

Community Engagement Report

April - May 2018





Introduction

North East Link Authority is using community feedback to shape our project, identifying opportunities and concerns from people living and working in the project area. In April this year, the Authority released initial designs for the project and hosted eight community information sessions. Online feedback was also taken.

The feedback gathered has been assessed as part of design works, as we get closer to finalising plans ahead of seeking planning approval with an Environment Effects Statement in 2019.

Another updated design will be released in the coming months, showing more detail and providing the next opportunity for people to ask questions and provide feedback.

As part of the Authority’s commitment to public consultation, we are releasing this report to highlight the issues people have raised. This is the fourth community engagement report the Authority has released, each is available via our website, at www.northeastlink.vic.gov.au/publications. Hard copies can be requested by contacting our call centre on 1800 105 105.

Contents











Who we spoke to	4
What we heard	5
Feedback	6
Feedback themes:	
Traffic and transport - Traffic	8
Traffic and transport - Walking and cycling	9
Traffic and transport – Public transport	9
Noise	10
Social and community	10
Landscape and visual	11
Air quality and human health	11
Aboriginal cultural heritage	12
Arboriculture	12
Business	12
Ecology	12
Greenhouse Gas	12
Ground movement and vibration	13
Groundwater and surface water	13
Historic heritage	13
Land contamination	13
Land use and planning	13




“Parking at Doncaster Park and Ride needs to be increased significantly - 1,000+ spaces. 400 is not sufficient - car park full by 7am on weekdays.”

Who we spoke to

Community engagement is helping to inform the project design as well as studies for an Environment Effects Statement (EES).

-  Newsletter posted to 236,000+ homes
-  Email broadcast to 8600+ people
-  Paid advertising in 8 local newspapers with a combined reach of 832,000+
-  28,000+ people reached through Social media
-  13,800+ Project website views
-  2,500+ people came to 8 drop-in displays and provided 580 pieces of feedback
-  45+ questions asked using our online Q and A tool
-  100+ comments made on our online map
-  260+ phone calls, emails and letters
-  100+ meetings with councils, community groups, schools, sports clubs and other stakeholders


"I use Manningham Car Care to service my car. I'm concerned about businesses losing local clients. I'd like them relocated somewhere close by."


"Keep walking paths and dog-leash free areas open for us during construction."

What we heard

Community feedback was tagged by the most relevant EES study area so that it could be easily collated and presented to design, planning and impact assessment specialists.

Overall, we received a lot of feedback about the need for North East Link to be built with many asking how soon construction could start.

We also received positive feedback on the design work so far, particularly keeping toll-free options for local trips in Melbourne's north-eastern suburbs and improving travel times and public transport on the Eastern Freeway. The proposed upgrades to walking and cycling links also received lots of positive comments.

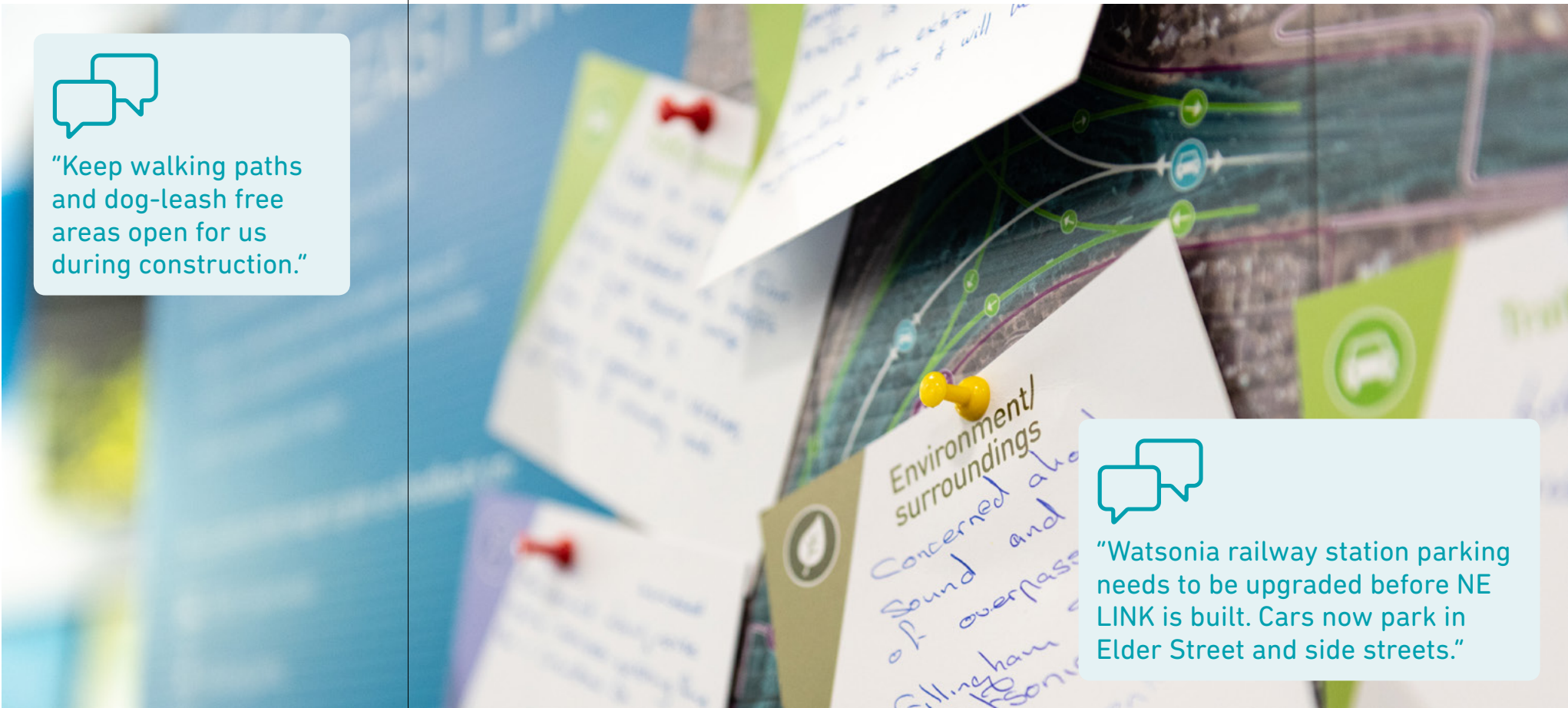
This report provides a high-level summary of the most prominent areas of community interest across each theme.

Feedback from communities is also being shared with local councils and other key stakeholders including VicRoads and Transport for Victoria so that it can be considered in ongoing discussions about project design and planning.

We are working towards providing an update on further design work and our EES studies in the coming months. This update will include how community feedback has helped to shape the project.

More information about community engagement will also be provided when the EES goes on public display next year.


"Please preserve Koonung Creek - do not cover. And you must preserve the environmentally important wetlands between Elgar Road and Doncaster Road."



Feedback

Community feedback has already played an important part in shaping North East Link and is continuing to do so as part of preparing the project Environment Effects Statement (EES).

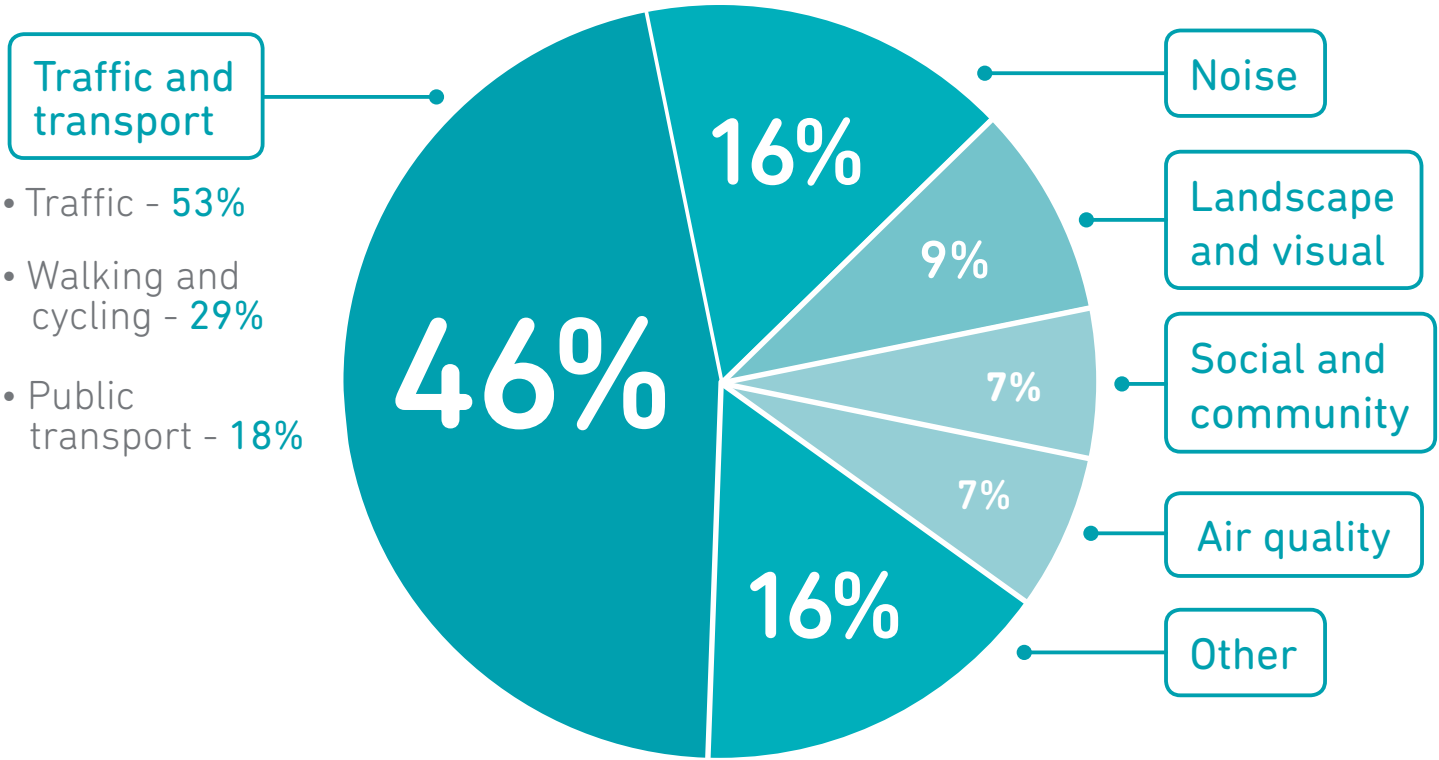


We asked people who visited a drop in session to let us know how we did. Here's what they told us...

	Agree	Disagree
Most information was easy to understand	100%	0%
Staff were able to explain the project to me	95%	5%
I know more about the project than I did before	100%	0%
It was easy to give feedback	100%	0%
I understand how my feedback will be used	80%	20%

We also received requests for the sessions to last for longer and for some of the venues to be bigger.

75% of all feedback about noise was related to the Eastern Freeway.



Theme: Traffic and transport - Traffic

Issue raised
Requests to reduce congestion in Melbourne’s north-east and east and move trucks away from residential roads
Requests for information about changes to traffic volumes (cars and trucks) on local and arterial roads in the project area. Key areas of interest were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arterial roads connected to NEL interchanges, particularly Grimshaw Street, Greensborough Road and Lower Plenty Road.• Concerns the design does not provide enough capacity for right hand turns from Grimshaw Street to the M80 (you told us traffic queues are already too long)• Local roads between Lower Plenty Road and the M80 interchange, including requests for more information about changes to rat-running routes. Kempston Street, Beverley Road and Drysdale Street were frequently mentioned.• Local and arterial roads west of the Lower Plenty Road interchange that provide access to La Trobe University and NEIC. You told us you are particularly concerned about increased traffic on Erskine Road.• Arterial and local roads near the Eastern Freeway. Concerns about traffic increases on Doncaster Road, Bulleen Road and in the entire suburb of Balwyn North were frequently mentioned.• The entire Eastern Freeway including the Mullum Mullum tunnels
Concerns the project will increase traffic volumes at the Hoddle Street/Alexandra Parade and EastLink tunnel ends of the Eastern Freeway.
Requests for information about how the design maintains or affects un-tolled local traffic movements between Yallambie, Watsonia, Macleod and Greensborough. Access from Elder Street to Greensborough Highway and alterations to access for Strathallan Road were frequently mentioned.
Concerns that tolls may discourage vehicles, particularly trucks, from using North East Link and requests for confirmation that traffic volumes on local roads will reduce.
Questions about whether existing truck bans will be retained and requests for new bans to be introduced, particularly on Rosanna Road.
Concerns that all trucks may not be able to use the tunnels and requests for information about how the design caters for placarded and OD vehicle movements.
Requests for information about how traffic disruptions and truck movements during construction will be managed.
Requests for more information about how local access during construction will be maintained.
Requests to simplify the design of some interchanges, particularly the interchange at Manningham Road.
Concerns that express lanes on the Eastern Freeway will reduce overall lane capacity for short trips, particularly for Doncaster residents.
Requests to upgrade existing roads in the project area. The most frequently mentioned road was the Diamond Creek roundabout. Other roads mentioned include Surrey Road, Middleborough Road, Springvale Road, Templestowe Road and Burke Road.
Requests for information about how the project design, specifically the number of lanes, caters for projected population growth and future traffic volumes.
Concerns that a road further out would have been a better option for North East Link.

Theme: Traffic and transport - Walking and cycling

Issue raised
Requests for the project to be developed as a transport corridor for all kinds of transport, not just a road for vehicles.
Requests for a logically connected cycling and walking network that provides efficient journeys for commuters, connections to key local destinations such as shops and schools and supports tourist routes.
Requests to preserve all existing walking and cycling paths, or where this is not possible, for affected paths to be rebuilt as close as possible to their original location. Walking and cycling paths along the Eastern Freeway were frequently mentioned.
Requests to improve safety for walkers and cyclists by separating them from traffic and from each other and providing wide paths, adequate lighting and crossing points.
Requests to improve amenity for walkers and cyclists including setting paths back from roads, using plantings and wide paths, and providing facilities such as seating and drinking fountains.
Requests to improve access to walking and cycling paths including by catering for ageing communities, families with young children and people with disabilities.
Requests for additional walking and cycling paths to those included in the project design. The most frequently mentioned requests were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An upgrade to the Belford Road crossing to reduce the steep grade• An improved connection from Greensborough Bypass to the Lower Plenty River trail• An improved crossing at Banksia Street to connect to the Main Yarra Trail• Improved crossings at Bulleen Road
Requests for information about how walking and cycling access would be maintained in the project area during construction with connections to Watsonia Station being frequently mentioned.

Theme: Traffic and transport – Public transport

Issue raised
Requests to improve public transport options to reduce car dependency.
Requests to improve car and bicycle parking facilities at major transport hubs. Doncaster Park and Ride and Watsonia Station were frequently mentioned.
Requests to improve accessibility at Watsonia Station by adding escalators or elevators.
Requests for information about how the project would affect existing public transport services. Existing bus connections into Watsonia Station, construction-related disruptions to the Hurstbridge rail line and changes to DART services were frequently mentioned.
Suggestions to improve the operation of Doncaster Busway including extending the busway further east, connecting the busway to Doncaster shopping centre, increasing the number and frequency of services, running a SkyBus service, offering bike racks on buses and running express services from Doncaster straight through to the CBD.
Concerns that upgrades to the Eastern Freeway would preclude a future Doncaster Rail project.
Requests for additional public transport upgrades outside the project scope including new local bus routes, more frequent bus services, and extending the North Balwyn tram line to Doncaster shopping centre.

Theme: Noise


Issue raised
Concerns about existing noise levels and increased noise impacts on residential areas, sensitive receptors such as schools and community facilities and open space areas. Specific locations frequently mentioned include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M80 Ring Road• Greensborough Road and surrounding streets• Bulleen Road and nearby surrounds – schools, parks and residential streets• Eastern Freeway, particularly on the south side of the freeway and homes backing on to Koonung Creek Reserve• Koonung Creek Reserve• Bellevue Primary School, St Martin of Tours Primary School, Watsonia Primary School and St Marys Parish Primary School
Requests for more information about what noise level standards will apply for the project.
Requests to upgrade existing noise walls along the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway.
Concerns about noise impacts from elevated ramps at Bulleen Road and the M80 interchange, including the potential for noise to carry over long distances and requests for more information about modelling and mitigation measures.
Concerns about noise impacts from ventilation structures and tunnel entry and exit portals.
Requests for factors including topography, height of homes (i.e. two-storey dwellings and above), vehicle type and speed, road gradient and wind direction to be considered in noise modelling and mitigation measures.
Concerns about existing and increased use of truck engine brakes on the Eastern Freeway, particularly at night while residents are sleeping, and requests to improve signage, enforce bans and penalties.
Concerns about construction related noise, particularly related to the use of heavy machinery and hours of operation.
Requests for temporary or advance noise management measures to be put in place prior to construction commencing.

Theme: Social and community


Issue raised
Concerns about loss of public open space, particularly along the Eastern Freeway, and requests to keep the amount of parkland acquired to a minimum.
Concerns about the potential loss of community facilities and hubs including Boroondara Tennis Centre, Bulleen Art and Garden, and sports fields.
Concerns about the loss of spaces that provide a sense of local identity and value such as Simpson Barracks.
Concerns about reduced local movements during construction and operation.
Requests to reduce vehicle pollution in the north-east, particularly around schools.

Theme: Landscape and visual

Issue raised
Requests to maintain or enhance the ‘green’ look and feel of the project area by protecting or planting as many new trees as possible, including requests for cut and cover sections to provide sufficient depth for tree roots.
Concerns about visual changes to the Koonung Creek parklands, particularly the loss of noise mounds and trees that screen views of the road and noise walls.
Concerns about the visual impacts from elevated ramps and roads at the M80 interchange and Bulleen Road.
Concerns about the visual impacts of flood mitigation measures such as flood walls.
Concerns about changes in outlook and/or overshadowing of residential properties from noise walls and road infrastructure and overlooking from new walking and cycling bridges.
Requests for the project design to reflect local character and heritage, the natural environment and Aboriginal cultural heritage.
Requests for more information about the location and height of ventilation structures and concerns about visual impacts.
Requests to consider anti-graffiti measures as well as maintenance and cleaning programs for noise walls.
Requests for noise walls to consider the use of Perspex panels to allow for natural light and reduce overshadowing.



Noise walls-
“I want noise wall improved but don’t want to see them. I like vegetation or trees to hide walls.”



Noise walls-
“We need greenery so we don’t feel like we are in a prison”
(Estelle Street resident)

Theme: Air quality and human health

Issue raised
Concerns about changes to air quality in residential areas, near sensitive receptors such as schools and community facilities and open space areas. Greensborough Road, Bulleen Road and the Eastern Freeway were frequently mentioned.
Requests for more information about the location and height of ventilation structures.
Concerns about locating ventilation structures near schools, residential areas and a retirement village.
Requests for air quality modelling to consider topography, weather patterns and ultrafine particles as well as the potential for emissions to settle in low-lying areas such as Banyule Flats and Koonung Creek reserve.
Concerns about dust during construction and operation in residential areas and public open space.
Requests for more information about how air quality will be monitored during operation and how standards will be enforced.

Theme: Aboriginal cultural heritage

Issue raised
Requests to improve water quality and water levels in culturally significant wetlands and waterways, particularly Bolin Bolin Billabong.
Requests to reference Aboriginal culture and heritage in the project design.

Theme: Arboriculture

Issue raised
Concerns about potential damage to areas of tree habitat such as Banyule Flats.
Requests for mature trees to be used as part of any tree replacement program, or for early planting to commence to allow trees more time to mature.
Concerns about the loss of Red Gum, Yellow Box and Scribbly Gum trees at Simpson Barracks.
Concerns about the loss of old growth trees including at Simpson Barracks and the historic River Red Gum on Manningham Road.

Theme: Business

Issue raised
Concerns about potential acquisition of businesses at the Bulleen business park and requests for more information regarding how businesses would be supported to relocate locally and/or compensated.

Theme: Ecology

Issue raised
Requests to avoid or minimise loss of wildlife habitat and requests for improvements to areas that support native flora and fauna and encourage biodiversity. Areas frequently mentioned include Simpson Barracks, Banyule Flats, Banyule Swamp, Banksia Park, Warringal Parklands, and Koonung Creek Reserve.

Theme: Ground movement and vibration

Issue raised
Concerns about tunnel vibration under residential homes and sensitive environmental areas during tunnel construction.
Concerns about general vibration associated with construction and operation of the project including homes with deep foundations.

Theme: Greenhouse Gas


Issue raised
Requests for more information about how greenhouse gas emissions would be assessed and how the project would seek to reduce carbon emissions during construction and operation.

Theme: Groundwater and surface water

Issue raised
Requests to improve the health of waterways and concerns about impacts to creeks and waterways during construction and operation including the potential for re-alignments, coverings and storm water run-off. Waterways frequently mentioned include Koonung Creek, Banyule Creek and Banyule Flats.
Concerns about impacts to groundwater systems from tunnelling.
Concerns about the potential for flooding at and near Bulleen Road and Manningham Road interchanges.

Theme: Historic heritage

Issue raised
Requests to preserve the historic Red Gum at the Caltex service station on Manningham Road.
Requests for the project to help people connect to nature and culturally significant areas.
Requests to preserve the heritage of the Heide artists.



“Can bike paths along the Eastern Freeway not feel like paths next to a freeway?”




Theme: Land contamination

Issue raised
Requests for information about the location of potential land fill sites and management plans for contaminated soil.

Theme: Land use and planning

Issue raised
Requests for more information about potential land uses at the Manningham Road interchange including requests for the old drive in site to be reinstated as parkland.

Contact us

-  1800 105 105
-  community@northeastlink.vic.gov.au
-  North East Link Authority
GPO Box 4509, Melbourne VIC 3001

Translation service

-  for languages other than
English, please call 9679 9896.

Please contact us if you would like this
information in an accessible format.

