

## **HCAG ADVOCACY FOR ADDRESSING RINGWOOD METROPOLITAN ACTIVITY CENTER (RMAC) ISSUES ARISING FROM THE NORTH EAST LINK**

### **Introduction:**

There are a number of unresolved issues arising from the North East Link project. Most of these are summarized in the overview section of this document that immediately follows this introduction.

This document however focusses only on one of them – the issues arising from the North East Link, their impact on the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Center (RMAC), and solutions and timelines needed to address them.

HCAG's advocacy on this matter draws heavily on:

- The O'Brien traffic report commissioned by the Maroondah City Council and submitted to Council as a Council Report on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. This report can be found in the attachment to this document.
- North East Link Council Report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (In particular Corridor A).
- Maroondah City Council letter of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 "North East Link Environmental Effects Statement Maroondah City Council Submission" to DELWP NE Link Inquiry and Advisory Committee.

### **Overview:**

The North East Link has been committed to and to date \$11.8 billion of the estimated \$16.8 billion cost has been allocated with construction having commenced on the chosen option – Option A.

Option A is the shortest of the four assessed routes and has several features (all creating choke points) that the other three options do not, the primary ones being:

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- **It is the only option that feeds traffic into the Eastern Freeway tunnels which present a choke point just west of the Ringwood MAC, limiting the capacity of the link and forcing substantial traffic into roads and streets in Whitehorse (Some estimates by others outside of the NE**

**Link Authority suggest as much as 70,000 extra vehicles a day into Whitehorse Roads).**

- **As HCAG understands, the choke point resulting from the Eastern Freeway tunnels under the Mullum Mullum Creek and the limitations of the Ringwood bypass have been deemed to be outside the scope of the NE Link project. Given the detrimental impact of these issues (the tunnels and bypass limitations), we find this “outside the scope of the project” incredibly shortsighted and compromising the functionality and usefulness of the NE Link.**
  - **The North East Link and particularly the elected Option A results in substantial and greater impacts on both the Ringwood bypass and the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Center (RMAC) than does any of the rejected options.**
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- The northern end of the North East Link is a choke point interconnecting to the Metropolitan Ring Road, Greensborough Bypass and Western Ring Road.

The link relies heavily on these roads having substantial growth capacity.

And, the proposed Outer Western Ring Road (which is only a reservation at present with no timeframe) being constructed.

The Metropolitan Ring Road has substantial growth capacity east of Plenty Road, The Western Ring Road has very little growth capacity and is becoming increasingly congested during peak times.

The Greenborough Bypass does nothing for the North East Link connection to EastLink since it directs traffic back to the (north) east.

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- Traffic is not only turned east along the Eastern Freeway to link with Eastlink, a substantial volume is also turned west towards the city.

- The western end of the Eastern Freeway is already a choke point at the Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade exits. Under the chosen Option A This western end of the Eastern Freeway will carry the additional North East Link traffic westbound from the NE Link/Eastern Freeway interchange.

*A tunnel has been proposed connecting the Eastern Freeway to the Tullamarine Freeway. The Victorian State Premier has stated on a number of occasions that it will never be built while he is Premier.*

*A source within the North East Link Authority has acknowledged that the extra west bound traffic resulting from the NE Link will exacerbate the bottleneck without the tunnel, and that the said tunnel is essential if the west bound traffic flow is to work.*

*There is a clear conflict between what the Premier is saying and what the NE Link source is saying.*

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Given these three choke point issues, is the North East Link shaping up as a 'white elephant?'

**The reality is:** If the North East Link is to function optimally the three choke points (west at Hoddle Street, the NE Link northern end, and east at the Mullum, Melba tunnels and Ringwood Bypass) need to be addressed.

The cost of removing these choke points is of a similar order or more than the cost of the North East Link itself (estimated \$16.8 billion total). That is, it is the hidden agenda the NE Link authority and its successor has been hiding from everyone - Including the premier?

The real cost of the North East Link is of the order of \$33-34 billion.

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- **Impact of tolls on the North East Link**

In March 2020, the state government announced the "North East Link State Tolling Corporation."

Direct tolls on the North-East Link will have a detrimental effect on the Link by encouraging cars to avoid it and use local roads instead - Contrary

to one of its stated purposes which is moving cars and trucks off local roads and onto the Link.

Shadow tolling could avoid this adverse impact.

Private sector funding and a design-build-operate solution could also be used to provide early elimination of the eastern choke point impacting the RMAC and surrounding area.

Paying back the private provider could be by either direct or shadow tolling.

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**As stated in the introduction, this paper addresses one of these choke points: The eastern most interchange between the east end of the Eastern Freeway – Ringwood Bypass – Eastlink and its impact on the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Center (RMAC).**

## Proposed benefits

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North East Link would complete Melbourne's Metropolitan Ring Road project and is estimated to carry around 100,000 vehicles a day, providing non-stop movement and easier access for freight operators, particularly between the growing industrial areas around [Dandenong](#), [Campbellfield](#) and the new freight-hub near [Donnybrook](#)."

**This is not achievable with the North East Link co-sharing with the Eastern Freeway east-west traffic (particularly going forward in time since there is no future growth potential) beyond the planned Eastern Freeway works.**

"With Melbourne's north expected to be home to around one million people in 2026, it is posited that the North East Link will reduce reliance on [Fitzsimons Lane](#), Heidelberg Road and Rosanna Road, and enhance road access to [Melbourne Airport](#) as well as popular regional and interstate destinations, and will allow traffic to bypass central Melbourne."

## Criticisms

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North East Link fails to effectively complete Melbourne's Ring Road project due to its connection to and reliance upon the [Eastern Freeway](#) and would be the only section of the Ring Road to rely on an existing radial freeway as a part of the route. The [Victorian transport association](#) has expressed a preference for an unconstrained ring road (known as Option C<sup>[31]</sup>) to be constructed.<sup>[32]</sup>

North East Link is the most expensive road project ever constructed in Victoria and has already faced significant cost blowouts from an originally planned \$10bn to \$16bn.<sup>[33]</sup>

A shift away from public transport to road transport of around 25,000 commuters per day is expected, with Tony Morton of the [Public Transport Users Association](#) quoted as saying "It's remarkable that anyone working in the public interest would be so positive about a project they find will put more traffic on the road at the expense of public transport."<sup>[34]</sup> ..."

HCAG considers these criticisms that are put forward in the public domain are valid and the proposed benefits do NOT adequately address the criticisms.

We further elaborate on this in a following section headed **"Impact of final version of North East Link (originally called Option A) on the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Center (RMAC)"** and

**"Impact of the NE Link on public transport within the Ringwood MAC and serving it from outside the MAC."**

## **Impact of final version of North East Link (originally called Option A) on the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Center (RMAC):**

**(Refer O'Brien Traffic Report)**

*Extracts from NE Link Council Report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017:*

*"The North East Link Project Objectives and Guiding Principles are as follows:*

### *Objective 1*

*Improve business access and growth in Melbourne's north, east and south-east."*

**Assessment: Shortfall of achievement**

### *"Objective 2*

*Improve household access and growth in Melbourne's north, east and south-east."*

**Assessment: Shortfall of achievement**

### *"Objective 3*

*Improve freight and supply chain efficiency and industrial growth across the north, east and south-east."*

**Assessment: Shortfall of achievement – and since placarded loads are denied use of the tunnels more limited than Objectives 1 and 2.**

**“Objective 4**

*Improve access, amenity and safety for communities in Melbourne’s north-east.”*

**Fail to deliver satisfactory outcomes for RMAC and surrounds**

**“Guiding Principle 1**

*Minimise impacts on communities.”*

**Fail to deliver satisfactory outcomes for RMAC and surrounds**

**“Guiding Principle 2**

*Minimise impacts on environmental and cultural assets.”*

**Fail to deliver satisfactory outcomes for RMAC and surrounds**

**“Guiding Principle 3**

*Minimise impacts during the construction phase.”*

**???? for RMAC and surrounding community**

**“Guiding Principle 4**

*Optimise the efficient use of resources.”*

**???? for whole project including RMAC**

“O’Brien Traffic’s advice outlines potential issues with Option A, in the event that due consideration is not given in relation to the future operation/capacity of the EastLink tunnels and the Ringwood Bypass, and indicates that,”

*“in the vicinity of the RMAC, this is likely to mean that for the shortest (most likely) NEL option” (option A now selected), “the existing demand on EastLink and Ringwood Bypass approaching and leaving the existing tunnels to and from the Eastern Freeway is likely to remain and additional growth must be accommodated based on the new connectivity to the M80.”*

*“If spare capacity is not available to accommodate all of this new demand, then the project would fail to achieve its aims of providing a viable alternative to the M1 for trips between the N and SE of Melbourne.”*

*“..... consideration of the RMAC area operations is only a serious issue in relation to Option A” (The selected final version) “where the NEL could significantly impact the RMAC area and vice versa.”*

*“O’Brien Traffic’s advice outlines potential issues with Option A, in the event that due consideration is not given in relation to the future operation/capacity of the EastLink tunnels and the Ringwood Bypass ..... If spare capacity is not available to accommodate all of this new demand, then the project would fail to achieve its aims of providing a viable alternative to the M1 for trips between the N and SE of Melbourne. Alternatively, the NEL project would succeed by displacing existing users onto arterials near the RMAC to avoid the route sections with capacity shortfalls.”*

**In relation to truck issues associated with Option A, the O’Brien advice states the following, “For Option A, this would mean increases in truck demand through the EastLink tunnels. The impact of significant truck increases through the tunnels on the Eastern Freeway, EastLink and Ringwood Bypass operations is likely to be substantial under Option A.**

*As currently proposed, Options B, C and D will experience truck capacity issues on the NEL sections but will avoid adding to the existing issues in the EastLink tunnels by bypassing them...*

*... Therefore, consideration of the RMAC area operations is only a serious issue in relation to Option A where the NEL could significantly impact the RMAC area and vice versa.*

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## **The final version (Originally Option A) of North East Link related to the RMAC:**

- Will overload the tunnels.

### **Solution: Tunnels need duplication**

- Will congest the Ringwood bypass, both East and west bound traffic.
- The Ringwood bypass is already compromised by the fact that there is no right turn offramp for northbound East Link traffic into Maroondah Highway through Ringwood. Thus, all east bound traffic is vectored into the Ringwood Bypass where it competes with eastbound traffic from the tunnel to the bypass.

### **Solution: Right turn lane from East Link northbound offramp to Maroondah Highway, Ringwood MAC corridor.**

- The Ringwood bypass traffic light controlled intersections at Ringwood Street and Warrandyte Road restrict east and west bound traffic flow on the bypass and conflict and restrict north south traffic flow on the roads (Ringwood Street - Wantirna Road, Warrandyte Road) feeding traffic into/out of the Ringwood MAC.
- The at-grade intersection of Mount Dandenong Road, Maroondah Highway and the Ringwood bypass causes flow restrictions impacting the bypass AND traffic access into the Ringwood MAC.

### **Solution: Grade separate all three interchanges.**

- With grade separation of these roads access to Ringwood MAC from Ringwood bypass needs to be re-established.  
Both Ringwood Street and Warrandyte Road should be accessed.

### **Solution: entrance/exit ramps off the Ringwood bypass to both Ringwood Street from the west and Warrandyte Road from both the west and east.**

Similar for Maroondah Highway- Ringwood bypass - Mount Dandenong Road. At least a three-level interchange.

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- **Impact of the NE Link on public transport within the Ringwood MAC and serving it from outside the MAC.**

*Extracts continued from NE Link Council Report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, page 333:*

**“Public transport & Active Transport**

*Whilst the current consultation is specifically about which road corridor will be selected, it is vital to ensure that public transport options are also considered, in particular improvement within region and external connection such as the rapid bus transport which is currently proposed along the Eastern Freeway, and complimentary rail upgrades. Without these improvements, it is likely that the road improvements will take existing patronage off public transport and increase congestion and the effectiveness of the road project. Active Transport (as seamless as possible) should be included at every opportunity for the full length of the project, and for any complimentary ancillary projects.*

*Further to the above, in April 2017, Transport for Victoria came into operation as the State Government agency that is responsible for coordinating Victoria's growing transport system and planning for its future. Transport for Victoria brings together the planning, managing and coordinating of Victoria's transport system and its agencies, including VicRoads and Public Transport Victoria.*

*Transport for Victoria is charged with ensuring that **all major transport projects are considered against the objectives of the Transport Integration Act 2010**. The Act requires that all decisions affecting the transport system be made within the same integrated decision-making framework and support the same objectives.*

*Key elements of the Act include applying considerations in the following areas when assessing any major transport project:*

- *Economic prosperity - Transport has an important role facilitating economic prosperity. An efficient and reliable transport network helps the productivity of existing businesses. It also helps people access a wide range of job opportunities.*
- *Social and economic inclusion - Transport plays an important role in developing social and economic inclusion by removing barriers to the use of the transport system. It also has a capacity-building role where opportunities for social and economic participation are maximised in partnership with communities.*
- *Transport resource efficiency and environmental sustainability - The transport sector is a significant consumer of energy, and a major source of urban air pollution. It is important to minimise the resources used by transport. Environmentally-responsible decisions protect, conserve and improve the natural environment. This ensures that we have the ability to maintain and improve living conditions needed to sustain people and other species.”*

**Impact of the North East Link on public transport patronage**

*P333 of NE Link Council Report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, continued.*

**“Active Transport (as seamless as possible) should be included at every opportunity for the full length of the project, and for any complimentary ancillary projects.**

Further to the above, **in April 2017, Transport for Victoria came into operation as the State Government agency that is responsible for coordinating Victoria's growing transport system and planning for its future.** Transport for Victoria brings together the planning, managing and coordinating of Victoria's transport system and its agencies, including VicRoads and Public Transport Victoria.

Transport for Victoria is charged with ensuring that all major transport projects are considered against the objectives ..... **The Transport Integration Act 2010..... Requires that all decisions affecting the transport system be made within the same integrated decision-making framework and support the same objectives.**

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- **Economic prosperity** - Transport has an important role facilitating economic prosperity. An efficient and reliable transport network helps the productivity of existing businesses. It also helps people access a wide range of job opportunities.
- **Social and economic inclusion** - Transport plays an important role in developing social and economic inclusion by removing barriers to the use of the transport system. It also has a capacity-building role where opportunities for social and economic participation are maximised in partnership with communities.
- **Transport resource efficiency and environmental sustainability** - The transport sector is a significant consumer of energy, and a major source of urban air pollution. It is important to minimise the resources used by transport. Environmentally-responsible decisions protect, conserve and improve the natural environment. This ensures that we have the ability to maintain and improve living conditions needed to sustain people and other species.

P334 of NE Link Council Report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**The NEL is deemed to be a critical project in relation to Melbourne's transportation needs (and) will have a major impact on Maroondah, especially the Ringwood Major Activity Centre, (a) full and proper consideration of the traffic impact on Ringwood Major Activity Centre, The Ringwood Bypass and the EastLink tunnels must be considered as part of the project. Ancillary, complementary projects should also be included as part of the NEL project.** These projects would include, but not be limited to:

- **New tunnel access to the Ringwood Bypass;**
- **The construction of the Norther Arterial & Healesville Freeway (all options);**
- **The construction of a right turn exit from EastLink to Maroondah Highway from the south;**
- **Freeway standard Rapid Bus Transit between Activity Centres, along NEL and EastLink;**
- **Complimentary Rail upgrades, (Hurstbridge, Lilydale, Belgrave); and**
- **Active Transport inclusion along the full alignment of the project and as part of any complimentary ancillary works.**

In HCAG's view, other than the busway through to Blackburn Road from the direction of the CBD, **the North East Link fails to consider the Transport**

**Integration Act 2010 adequately and in particular fails to address the requirements and needs of the RMAC and its surrounds.**

In anticipation of any counter statement that it is outside the scope of the North East Link activities our view is that the Transport Integration Act 2010 is a mandatory requirement, not an option.

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- **The northern arterial.**

Note:

The chosen route for the North East Link does not consider this Northern Arterial as a potential upgrade whereas Options B and C do.

**The O'Brien traffic report recommends diverting traffic from the Maroondah Highway to a yet to be committed or completed northern arterial Road.**

**This would most probably come off the Maroondah Highway at Chirnside Park along an upgraded and divided Holloway Road connecting to Wonga Road, Falconer Road, and Reynolds Road. (As shown in the schematic maps for the discarded Options B and C but omitted in the schematic map for the chosen Option A**

**This is a more direct westerly route than Maroondah Highway which directs traffic southwest into Ringwood. The proposed northern arterial would most probably be a four-lane divided road and would divert a considerable amount of through traffic away from Ringwood.**

**As envisaged it directs traffic into Reynolds Road which is hilly and therefore not ideal. The attitude of Manningham Council to this proposal is not known to HCAG. Again, referring to the schematic maps of discarded Options B and C, traffic is then directed south into Springvale Road and onto the Eastern Freeway west of the tunnels.**

**Other possibilities that are more direct and that HCAG favours and that we recommend and put forward here for consideration is to:**

- Connect Falconer Road to Park Road with an on/off ramp(s) to the Eastern Freeway west of the tunnels.

OR

- A straightened connection from Stinsons Road to Tindals Road-Old Warrandyte Road-Springvale Road–the Eastern Freeway on/off ramps.
- A combination of both of the above.

## Extracts from HCAG’s website document “Growing Pains.”

Figure 1:

Melbourne anticipated population growth (right column) between now and 2100 based on current annual compounding growth of 2% per annum.

COMPOUNDING GROWTH			
MELBOURNE SCENARIO: 2100			
Compounding growth at a growth rate of:			
	1.1% pa	1.5% pa	2.0% pa
Year	Pop. growth	Pop. growth	Pop. growth
2000	3,450,000	3,450,000	
2010	3,844,796	3,969,876	
2020	4,272,641	4,607,203	5,100,000
2030	4,733,486	5,346,847	6,120,000
2040	5,227,331	6,205,235	7,344,000
2060	6,314,021	8,357,551	8,812,800
2080	7,532,711	11,256,410	10,575,360
2100	8,883,401	15,160,752	15,228,518
			21,929,066

Whilst population growth may at present be less than 2% due to Covid we anticipate that it will return to pre covid levels in the near future.

Figure 2:

What Urban growth at 2%pa means for the local governments of Maroondah and Whitehorse, which encompass HCAG's area of advocacy. Assuming 2% compounding growth continues.



These population projections suggest that by 2030 Melbourne's population will have increased by 1 million to 6.12 million.

Furthermore, extrapolating this data, Maroondah can expect a population of 141000 by 2030, an increase of 23500.

Similarly, Whitehorse can expect a population of 216 900 by 2030, an increase of 36150.

The Ringwood bypass and tunnel growth is expected to be of a similar percentage due to population growth alone and without the NE Link additional traffic contribution.

## **HCAG ADVOCACY**

### **HCAG calls on:**

- **The State Government commit to a study of Public Transport requirements in the RMAC as required in accordance with the objectives of the Transport Integration Act 2010 (and which have not to date been carried out by the North East Link authority or any other Government authority)**
- **The State Government to provide the necessary funding to undertake all of these additional works – in particular the Melba and Mullum-Mullum tunnel duplication, Ringwood by pass upgrade, Northern Arterial, right turn lane from Eastlink north bound off ramp to Maroondah Highway Ringwood, and public transport upgrades in the RMAC and related surrounding areas. (See above)**
- **To do so in-conjunction with the North East Link works and to be completed BEFORE the completion of the North East Link.**

**(We believe that these works are likely to cost at least \$3 billion, possibly more than \$4 billion.)**

- **Opposition Parties, and relevant authorities to support all of the above items HCAG has advocated for.**

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## Appendix 1

### Politics

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#### Current Political Views

##### *For*

- The [Labor Party](#) at State and Federal level.
- The [Coalition](#) ([Liberal](#) and [National Parties](#)) at State and Federal level.

##### *Against*

- The [Greens](#) at State and Federal level.
- [Sustainable Australia Party](#)
- [Animal Justice Party](#)

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## Appendix 2

### The AGE

#### North East Link \$11.1b contract to include state's longest tunnels

By [Sumeyya Ilanbey](#) and [Marta Pascual Juanola](#)

**Updated** October 28, 2021 — 11.34amfirst published at 9.39am

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Victoria's longest road tunnel to be built as part of the North East Link will be extended a further 1.9 kilometres and cost an additional \$2 billion under a deal signed by the Andrews government, in a major win for local residents and councils.

The project will lead to an extra 100,000 cars onto the North East Link and Eastern Freeway, leading to bottlenecks on major roads and all but guaranteeing the need to turbocharge the build of the East West Link that the Andrews government paid \$1 billion to dump after the 2014 election.

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## Appendix 3

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT**

- 1. COUNCIL SUPPORTS THE NORTH EAST LINK PROJECT SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS BEING APPLIED FOR THOSE AREAS AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED ROUTE AND ANY ANCILLIARY WORKS**
- 2. COUNCIL CALLS FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE ALIGNMENT SELECTED BEST MEETS THE HIGH LEVEL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT, AND THE TRANSPORT INTEGRATION ACT 2010**
- 3. APPROPRIATE ANCILLARY PROJECTS, SUCH AS UPGRADED / DUPLICATE TUNNEL ACCESS TO THE RINGWOOD BYPASS, THE NORTHERN ARTERIAL, THE HEALESVILLE FREEWAY, EASTLINK RIGHT TURN EXIT ONTO MAROONDAH HIGHWAY, RAPID BUS TRANSIT BETWEEN ACTIVITY CENTRES, RAIL UPGRADES AND ACTIVE TRANSPORT BE INCLUDED AS NEEDED; AND**
- 4. COUNCIL PROVIDES THE NORTH EAST LINK AUTHORITY WITH A COPY OF THIS COUNCIL REPORT, WHICH CONTAINS ITS RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE O'BRIEN TRAFFIC ADVICE DATED 8 SEPTEMBER 2017.**

P336 – 343 North East Link Community update. Issue 2 August 2017

Page 339 Selected alignment: Greensborough- Bulleen Road – Eastern Freeway.

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# Appendix 4

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Our Reference: 19/122365 TS

4 June 2019



**Attention:** DWELP  
**North East Link Inquiry & Advisory Committee**  
**Via Website Link** <https://engage.vic.gov.au/north-east-link-project>

Dear Sir / Madam

**North East Link Environmental Effects Statement  
Maroondah City Council Submission**

Maroondah Council would like to thank the State Government and the North East Link Authority (NELA) for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry and Advisory Committee on the Environmental Effects Statement in regard to the North East Link (NEL) project.

At the Council meeting held on 18 September 2017 Maroondah Council considered the NEL project. These considerations were informed by a technical review carried out by Council officers on the NEL project, as well as a highly localised understanding of the current traffic issues in Ringwood, particularly on the Ringwood Bypass and on the Eastlink Tunnels, and the Eastlink interchange with the Ringwood Bypass and the Maroondah Highway. The Council review process also included the consideration of an assessment by traffic consultants O'Brien Traffic, who have multiple years of experience in assessing traffic matters in Ringwood, including during Eastlink's construction, during Ringwood's transformation into a Major Activity Centre and during the recent major development of Eastland and the Ringwood Station. Based on the findings of this review, Council endorsed the following recommendations:

1. Council supports the NEL project subject to appropriate traffic considerations being applied for those areas affected by the proposed route and any ancillary works
2. Council calls for the government to ensure that the alignment selected best meets the high-level objectives of the project, and the transport integration act 2010
3. Appropriate ancillary projects, such as upgraded / duplicate tunnel access to the Ringwood bypass, the northern arterial, EastLink right turn exit onto Maroondah highway, rapid bus transit between activity centres, rail upgrades and active transport be included as needed subject to appropriate community consultation; and
4. Council provides the North East Link Authority with a copy of this council report, which contains its recommendations and the O'Brien traffic advice dated 8 September 2017

At the time, Council's Mayor wrote to NELA regarding these recommendations, and requested the following:

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*"Given Council's support was subject to appropriate traffic considerations and ancillary works being included as required, it is requested that NELA provide Council with a response that addresses the concerns raised in the reports attached with Council's submission. Council officers would also welcome the opportunity to meet with NELA to discuss Council's specific concerns and how they relate to Ringwood."*

**Contact us**

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Council officers met with NELA on the 6 April 2018 and 30 April 2018 to discuss Council's concerns, particularly with regard to the impact of the project on the Eastlink Mulum and Melba Tunnels and the Ringwood Bypass. It was discussed that Council considered the Eastlink tunnels and the Ringwood Bypass would not cope with the expected traffic increases from the North East Link project and that this would have a major impact on the viability of Ringwood. It was outlined that Council believed the Northern Arterial Road project (currently unfunded) was critical and should form part of the NEL works, as well as other improvements to the Ringwood Bypass and the intersection of Maroondah Highway and Eastlink to reduce the anticipated traffic pressure on Ringwood.

At these meetings actions were agreed that Council would forward local traffic / transport information to NELA (e-mailed by MCC to NELA on 24 September 2018), and that NELA would provide a status update when information is available regarding:

- Managed motorway and lane configuration; and
- Next steps forward in transport modelling.

To date Council has not received any specific information regarding the two points above.

As such, Council's original concerns remain unresolved, and Council holds the view that these concerns need to be seriously considered and addressed by NELA and the State Government. It is Council's view that if the Ringwood Bypass and the Eastlink tunnels are unable to cope with expected traffic increases from the NEL, not only will this be highly detrimental to the viability of Ringwood, but also to the overall success and community benefit of the NEL project.

Yours sincerely



**Cr ROB STEANE**  
**MAYOR**

C.C.     Dustin Halse MP (State Member for Ringwood)  
           Jackson Taylor MP (State Member for Bayswater)