was limited to 40 participants per workshop topic. The first session reached capacity quickly and a second session was arranged. This was well attended but did not reach capacity.

Opportunities to participate online were available for people who could not attend a session in person, or preferred to get involved through the project website.

Information presented for feedback

Specialists provided short presentations to help build understanding of the topic being discussed and clarify the purpose of each workshop.





Participants were then asked questions and worked in small groups to discuss different topics that could help inform early design and planning work. Questions included:

- Your environment – what communities think about the environment they live in, including traffic, noise, air quality, landscape, flora and fauna, what they value, what concerns they have and what can be improved.
- Walking and cycling – what communities think is important to consider when planning walking and cycling tracks for all kinds of users.
- Urban design – how communities travel around their local area, use community spaces like parks and shops and what they like about the look and feel of their neighbourhood.

Engaging online

After the workshops finished, copies of the information shared by the specialists, a snapshot of the ideas generated by participants and answers to questions raised during the workshops were posted on the project website. Communities were asked to add anything they thought was missed.

Closing the loop

A report summarising the feedback received, key themes and issues and how these were being considered in early work for the Urban Design Strategy, walking and cycling plans and the EES was published on the project website. A copy is available online here: northeastlink.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/305282/CommunityWorkshopsFeb2018Report.pdf

5.6.2 Design update 1

Design update #1 held in April and May 2018 was developed to:

- Explain functional elements of early work on the project design and proposed construction techniques
- Introduce and explain the EES process and study areas
- Respond to key areas of community interest, particularly requests for much more specific detail about where the project would be built, where entry and exit points would be, how local movements would be maintained and how impacts would be assessed and managed.

Feedback was sought to understand:

- How the early project design affected local communities and how it could be improved – particularly amenity and local movements by car, on foot, bike and public transport
- Areas of concern, issues and interest for communities so these could be considered in EES impact assessments – particularly information about existing conditions.

Materials presented for feedback

- A large format project map on a satellite image base showing:
 - Where the project would be built
 - Information about design considerations, constraints, concepts and options being considered
 - Information about likely construction techniques (such as tunnel boring machines, cut and cover and ramps)
 - Potential urban design approaches
- A3 books of the early project design showing schematic designs and artist impressions of:
 - Interchanges, connections with local roads and changes to local movements
 - Lane configuration and numbers for the Eastern Freeway including busway
 - New and upgraded shared use paths and on-road cycling routes.

Fact sheets explaining key steps, stages and impact assessments for the EES were also produced.

Information displays

Eight information displays were held across the project area. Specialists attended to answer questions and record feedback relevant to their area. Visitors to each information display were also encouraged to:

- Leave comments themed by different design areas (such as trucks, traffic or walking and cycling) and impact areas (such as environment, community, air quality or noise) on a large project map.
- Give feedback on the quality of the information provided by the materials and the project team.



Information displays

Location	Date	Time	Venue	Visitors (approx.)
Watsonia	Saturday 21 April	10am–1pm	Gresswell Uniting Church	700
Rosanna	Sunday 22 April	10am–1pm	Rosanna Bowling Club	500
Melbourne CBD	Tuesday 24 April	12pm–2pm	VicRoads Hub	80
Blackburn North	Tuesday 24 April	5pm–8pm	New Hope Baptist Church	180
Bulleen	Thursday 26 April	5pm–8pm	Veneto Club	490
Greensborough	Saturday 28 April	10am–1pm	Melbourne Polytechnic	300
Doncaster	Sunday 29 April	10am–1pm	Manningham City Square	250
Kew	Tuesday 1 May	5pm–8pm	Kew RSL	180
Total				2,680



Online engagement

An interactive online map and copies of the fact sheets, schematics and artist impressions used at the information displays were available online. Visitors to the site were encouraged to ask questions using an online Q and A tool and to leave comments on an online feedback map.

More than 25 pieces of content were published on the project Facebook page including videos, event listings, photos and links to project maps and images:

- 130,000+ views of social media content
- 27,000 comments, reactions and shares
- 42,000+ video views
- 1,435+ event responses
- 12,900+ visits to the online project map
- 60+ questions asked online
- 100+ comments on the feedback map.

Closing the loop

A summary of issues raised by communities and stakeholders during Design update #1 was published on the project website. A copy is available online here: northeastlink.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/322190/Community-Engagement-Report-April-May-2018.pdf

5.7 Phase 2: Impact assessments, Mid-late 2018

Phase 2 was used to gain a more in depth understanding of the community concerns for impacts at the local level, report back to communities how feedback received so far had helped shape changes and refinements to the project design and was being considered in impact assessments and the development of proposed management and minimisation approaches.

5.7.1 Workshop series 2

The second community workshop series was coordinated as part of the social impact assessment for the EES.

Participants were asked to provide feedback on direct effects such as impacts on day-to-day lifestyle and enjoyment of the natural and built environment, as well as other effects such as changes in access, connectivity or community cohesion.

The workshop locations and topics for discussion were informed through previous engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Five social impact assessment workshops were held with residents living near the project in Greensborough, Watsonia/Macleod, Balwyn North, Bulleen and Rosanna. Forty-four people attended. The locations of the workshops were selected taking into consideration the proximity of the residential areas to the project and to allow for an appropriate cross-section of community representation across the project.

While a workshop was proposed for the Whitehorse municipality, residents did not express an interest in being involved.

Telephone interviews and online surveys were also completed with approximately 80 community groups, sporting groups and community facilities.

Materials were developed to facilitate workshop participation and help residents better understand project impacts in their local area. Materials included:

- Maps showing North East Link
- Maps of relevant neighbourhood areas
- A take-home pack with project factsheets.

The findings from the small group workshops are available in EES Chapter 17 – Social.



Interactive digital tools were used to give communities and stakeholders a sense of the size, scale, look and feel of North East Link. An augmented reality tablet app provided detailed information about how the design would function such as lane numbers, interchange configurations and traffic movements. Six 180° virtual reality tours of key project locations helped demonstrate what North East Link could look like.

5.7.2 Design update 2

Design update #2 held in September and October 2018 was developed to:

- Present a more refined project design, including how issues, concerns and opportunities raised by communities and stakeholders were being considered
- Provide more detail about design function, particularly lane numbers and configurations
- Present key elements of the Urban Design Strategy and demonstrate how these could be interpreted and applied by the contractors
- Provide an update on EES studies including how issues and concerns raised were being considered.

Communities and stakeholders were asked to:

- Provide feedback on the changes made to the project design
- Provide feedback on the EES studies so far and proposed approaches to avoid, manage or minimise impacts
- Provide feedback on the approach to the three character areas in the Urban Design Strategy
- To raise any new concerns or issues.

Materials presented for feedback

- An updated large format project map on a satellite image base showing:
 - Key design changes based on feedback from communities and stakeholders
 - Proposed locations for ventilation structures
 - Detailed urban design approaches
 - New and upgraded shared use paths and on-road cycling routes.
- Updated A3 books of the refined project design including:
 - Updated schematics of the project design
 - More than 30 detailed artist impressions of key interchanges, connections with local roads, changes to local movements and upgrades to the Eastern Freeway including busway.
- Large format display boards introducing:
 - The purpose and structure of the Urban Design Strategy
 - The three unique character areas in the Urban Design Strategy, the design approach proposed for each and detailed artist impressions.
- Project design and EES update fact sheets themed by key areas of community and stakeholder interest:
 - Community – Social and community, Landscape and visual, Business, Aboriginal cultural heritage and Historic heritage
 - Environment – Ecology (flora, fauna and aquatic), Groundwater and Surface water
 - Construction – Transport, Noise, Air quality and Vibration
 - Noise and Air Quality – Noise, Air quality and Human health
 - Walking and cycling – Proposed upgrades to shared use paths and commuter links.

Information displays

Twelve information displays were held across the project area, as shown in Table 5-1.

In response to requests made during Design update #1 for the next round of displays to last longer and be held in larger venues, two large, full weekend displays were held in the locations with the highest levels of attendance in April – Watsonia and Bulleen. This gave people more time to look at materials, ask questions and speak to specialists.

Pop-up displays were also held at 10 shopping centres to reach people who may not have heard much about the project so far.





Table 5-1 Information displays

Location	Date	Time	Venue	Visitors (approx.)
Watsonia	Saturday 16 September & Sunday 17 September	10am–4pm	Watsonia RSL	560
Doncaster	Thursday 20 September	9am–9pm	Doncaster Shopping Centre	300
Bulleen	Saturday 22 September & Sunday 23 September	10am–4pm	Yarra Junior Football League clubhouse	205
Melbourne CBD	Tuesday 2 October	10am–4pm	VicRoads Hub	40
Greensborough	Saturday 6 October	9am–5pm	Greensborough Plaza	385
Richmond	Saturday 13 October	9am–5pm	Victoria Gardens Shopping Centre	105
Ringwood	Sunday 14 October	9am–5pm	Eastland Shopping Centre	140
Box Hill	Thursday 18 October	9am–7pm	Box Hill Central	295
Preston	Saturday 20 October	9am–5pm	Northland Shopping Centre	650
Epping	Sunday 21 October	10am–5pm	Pacific Epping	295
Bulleen	Thursday 25 October	9am–5.30pm	Bulleen Plaza	615
Dandenong	Saturday 27 October	9am–5pm	Dandenong Plaza	125
Total				3,715

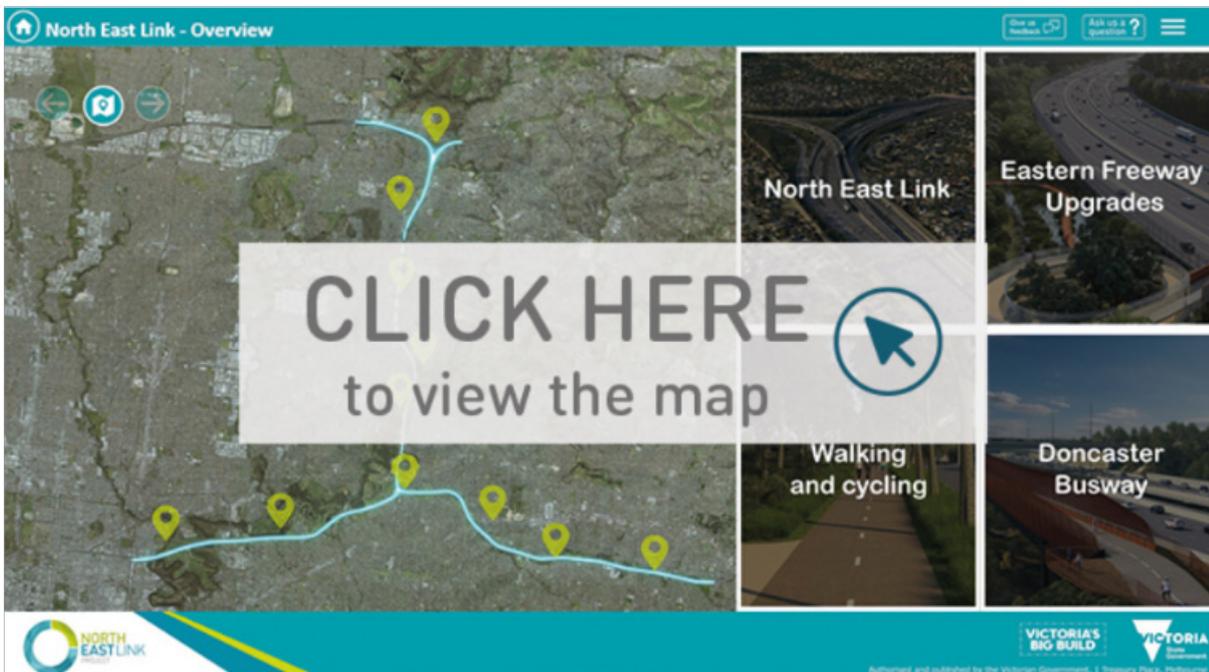
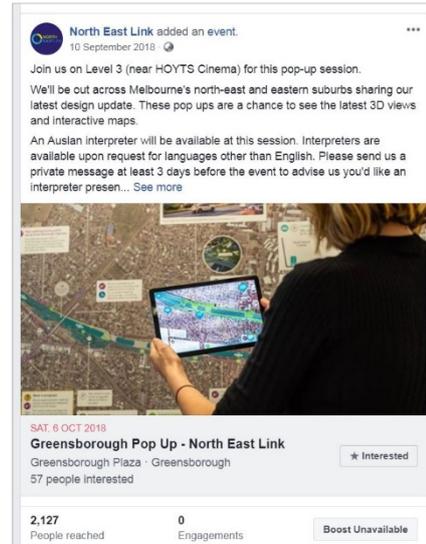
Online engagement

An interactive online map as well as the fact sheets, schematics and artist impressions used at the information displays were available on the project website.

Visitors were encouraged to ask questions using an online Q and A tool and to respond to online surveys about the project design and EES impact assessments.

More than 30 pieces of content were published on the project Facebook page to share information about the design update, promote the information displays and pop-ups and answer questions about the project.

- 551,000+ views of social media content
- 86,000+ video views
- 1,780+ event responses
- 32,900+ visits to the online project map
- 160+ questions asked online
- 95+ responses to online surveys about the project design and EES impact assessments.



5.8 Phase 3: Exhibition and Inquiry and Advisory Committee submissions, Early-mid 2019

Community and stakeholder feedback has played an important role in the project's planning and development, informing specialist studies and contributing to the preparation of the project's Environment Effects Statement (EES). These detailed planning and environmental documents are now available for further consultation. Throughout the formal exhibition, submission and review process, the community has the opportunity to comment on the EES.

The focus of Phase 3 is to support the public exhibition through:

- Providing copies of the EES at information displays, public libraries and council offices and online
- Providing information about how to access and navigate the EES
- Providing information about how to make a submission to the independent panel and deadlines for submissions
- Providing information and updates about the panel hearings and recommendations.

5.9 What we heard

Ideas, issues and concerns raised by communities and stakeholders have played an important role in shaping the planning and design of North East Link. Key changes to the project design are discussed below and the community feedback received to date are summarised in Table 5-2.

The EES technical reports also summarise community and stakeholder feedback received and how this was considered in the environmental and technical studies.

5.9.1 Key changes to the project design

Ongoing engagement with communities and stakeholders has contributed to significant changes to the project design.

Early feedback during strategic planning stages led to a number of key changes in late 2017 including a longer tunnel well before work for the EES began.

Further feedback from communities and stakeholders during the preparation of the EES led to further design changes. Key changes included in the reference project are summarised below.

M80 Ring Road interchange

In response to concerns raised during Design update #1 about visual impacts, the ramps were significantly lowered.



Lower Plenty Road interchange

In response to concerns raised during Design update #1 about visual impacts on residents from the northern tunnel ventilation structure, the tunnel portal was moved much further north to Blamey Road so ventilation structures could be located on what is currently Simpson Barracks land. Moving the tunnel portal to Blamey Road also significantly increased the amount of green space next to Greensborough Road and opportunities for new planting.

Manningham Road interchange

In response to requests raised during Design Update #1 to simplify the design of the Manningham Road interchange, an alternative design has been developed to the reference project. The EES impact assessments have considered the reference project and the alternative design.

Walking and cycling links

NELP has worked with communities and stakeholders to discuss and significantly expand the scope of shared use paths included in the project design. New paths have been added to improve key commuter routes. Additional paths and road crossings have also been added to make moving around local areas safer and easier.

Noise

A project-wide noise standard of 63 decibels has been introduced to protect residents and noise sensitive buildings along the project corridor from noise. Project-specific traffic noise objectives have been developed based on the VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy, with adjustments to provide an enhanced level of noise protection to communities adjacent to North East Link.

Recognising and enhancing local character

Input from communities and stakeholders has played a key role in preparing an Urban Design Strategy for the project. Through small group workshops, information displays and online activities urban design specialists have gained a significant understanding of local values, issues and opportunities and incorporated these into the Urban Design Strategy (EES Attachment II – Urban Design Strategy).

5.9.2 Feedback and responses

Engagement with communities and stakeholders to prepare an EES has been designed to progressively build knowledge of the project design and the EES process.

By seeking and documenting feedback from a wide range of communities and stakeholders across and beyond the project area, local priorities, issues and concerns have been considered in the EES impact assessments and the draft Environmental Performance Requirements.

Some feedback related to the entire project, and other feedback was related to a specific project area, a very local area, or an individual property.

Comments made by stakeholders and communities have been recorded, coded and analysed and the following high-level themes identified:

- Project planning
- Project design
- Traffic and transport
- Amenity, community and business
- Noise
- Air quality
- Construction
- Environment.

Table 5-2 summarises the response to key issues raised for each theme.

Each of the EES impact assessment reports also includes key issues and concerns raised by communities and stakeholders and outlines how these have been considered in impact assessments.

Table 5-2 Community feedback and project responses

Project planning

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns that a corridor further east or circular in shape would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a better 'ring road' solution • Been more effective at reducing congestion • Taken more trucks off local roads • Better catered for future population growth. 	<p>Communities and stakeholders raised these issues and they were explored in depth during extensive project corridor assessment studies and development of a business case for the project.</p> <p>The recommended project corridor attracts the most through traffic out of all the options considered, reduces demand on arterial roads and provides the best opportunity to remove trucks from local roads in the north-east.</p> <p>Chapter 4 – Project development explains the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles developed to guide project planning and assess the different corridor options. The assessment was tested through more than six months of engagement with communities and stakeholders and was informed by more than 11,555 pieces of feedback.</p>
<p>Requests for the government to invest in public transport and freight rail services rather than a new toll road and believes this would deliver better transport, social and environmental outcomes.</p>	<p>NELP investigated the comparative benefits of road vs public transport and/or rail freight only solutions in previous stages of the project development. These options included a public transport and freight only solution. A connected freeway was confirmed as providing the most comprehensive and viable solution to the identified orbital connectivity and capacity problems on the road network in the north-east.</p> <p>Chapter 4 – Project development explores the broad range of strategic interventions and options considered for the business case.</p>
<p>Requests for North East Link to be a project for all modes of transport, not just cars and trucks.</p>	<p>North East Link includes a major investment in public transport services including Melbourne's first dedicated busway for Doncaster Busway services, upgrades to the Doncaster Park and Ride facility and a new bus station and park and ride facility near the corner of Bulleen Road and Thompsons Road.</p> <p>More than 25 kilometres of new and upgraded shared use networks and paths are also included. This includes construction of an eastern bike corridor along the Eastern Freeway, new Yarra River crossings and completing links between shared use paths in Watsonia, Heidelberg and Bulleen Road.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 8 – Project description for proposed improvements to public transport services and to the shared use path network.</p>
<p>Requests for the project to include a rail link along the Eastern Freeway rather than a busway.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Victoria's 30 Year Plan for Melbourne looked at the feasibility of rail along the Eastern Freeway. The plan recommended upgrading the existing Doncaster Busway to support increased demand and improve the reliability of services – this is the approach taken by NELP. This is detailed in Chapter 4 – Project development.</p> <p>The feasibility of a rail line along the Eastern Freeway is not included in the scope of the EES.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for North East Link to consider other planned road and public transport upgrades.</p>	<p>NELP has considered other planned transport upgrades during planning and design work. Considerations included understanding the impact on the project and identifying opportunities to coordinate works. Other transport projects considered include the M80 Ring Road upgrade, Hurstbridge Rail Line duplication and Yan Yean Road upgrade.</p> <p>Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport explains how the impact assessment for the project is based on modelling for the year 2036 that takes into account all major road and public transport projects that are Victorian Government commitments.</p>
<p>Requests for upgrades to additional roads to be delivered as part of North East Link. An upgrade to the Diamond Creek roundabout was the most frequently mentioned project.</p>	<p>Preliminary investigations, traffic analysis and initial consultation with VicRoads, Transport for Victoria and local councils in the north and east undertaken during development of the Business Case identified arterial road network improvement opportunities in areas along the North East Link corridor that may enhance the benefits of the project.</p> <p>The road improvement opportunities that were identified included upgrades to Diamond Creek Road, Grimshaw Street, Rosanna Road and Templestowe Road.</p> <p>At this stage, these opportunities have not been included as part of North East Link, as they require further project development and input from stakeholders and the community.</p> <p>These opportunities are not included in the scope of the EES.</p> <p>Chapter 4 – Project development provides further information of the how project alternatives have been considered.</p>
<p>Requests for toll arrangements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for North East Link to be toll free • Requests for the government to retain toll revenue • Request for North East Link to become toll free once the costs have been recovered • Requests for more information about tolling points and costs • Requests for North East Link toll prices to consider the additional cost of EastLink tolls for long trips. 	<p>The business case for the project outlined that toll revenue would contribute about 22 per cent of the funding needed for the project, with the Victorian Government providing the remainder.</p> <p>While the new North East Link would be tolled, there would be no new tolls on existing roads. This includes no new tolls to use the Eastern Freeway, Greensborough Highway/Bypass and the M80 Ring Road. The project design also includes ways to keep local roads available for local trips.</p> <p>The tolling structure and strategy are not included in the scope of the EES.</p> <p>The traffic impacts of the tolls are discussed in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p>

Project design

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for a more direct connection across North East Link in Watsonia and improved connections for pedestrians and cyclists.</p>	<p>Connectivity for all modes of transport would be considered as part of the design.</p> <p>EPR T1 requires the design of the project to be optimised to maintain, and where practicable, enhance pedestrian movements, bicycle connectivity, and shared use paths.</p> <p>The Urban Design Strategy also includes a guideline to consider a direct connection from Elder Street to Watsonia railway station.</p>
<p>Requests to extend the tunnel further north up to Yallambie Road, Watsonia Road or Grimshaw Street.</p>	<p>NELP investigated the possibility to extend the tunnel further north and found the Hurstbridge rail line limits how far north the tunnel can extend while still allowing for an interchange at Grimshaw Street.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 6 – Project development for further information on the development of the project reference design.</p>
<p>Requests to simplify the design of the Manningham Road interchange so fewer businesses are required for construction</p>	<p>NELP has investigated different options for the Manningham Road interchange.</p> <p>Community and stakeholder feedback received via community information sessions, Community Liaison Groups, stakeholder meetings and other engagement activities were considered as part of the options investigation.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 6 – Project development for more information on the Manningham Road interchange options investigated.</p>
<p>Requests to simplify the design of the Lower Plenty Road interchange including removing the duplication of north and southbound lanes at the southern end and reducing the distance required to travel up to Strathallan Road to access southbound entry ramps.</p>	<p>The reference project design for the proposed interchange at Lower Plenty Road is long and narrow to minimise impacts on communities and keep traffic flowing freely.</p> <p>Different design options for this interchange have been explored. These include variations on standard interchange designs (where the road connects at a single point) as well as providing connections on both sides of Greensborough Road.</p> <p>Community and stakeholder feedback received via community information sessions, Community Liaison Groups, stakeholder meetings and other engagement activities were also considered as part of the options investigation.</p> <p>Refer to Chapter 6 – Project development for more information on options investigated for the Lower Plenty Road interchange.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests to reduce the number of lanes on the Eastern Freeway to minimise impacts on Koonung Creek Reserve as well as other open space along the Eastern Freeway</p>	<p>From speaking with local councils, residents and community groups it is clear that parklands along the length of the Eastern Freeway are a highly valued community and environmental asset.</p> <p>The number of lanes required for the freeway upgrade has been carefully considered throughout project planning and design. Design approaches have been considered to minimise the impact to open space along the Eastern Freeway, including changing the alignment of the freeway. Compared with other options, overall the current alignment was found to have fewer impacts on communities and the environment.</p> <p>Chapter 6 – Project development explains these considerations.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to design and construct the project in a way that avoids to the extent practicable temporary and permanent impacts on parks and reserves (EPR LP1).</p>
<p>Requests for no loss of car parking spaces at Doncaster Park and Ride and Watsonia railway station and for the number of car parking spaces to be increased.</p>	<p>There would be no net loss of parking at Doncaster Park and Ride. The works proposed at the Doncaster Park and Ride facility to accommodate the new busway would occupy some of the area that is currently used for car parking. A multilevel car park would be constructed to maintain the current parking capacity.</p> <p>The reference project provides an additional 60 car parking spaces at Watsonia railway station to address the predicted loss of parking at Greensborough railway station due to upgrade works along the Hurstbridge rail line.</p> <p>The reference project includes a new park and ride facility at Bulleen with car parking for 300 to 400 for bus commuters.</p> <p>Chapter 8 – Project description, provides further details of these park and ride facilities.</p>
<p>Concerns that the busway along the Eastern Freeway would prevent a future rail link.</p>	<p>The busway along the Eastern Freeway has been designed so that it does not prevent a rail link should this solution be found to be viable in the future.</p>
<p>Concerns about flooding at the Bulleen Road and Manningham Road interchanges and tunnel portals.</p>	<p>The potential for flooding of the portals has been assessed.</p> <p>Chapter 24 – Surface water assess the impacts of flooding as a result of the project’s reference design.</p>
<p>Requests for separate paths for walkers and cyclists to be provided, or for paths to be wide enough to accommodate cyclists, pedestrians and dog walkers.</p>	<p>The new and upgraded shared use paths would be at least three metres wide, which is wider than the existing paths. Separate paths for pedestrians and cyclists would be provided where the anticipated number of pedestrians is high and where it is possible to do so within the space available while avoiding property acquisition.</p> <p>Further information on shared use paths is provided in Chapter 8 – Project description.</p>
<p>Requests for more busway stations along the Eastern Freeway including at Burke Road and Chandler Highway.</p>	<p>Options for more busway stations along the Eastern Freeway have been explored with Transport for Victoria. At this stage, forecast demand is not sufficient for additional stations, however the reference project does not preclude these from being added in the future.</p> <p>It is not proposed to remove any existing bus stops along the Eastern Freeway.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for the project design to maximise tree planting, particularly to screen and filter views of noise walls, and to maintain or enhance the existing character, historic and cultural heritage of local areas.</p>	<p>The project's Urban Design Strategy would guide the contractors to develop a detailed design with consistent, high quality urban design outcomes.</p> <p>Key directions in the Urban Design Strategy include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a natural and connected corridor • Recognise cultural and historic values including places with significance to Indigenous communities. <p>Reinstating and/or maximising native tree and understory planting, including to screen or filter views of road infrastructure, are key design requirements in the Urban Design Strategy.</p> <p>Recognising cultural and historic heritage are also included in the design requirements.</p> <p>More information is included in Attachment II – Urban Design Strategy.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to develop a project design that reflects the Urban Design Strategy by developing urban design and landscape plans to the Office of the Victorian Government Architect, VicRoads and other relevant land managers (EPR LV1).</p>
<p>Requests for land bridges and cut and cover sections of tunnel along Greensborough Road to have sufficient cover to allow trees to be planted.</p>	<p>The Urban Design Strategy requires that land bridges have sufficient depth of soil and a suitable soil profile to support the healthy long-term growth of trees and shrubs.</p>
<p>Requests for noise walls, new planting, open space and shared use paths to be well maintained once the project is operating.</p>	<p>Maintenance and operating requirements would be considered as part of the project contracts and the Operations Environmental Management Plan (EPR EMF2).</p>
<p>Requests for the project to use LED or solar lighting for overhead lights, solar or other renewable power sources as well as innovative technologies and low carbon or carbon neutral materials (such as recycled road surfaces) during construction and operation.</p>	<p>NELP is committed to embedding energy, water, material and waste reduction initiatives into the design, construction and operation of North East Link.</p> <p>The EPRs include a requirement for the contractors to develop and implement a Sustainability Management Plan to meet the sustainability targets, including achieving the specified ratings under the Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia's Infrastructure Sustainability Rating Tool (EPR SCC1).</p> <p>The specific measures implemented to meet these sustainability targets would be selected by the contractors.</p>
<p>Requests for design elements such as green walls to be used to help minimise greenhouse gas emissions during operation.</p>	<p>Specific measures to be implemented to meet the sustainability targets, such as the use of green walls, would be determined by the contractors through detailed design.</p>

Traffic and transport

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for more evidence that North East Link would ease traffic congestion and reduce the number of trucks on residential roads across Melbourne's north-east.</p>	<p>With no freeway-standard link currently in place between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway, through-traffic uses a small number of local and arterial roads that provide crossings over the Yarra River. The most heavily congested route is via Greensborough Road, Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna Road, Manningham Road and Bulleen Road.</p> <p>North East Link would provide a new motorway connection for people and goods moving between the M80 Ring Road in Melbourne's north and the Eastern Freeway/EastLink in the east/south-east – taking trucks and through traffic off local roads and cutting travel times for trips between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway by up to 35 minutes. This would ease congestion across Melbourne's north eastern suburbs and take 15,000 trucks off local roads every day.</p> <p>Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport provides an assessment of the traffic and transport impacts associated with the construction and operation of North East Link.</p>
<p>Concerns about traffic increases on roads connected to North East Link interchanges and the upgraded Eastern Freeway.</p>	<p>Changes to traffic volumes on roads connected to North East Link and the upgraded Eastern Freeway have been considered and are discussed in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport. This includes a detailed analysis of negative and positive impacts of North East Link on the transport network.</p>
<p>Concerns about congestion around interchanges.</p>	<p>Interchanges have been designed to meet the performance requirements of the project. Performance has been considered and modelled in the impact assessment as detailed in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p>
<p>Concerns about increased congestion at the EastLink tunnel and Hoddle Street ends of the Eastern Freeway.</p>	<p>NELP recognises the potential for increased traffic at the EastLink tunnel and Hoddle Street ends of the Eastern Freeway has been an ongoing concern for communities. Peak period traffic volumes along Alexandra Parade, Hoddle Street and the EastLink tunnels are not predicted to increase significantly due to the project. Predicted increases in traffic volumes at these locations are within the typical day to day fluctuation and would be accommodated by the existing road network.</p> <p>The project contractor would be required to monitor traffic conditions before, during and after construction (EPR T5).</p>
<p>Concerns that trucks carrying placarded loads (dangerous goods) would not be permitted in the North East Link tunnels and would continue to use local roads.</p>	<p>Less than 2 per cent of the truck fleet would not be able to use the North East Link tunnels because they are over-dimensional or carrying placarded loads. Further information is provided in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p>
<p>Concerns that tolls would discourage cars and trucks from using North East Link.</p>	<p>The strategic transport model includes tolling and takes into consideration the willingness of people to pay that toll. Given the significant travel time savings predicted by the project, it is predicted tolls would not discourage use of North East Link.</p> <p>Information on tolling and impacts are discussed in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p>

Feedback	Project response
Concerns about increases to the number and size of trucks using the Eastern Freeway.	While the project is being developed to support high performance freight vehicles, the rate of change in the truck fleet would be determined by a range of factors and is not considered in the scope of the EES. Notwithstanding, a key objective of the project is to move trucks off local roads and onto the city's freeway network. Truck volumes along the Eastern Freeway are predicted to increase due to the connection between the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road.
Requests for existing truck curfews to remain in place and for truck bans to be introduced on Rosanna Road.	Existing truck curfews would be retained. It is not proposed to introduce truck bans on Rosanna Road. It would still be used by some trucks that cannot travel through the tunnel and trucks making local deliveries. Information on truck bans and curfews is provided in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.

Amenity, community and business

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about visual impacts from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pedestrian bridges, viaducts and/or ramps • Ventilation structures • Noise walls moving closer to homes • Loss of trees, planting and mounds – particularly those that currently screen and filter views of road infrastructure • Loss of natural light • Light spill 	<p>A Guiding Principle for the project is to minimise impacts on communities, including minimising landscape and visual impacts.</p> <p>Chapter 16 – Landscape and visual provides an assessment of the potential landscape, visual impacts and lighting impacts as a result of project infrastructure including noise walls, elevated structures, tunnel ventilation structures, bridges and flood walls. The overshadowing impacts of the project are also considered in Chapter 16 – Landscape and visual. Chapter 13 – Land use planning provides an assessment of the shading impacts in relation to planning policy provisions regarding amenity implications.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a design response that is in general accordance with the Urban Design Strategy and avoids or minimises, to the extent practicable, landscape and visual and shading impacts (EPR LV1) • Maximise tree retention (EPR AR1) • Design lighting in accordance with relevant standards including to control obtrusive effects of outdoor lighting (EPR LV4). • Minimise overshadowing from noise walls and elevated structures (EPR LP4).
Requests to minimise the duration of visual impacts from loss of trees by re-planting mature trees, or starting planting before construction.	The contractors would be required to implement landscaping enhancement as part of permanent works before construction started where practicable (EPR LV2).

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about permanent loss of walking and cycling connections and requests for additional upgrades to share used paths to be included in the project design.</p>	<p>The proposed walking and cycling scope for North East Link is based around fixing strategic missing gaps in the existing network within the project boundary, including along key commuter routes.</p> <p>The reference project includes a number of significant improvements to local shared use paths and commuter links as outlined in Chapter 8 – Project description. On completion of the project, riders would be able to cycle the full length of the Eastern Freeway without needing to cross at any traffic lights, including by using a new grade-separated crossing under Bulleen Road.</p> <p>Generally, the existing shared use paths would be retained. Where existing paths are impacted during construction, they would be realigned and rebuilt.</p> <p>The reference project has been informed by engagement with Transport for Victoria and key strategies and plans including local council plans and strategies, Victorian Cycling Strategy, Towards Zero (Victoria’s safety strategy and action plan), Cycling Into The Future and the Northern Regional Trails Strategy.</p> <p>Impacts on community connectivity have been considered in Chapter 17 – Social.</p> <p>EPR T1 requires the contractors to optimise the design of the works to maintain, and where practicable, enhance pedestrian movements, bicycle connectivity, and shared use paths.</p>
<p>Requests to keep the new shared use bridges at Macorna Street and Nell Street as close to the location of the existing bridges as possible.</p>	<p>Upgraded shared use bridges over the M80 Ring Road near Macorna Street and over North East Link at Nell Street would provide key crossing points to access existing and new paths which would improve links between shared use paths along and across the project corridor.</p> <p>The original location proposed for the new bridge at Macorna Street was moved to be as close to the location of the existing bridge as possible.</p> <p>The reference project includes replacing the old, narrow Nell Street bridge with a new bridge that would be compliant with the requirements of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992.</p> <p>Investigations to explore building the new bridge in the existing location found that homes would need to be required.</p> <p>Chapter 8 – Project description identifies the location for the new shared use paths.</p>
<p>Requests for improved walking and cycling connections across Rosanna Road to Rosanna railway station.</p>	<p>North East Link, in conjunction with Transport for Victoria, has been working on a strategy to further the concept of ‘20 Minute Neighbourhoods’ as outlined in Plan Melbourne. This focuses on progressing the State’s Strategic Cycling (SCC) network corridors that connect to the North East Link paths. These cycling corridors aim to provide direct and safe access to activity centres, schools, recreational facilities and shops.</p> <p>A recent review by Transport for Victoria of the SCC network confirmed that St James Road is the preferred east-west SCC route to facilitate access to Rosanna railway station and shops. This route does not intersect with the North East Link alignment or project boundary and is outside the scope of North East Link.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns permanent loss of parklands, wetlands, mature trees, sections of Koonung Creek, particularly east of Bulleen Road, would adversely impact local residents' day-to-day lifestyle by removing or reducing areas where people exercise, spend time with friends and family, relax, connect with nature and take dogs for exercise and play.</p>	<p>The upgrades to the Eastern Freeway are proposed to stay within the existing road reserve where possible. Where works would extend outside the road reserve, potential impacts on Koonung Creek parklands have been considered as detailed in Chapter 17 – Social.</p> <p>Minimising impacts on Koonung Creek parklands has been a key focus of developing the reference project. The contractors would be required to further minimise the design footprint to avoid, to the extent practicable, any temporary and permanent impacts on parks and reserves (EPR LP1).</p>
<p>Concerns about permanent acquisition of community facilities and parklands at Bulleen Park area including Boroondara Tennis Centre and Carey Sports Complex.</p>	<p>Impacts on communities from permanent acquisition of facilities including Boroondara Tennis Centre and areas of the Freeway Public Golf Course have been considered in Chapter 17 – Social.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to minimise impacts on sporting, recreation and other facilities (EPR SC4). This includes working with local councils and relevant Victorian Government authorities to identify relocation opportunities for displaced facilities, with the objective of accommodating displaced facilities and maintaining the continuity of those recreational activities, where practicable.</p>
<p>Concerns about loss of local employment through acquisition of business premises at Bulleen Industrial Precinct.</p>	<p>Impacts on the availability of local employment through direct impacts on businesses along the project corridor, including at the Bulleen Industrial Precinct, have been considered in Chapter 14 – Business.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to inform and regularly update affected businesses and commercial facilities of the planning and design progress for the project and, prior to construction, work with the council to identify alternative locations for displaced businesses (EPR B1).</p>
<p>Requests for NELP to consult with Traditional Owners, avoid impacting places with significant cultural heritage (such as Bolin Bolin Billabong) and reference Indigenous culture in the project design.</p>	<p>NELP has actively sought input from the WWCHAC to help inform project planning and design, including through workshops and field visits with Elders, participation in the Technical Reference Group, and preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) and the Urban Design Strategy. This is outlined in Chapter 20 – Aboriginal cultural heritage.</p> <p>Running parallel to the CHMP is a Cultural Values Mapping exercise which provides for a greater appreciation of Aboriginal cultural heritage values (including intangible values) in addition to those values more formally covered by the relevant legislative framework.</p>
<p>Requests for the River Red Gum at the Caltex service station on Manningham Road to be protected.</p>	<p>The River Red gum on the corner of Bridge Street and Manningham Road is recognised as a fine example of remnant indigenous vegetation, of regional significance and forming a local landmark. The removal of the tree is required to construct the Manningham Road interchange. The impact of this removal is discussed in Chapter 19 – Historical heritage.</p> <p>EPR HH4 requires archival photographic records to be taken before construction started and the removal of the tree would be offset in accordance with the requirements of the DELWP Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation (EPR FF2).</p>

Noise

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about increased traffic noise along the entire project alignment – cars and trucks.</p>	<p>Managing traffic noise is a key priority for communities and NELP. A project noise standard of 63 decibels along the length of the project alignment would be introduced to protect residents and noise sensitive buildings such as schools (EPR NV1).</p> <p>The project noise standards have been developed based on the VicRoads Traffic Noise Reduction Policy, with adjustments to provide an enhanced level of noise protection to communities adjacent North East Link</p> <p>More information about the project noise standard is included in Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration.</p>
<p>Requests for information about existing noise levels and predicted changes to be made available.</p>	<p>Results from noise monitoring undertaken to establish existing conditions and predicted changes within the study area are provided in Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration.</p> <p>Locations for noise monitoring were informed by desktop studies and feedback from residents about areas of concern received at information displays, online and through doorknocking. More than 60 locations were monitored along the project corridor.</p>
<p>Concerns about increased traffic noise along roads connected to North East Link and the upgraded Eastern Freeway – cars and trucks.</p>	<p>Changes to noise levels on collector roads intersecting with North East Link have been considered and are discussed in Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration.</p> <p>Noise mitigation for residential homes or noise sensitive buildings such as schools on collector roads intersecting with North East Link would be addressed by comparing conditions with North East Link in place and without. Noise mitigation measures would be applied in situations where noise from the combined North East Link and collector road would increase by 2 decibels compared with the 2036 ‘no project’ scenario (EPR NV1).</p>
<p>Requests for noise modelling and noise management measures to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of vehicle (cars vs trucks) • How sound travels across open spaces • Local topography and weather – particularly for homes on hills • Noise travelling long distances from ramps and viaducts • Height of residences and number of storeys. 	<p>As detailed in Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration, noise modelling has considered all these matters.</p> <p>The project noise standard of 63 decibels would apply to the lowest habitable level of homes and noise sensitive buildings (EPR NV1), in accordance with VicRoads requirements.</p>
<p>Concerns about noise travelling up and out of the trenched section of North East Link during operation.</p>	<p>Once North East Link is built and operating, the project noise standard of 63 decibels would apply for noise sensitive buildings along the trenched section of the project (EPR NV1).</p>

Feedback	Project response
Concerns about noise from tunnel ventilation structures.	The tunnel ventilation system detailed design would need to be provided to the satisfaction of EPA Victoria before construction starts (EPR NV6). Noise monitoring would take place for up to five years after construction is completed, as agreed with EPA Victoria, to verify noise requirements are being met (EPR NV7).
Concerns about increases to night noise including truck brakes.	VicRoads does not provide any requirements to provide noise mitigation to control maximum noise levels (such as engine brakes). However, improvements to traffic flow along the Eastern Freeway and M80 Ring Road are expected to minimise the reliance on engine brake use. Engine brake use is expected to be reduced along the approaches to the existing traffic lights between the M80 Ring Road, Greensborough Road and Greensborough Bypass are expected to benefit from the new free-flowing interchange design. Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration provides further detail on the project noise impacts.
Requests for noise assessments to take place once the project is operating to ensure the project noise standard is being met, for additional noise measures to be put in place if the standard is not being met, and for the results to be made available to the public.	The contractors would be required to monitor traffic noise before and after the project opened and take remedial action as soon as practicable if the project noise standard was not being met (EPR NV2). An Independent Environmental Auditor would verify compliance with the environmental performance requirements, including the project noise standard.
Requests for noise walls to be built prior to construction to minimise noise impacts for local residents.	The construction of any permanent noise attenuation (noise walls) must, where feasible, be installed in advance of adjacent works (EPR NV13).

Air quality

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about increases in air pollutants and dust at ground level along the project alignment and for information to be made available about predicted changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In residential areas • Near schools, sports fields, parklands and community facilities • Next to recreational and commuter shared use paths 	<p>The air quality impact assessment has shown air quality is predicted to improve in some areas and decrease in other areas with North East Link when compared with the 'no project' scenario.</p> <p>The results of the air quality impact assessment are documented in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p> <p>Air quality monitoring would be undertaken in consultation with EPA Victoria to measure the air quality impacts of North East Link, including at least one year of monitoring before the project opened and five years after it opened, or sooner as agreed with EPA Victoria (EPR AQ4 and EPR AQ5).</p>
<p>Concerns about increases in ultrafine particles and requests for these to be considered in impact assessments.</p>	<p>The North East Link air quality impact assessment focuses on the particulate matter size fractions (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) where ambient air quality criteria, emission factors and standardised measurement methods are available.</p> <p>Currently this information is not available for ultrafine particles and they have not been considered as part of the North East Link air quality impact assessment. Further information regarding this approach is provided in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p>
<p>Concerns about increased air pollution from more trucks using the Eastern Freeway and using the new North East Link to travel through Macleod, Yallambie, Watsonia and Greensborough.</p>	<p>The assessment considered impacts from traffic using the Eastern Freeway and North East Link, and takes into account projected changes in vehicle numbers resulting from the project, including predicted truck volumes.</p> <p>The results of air quality modelling is provided in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p>
<p>Concerns about ground level pollutants being dispersed by wind beyond the immediate road corridor.</p>	<p>The potential for ground level pollutants to be dispersed beyond the immediate road corridor has been considered in impact assessments.</p> <p>The results of air quality modelling is provided in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p>
<p>Concerns about emissions from ventilation structures concentrating in the local area and requests for more information about how air quality would be monitored.</p>	<p>The air quality impact assessment considered the potential impact of ventilation structure emissions over a large area, as well as a number of potential future emissions scenarios. The approach to management and monitoring of emissions from the tunnel ventilation structures would be documented in the project Operations Environmental Management Plan (EPR EMF2).</p> <p>An ambient air quality monitoring program would be established in consultation with EPA to measure the air quality impacts of North East Link, including monitoring before operation. The contractors would also be required to monitor in-tunnel air quality and ventilation structure emissions following the opening of North East Link, in accordance with EPRAQ5.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about emissions from tunnel ventilation structures drifting and settling in low lying areas (particularly Banyule Flats and the Koonung Creek valley) and requests for weather patterns and topography to be considered.</p>	<p>The air quality modelling undertaken to inform the air quality impact assessment took into account the effect of the topography of the region on the dispersal of ventilation structure emissions, including consideration of the Banyule Flats and the Koonung Creek valley. In addition, data from the Bureau of Meteorology Automatic Weather Station at Viewbank from 2013–2017 was used to inform the assessment of air quality impacts from tunnel ventilation structure emissions.</p> <p>The results of air quality assessment is provided in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p>
<p>Concerns that air quality monitoring during operation would not be reliable and that EPA Victoria guidelines would not be enforced.</p>	<p>An ambient air quality program would be established in consultation with EPA Victoria to measure the air quality impacts of North East Link, including monitoring before and after the project opened. The Environmental Performance Requirements commit the contractors to undertaking air quality monitoring in accordance with EPA Victoria guidelines.</p> <p>The contractors would be responsible for monitoring ambient air quality for at least five years post opening of North East Link (or as agreed with EPA Victoria), and would be required to monitor in-tunnel air quality and ventilation structure emissions (EPR AQ4).</p> <p>The approach to management and monitoring of surface road vehicle emissions and emissions from the tunnel ventilation structures would be documented in the project Operations Environmental Management Plan (EPR EMF2).</p>

Construction

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about loss of access to local roads, residences and community facilities including sports centres playing fields, schools and shops.</p>	<p>Transport disruptions during construction have been considered in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport. This includes details of proposed road closures, alternative routes and the predicted impacts to the transportation network. The associated impacts on access to community facilities is discussed in Chapter 17 – Social.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to develop and implement Transport Management Plan(s) (TMP) before starting relevant works to minimise disruptions (EPR T2). The Transport Management Plan(s) would be informed and supported by transport modelling, and would include the identification of appropriate construction traffic routes, measures to maintain transport capacity and limit construction haulage in peak periods, and provide for consultation with relevant road authorities.</p> <p>The contractors would also be required to establish a Traffic Management Liaison Group (TMLG) with representatives from the Victorian Government, VicRoads, emergency services, the project and relevant councils to discuss TMPs (EPR T3).</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about temporary loss of use of public open space, playing fields and parks used as construction laydown areas and requests for more information about locations, length of disruptions and reinstatement works.</p>	<p>Construction laydown areas have been identified in consultation with local councils and other land owners and users and are included in the EES Map Book. Temporary loss of public open space, playing fields and parks identified for use as construction laydown areas have been considered in the social impact assessment documented in Technical report I – Social.</p> <p>To manage temporary disruptions, the contractors would be required to prepare and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan which must include an approach to notifying communities and other stakeholders affected by construction activities about impacts (EPR SC2).</p>
<p>Concerns about loss of trade at Watsonia shops due to transport, noise, dust and visual impacts.</p>	<p>Amenity impacts to businesses, including at Watsonia shops, during construction have been considered in Chapter 14 – Business. The contractors would be required to develop and implement Transport Management Plan(s) (TMP) before starting relevant works to minimise disruptions, prepare and implement a Dust and Air Quality Management and Monitoring Plan to minimise air quality impacts during construction and a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan to minimise noise and vibration impacts, and minimise landscape and visual impacts during construction (EPR T2, EPR AQ1, EPR NV4, EPR LV2).</p> <p>The contractors would also be required participate in Business Liaison Groups to provide regular and timely reporting of design and construction activities, advance notice about changes to traffic and parking conditions and duration of impact, and respond to issues raised by the group (EPR B6).</p>
<p>Concerns about congestion and travel delays particularly along Greensborough Road, Bulleen Road and the Eastern Freeway during construction.</p>	<p>The potential for traffic delays during construction has been considered and are outlined in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p> <p>Construction staging would be scheduled so that multiple roads are not closed at the same time to allow for traffic to detour around construction areas.</p> <p>The Traffic Management Plan developed and implemented by the contractors would be required to maintain transport capacity in peak periods (EPR T2).</p>
<p>Concerns about impacts to public transport services, particularly train services on the Hurstbridge rail line and bus services along the Eastern Freeway.</p>	<p>Impacts to public transport services during construction are considered in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p> <p>The TMP developed and implemented by the contractors would be required to consider and minimise disruptions to all modes of transport, including public transport (EPR T2). In general, public transport services would need to be maintained throughout the construction period across the study area. This includes bus services along the Eastern Freeway.</p> <p>Works on rail underpasses at Grimshaw Street and Greensborough Road as well as works around Watsonia railway station are expected to impact passenger services on the Hurstbridge rail line. Due to the nature of the works, and to ensure the safety of workers, it is anticipated the works would require temporary closure of the rail line. Replacement bus services are expected to be used to transfer passengers between stations during the rail line's closure</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about increased construction-related truck movements on arterial and residential roads, particularly Rosanna Road which already carries heavy truck volumes.</p>	<p>Construction-related truck movements including those associated with delivery of materials, machinery and equipment, removal of spoil from the tunnels and other excavation activities have been considered and are discussed in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport.</p> <p>Trucks would generally remain on arterial roads for the haulage of spoil and materials and the contractors would be required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of construction related trucks on the road during peak travel periods (EPR T2) • Review haulage routes to minimise reliance on a single haulage route (EPR T3). <p>Any construction routes would require Traffic Management Plans that would be approved by the relevant road authority.</p>
<p>Concerns about loss of access to shared use paths and commuter routes and suitability of diversions including availability of temporary bridges. Concerns about shared use paths and bridges along the Eastern Freeway were frequently raised.</p>	<p>During construction, the majority of shared use paths would remain open or suitable temporary diversions would be provided.</p> <p>Where closures are needed, the contractors would be required to develop suitable diversion routes (EPR T2).</p> <p>More information is provided in Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport and Chapter 17 – Social.</p>
<p>Concerns about noise from construction sites, particularly at night.</p>	<p>The contractors would be required to manage noise and vibration impacts during construction in accordance with EPA Victoria guidelines (EPR NV3).</p> <p>More information on management of noise during construction is provided in Chapter 11 – Noise and vibration.</p>
<p>Concerns about dust from construction sites.</p>	<p>There is the potential for construction activities to generate dust. This is discussed in Chapter 10 – Air quality.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to implement a Dust and Air Quality Management and Monitoring Plan(s) to minimise and monitor air quality during construction (EPR AQ1).</p>
<p>Concerns about visual impacts from construction sites.</p>	<p>The contractors would be required to develop and implement measures to use temporary landscaping, features or structures during construction to minimise adverse visual impacts and provide visual appeal. This would include starting landscaping works before construction where practicable (EPR LV2).</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about vibration from tunnel construction and damage to homes and other buildings.</p>	<p>Vibration impacts and the potential for the project to affect buildings during construction has been considered and is discussed in Chapter 12 – Tunnel vibration.</p> <p>At some locations, some residents above or close to the tunnel alignment may notice vibration while the tunnel boring machine passes through their area. The contractors would be required to evaluate vibration effects in accordance with project-specific guideline target levels (EPR NV8 and EPR NV9). Where conditions during construction are encountered that could produce vibration above the guideline target levels, management actions would be implemented to prevent damage to homes and other buildings.</p> <p>To minimise the potential for impacts to building and structures, the contractors would be required to develop a model to predict ground movement impacts and to monitor ground movement during construction (EPRs GM1 and GM2).</p> <p>The contractors would also be required to complete condition surveys before construction starts for properties in areas where ground movement is predicted, or where a property owner reasonably expects to be affected. The contractors would be required to rectify damages to property or assets impacted by ground movement or settlement and establish an independent mediation process for claims that cannot be agreed with the property or asset owner (EPRs GM3 and GM4).</p>
<p>Requests for greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction, including the production of materials such as concrete, be considered in impact assessments and mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction have been considered in Chapter 26 – Greenhouse gas. The assessment included consideration of construction materials.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to implement a Sustainability Management Plan (EPR SCC1) and implement sustainable design practices to minimise greenhouse gas emissions during construction, operations and maintenance (EPR SCC3).</p>
<p>Concerns that adequate notice about construction disruptions would not be provided.</p>	<p>NELP recognises that timely and regular communication about construction impacts is an important part of the approach to managing and minimising disruptions for road users, residents, local businesses and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to prepare and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan for construction. The plan would include an approach to notifying affected communities, businesses, road users and other stakeholders about construction impacts (EPR SC2).</p> <p>The contractors would also be required to participate in Community Liaison Group/s and Business Liaison Group/s (EPR SC3 and EPR B6). Participation in these groups would include regular reporting of design and construction activities and regular reporting and monitoring of community or business feedback, impacts and discussion of mitigation measures and their effectiveness.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for more detailed information about likely construction timelines, sequencing and length of disruptions.</p>	<p>NELP will release the project to market across multiple packages and select preferred tenderers after the EES exhibition. Detailed information about construction timelines, sequencing and length of disruptions would be informed by the construction approach recommended by the contractors and agreed to by NELP.</p> <p>The contractors would be required to prepare and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan that includes an approach to making relevant project information available to the community, including the progress of construction activities and impacts.</p>

Environment

Feedback	Project response
<p>Concerns about loss of trees along the project alignment.</p>	<p>Tree loss has been considered in impact assessments and is documented in Chapter 25 – Ecology. Visual impacts associated with loss of trees are also considered in Chapter 16 – Landscape and visual.</p> <p>While loss of trees and associated canopy is unavoidable to construct a project the size and scale of North East Link, the contractors would be required to maximise opportunities to retain trees to minimise canopy loss. This includes retaining trees where practicable and selecting construction methods that minimise the removal of or damage to trees. The contractors would also be required to implement Tree Protection Plans to protect retained trees (EPR AR2) and a Tree Canopy Replacement Plan (EPR AR3) to mitigate the loss of canopy.</p> <p>Large trees within native vegetation patches, and scattered trees would be required to be offset in accordance with the DELWP Guidelines of the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.</p>
<p>Concerns about impacts to Matted Flax-lily colonies at Simpson Barracks and other locations within the project boundary.</p>	<p>Impacts to Matted Flax-lily colonies have been considered in the impact assessment documented in Chapter 25 – Ecology.</p> <p>Matted Flax-lily affected by the project would be translocated to alternative suitable sites in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Government (DELWP) and the Australian Government (DoEE) (EPR FF7). This would ensure the population of this important species are not lost.</p>
<p>Concerns about loss of habitat for native fauna and severance of wildlife corridors, particularly at Simpson Barracks and Koonung Creek parklands.</p>	<p>The most important habitat areas and wildlife corridors within the study area are along the Yarra River floodplain including Bolin Bolin Billabong, Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands. These would be protected from land clearing by tunnelling beneath/around these locations. No loss of habitat for native flora and fauna or disruptions to wildlife corridors are expected to occur in these areas.</p> <p>While the loss of some native vegetation that could provide habitat to native fauna at Simpson Barracks and Koonung Creek would be unavoidable during construction of the project, this is required to be minimised.</p> <p>Impacts to areas of habitat for native flora and fauna, and the potential for fragmentation of wildlife corridors are considered and detailed in Chapter 25 – Ecology.</p>

Feedback	Project response
Requests to increase native planting and improve habitat and corridors for native wildlife	A key direction of the Urban Design Strategy is to support a natural and connected corridor. This includes supporting natural systems and seeking opportunities to repair and protect local environmental assets and systems to optimise ecology. The Urban Design Strategy is provided as Attachment II to the EES.
Concerns about temporary and permanent impacts to Banyule Creek to construct and operate the interchange at Lower Plenty Road and downstream impacts to water flow and quality.	<p>The reference project would involve diverting approximately 1.4 km of Banyule Creek between Blamey Road and Lower Plenty Road. A new retarding basin would be built north of Lower Plenty Road. There would be no diversion works south of Lower Plenty Road.</p> <p>The project would remove an actively eroding and degraded section of waterway and replace it with a stable engineered waterway and storages, leading to improved water quality.</p>
Concerns about water run-off from road surfaces during construction and operation and pollution of creeks and waterways.	<p>Runoff during construction would be managed in accordance with a Surface Water Management Plan (EPR SW5). This would include requirements for best practice sediment and erosion control and monitoring in accordance with EPA Victoria guidelines.</p> <p>During operation, the project would remove many pollutants from runoff using new water treatment features, with the potential to reduce the net pollutant load to the waterways. The contractors would be required to ensure discharges and runoff meets SEPP (Waters) requirements (EPR SW1).</p> <p>Impacts to surface water from runoff during construction and operation are detailed in Chapter 24 – Surface water.</p>
Concerns about contamination of groundwater or changes in levels during construction and operation of the tunnels.	<p>Tunnels would be designed and constructed to minimise changes to groundwater levels during construction and operation (EPR GW3). Modelling of groundwater levels indicates that some 'drawdown' or lowering of the water table from the existing groundwater level would occur during construction. The degree of groundwater level changes would generally decrease with distance from the tunnels. Once construction is completed, groundwater levels would gradually reach a new equilibrium, generally recovering to within three metres of pre-construction water levels. The potential changes to groundwater levels as a result of the project, and required management measures, are discussed in Chapter 22 – Groundwater.</p> <p>The project is not located within a highly contaminated area, due to current and historic land uses. Limited soil and groundwater contamination has been identified along the North East Link alignment. If contamination is identified in soil or groundwater, this would be assessed and managed as part of the construction phase works, reducing the opportunity for issues during the operational phase. This is discussed in Chapter 23 – Contamination and soil.</p>

Feedback	Project response
<p>Requests for the project to consider the interaction between groundwater and surface water systems, particularly impacts to creeks, rivers and billabongs and groundwater dependent ecosystems. Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands were frequently raised as key areas of concern.</p>	<p>Geotechnical investigations have identified that within the Yarra River floodplain, there is connectivity between surface water and groundwater, including at Bolin Bolin Billabong. This is not unexpected and has been considered in impact assessments.</p> <p>Groundwater drawdown is discussed in Chapter 22 – Groundwater, and its potential effects on vegetation and aquatic ecology are discussed in Chapter 25 – Ecology.</p>
<p>Requests to ‘top-up’ water levels at Bolin Bolin Billabong.</p>	<p>Groundwater levels would be regularly monitored before and during construction and also during operation at locations where levels (or quality) are potentially impacted. If monitoring identified changes to the groundwater level at Bolin Bolin Billabong that require restoration, the contractors would be required to implement management measures (EPR GW5).</p>
<p>Concerns about increases in greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles using North East Link and the upgraded Eastern Freeway.</p>	<p>Forecast greenhouse gas emissions in 2026 and 2036 associated with road traffic for the ‘with project’ and ‘no project’ scenarios are discussed in Chapter 26 – Greenhouse gas.</p> <p>The results predict a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions from the road network for the ‘with project’ scenario compared with the ‘no project’ scenario. While North East Link is predicted to increase greenhouse gas emissions from cars, this increase would be more than offset by a larger reduction in emissions from heavy vehicles.</p>



6 Conclusion

Engagement is an essential part of planning for any major project. NELP has carried out an extensive communication and engagement program to support the development of the North East Link reference project and to inform the EES.

The program included a range of activities such as community and stakeholder workshops, targeted meetings, online communications and site visits. The purpose of these activities is two fold: to provide opportunities for communities and stakeholders to learn and understand the likely environment impacts and how they are proposed to be managed; and for NELP to seek information from communities and stakeholders to inform the corridor selection, project design and EES technical studies.

Feedback has covered a range of topics including corridor selection, project design, traffic and transport, amenity, business, construction and environment.

This feedback has informed development of the North East Link reference project and preparation of this EES.

Communication and engagement would continue with the community and stakeholders over the next phase of the project. Systems and processes would be established to respond to new and emerging issues in accordance with the environmental management framework and EPRs for the project.

Contractors would also be required to develop and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan outlining their approach to keep potentially affected stakeholders informed about the progress of the project during its construction and operation and to identify opportunities to work together to minimise construction impacts.

7 References

Department of Sustainability and Environment 2006, *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978*. Melbourne: State Government of Victoria.

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