My Address To My Submission Statement Previously Forwarded To The North East Link Inquiry And Advisory Committee.

Wednesday September 11th 2019, proposed time: 4.25, for 10 minutes, Giselle James

To The Committee:-
Thank you for the opportunity to speak and for your time in an intensive schedule.

To the traditional owners, their Elders - past, present and future:-
I pay my respects and express my gratitude for your love of the land.

To the Veneto Club:-
Thank you for supplying your beautiful venue.

My submission was brief, rapid and self-focused - as my awareness for the need to submit one was a) unexpected and b) short in deadline time. (It was unexpected because an alternative trench design had been created, indicating it was a response to a huge number of people requesting it and, therefore, I assumed it had superseded the original design. It was self-focused because of the deadline time and my lack of knowledge of the other North East Link developments.)
I was given a copy of the Environment Effects Statement Summary Report book to assist me. After submitting, I began to go through the book.

I went to Amenity and wellbeing, specifically Air Quality, pp37-39.
On page 38 I was delighted to read of the measures for the workers' protection.
I noted with alarm the following in paragraph 3: The largest increases in maximum pollutant concentrations are predicted to occur along the North East Link alignment between Yallambie Road and the M80 Ring Road interchange. Notwithstanding, these changes are not considered to be associated with significant or measurable impacts on community health.
I wondered who did the considering.
On page 39, I read: Overall, the applicable EPA Victoria standards would be met for most pollutants across the project.
This was followed by: The exception would be maximum 24-hour and annual average PM concentrations in some locations, which would exceed the SEPP (Ambient Air Quality) criteria. As noted above, this is because background concentrations of PM already exceed the SEPP criteria. [Referring back, I discovered PM means particulate matter].

I decided to go back to the very beginning of it all, if I could.
This appeared to be the Business Case Executive Summary May 2018 document/book, which I found processed onto the internet.
I went to Section 2: Summary. It stated: Overall, corridor Option A offers the most cost-effective solution and the maximum benefits.
I went on to Appendix D Options Assessment February 2018 which contained the Objectives and Guiding Principles for the North East Link. I noted Objective 2:- Improve household access to employment and education in Melbourne's north, east and south-east.
I also noted Objective 4:- Improve access, amenity and safety for communities in the north east.
Continuing on, I found the subheading The project corridor,
Dot point 1 stated: This corridor best meets the Project Objectives and was assessed as performing very well against the Guiding Principles when compared to all other corridor options.
I did not know if any other corridor performed better in regard to Guiding Principles, although Section 2: Summary contained a statement that, in the detailed appraisal, corridor option A performs significantly more effectively in relation to the Project Objectives and Guiding Principles than corridor option C.
I did not read further, but at some stage I would like very much to read the book.

I was gratified to find that education (and by extension, schools) was part of Objective 2 out of four Objectives in the Business Case book which indicated to me the high value placed on children.

To my knowledge, the area between Lower Plenty Road and the M80 contains, in close proximity to Greensborough Road and Bypass, at least 5 preschools and kindergartens, one being a footpath’s distance from Greensborough Road. There are additional preschools in proximity to Greensborough Road, and on the cusp area of the proposed tunnel and trench.

To my knowledge, the area between Lower Plenty Road and the M80 contains, in close proximity to Greensborough Road and Bypass, 12 primary schools (including a P-12 school) and a further two secondary schools. 7 of these schools are in, and north of Elder Street and, therefore, outside the NE Link Project’s proposed trench area.

I re-read the sentence referring to the occurrence of the largest increases in maximum pollutant concentrations and, whilst the following sentence stated the changes were not considered to be associated with significant or measurable impacts on community health, it did not make me feel any better about the lack of a trench in the area between the M80 and Yallambie Road, as planned.

I needed detail about why the changes were not associated with the above defined impacts.

I then went on to the Tabled Documents, that touched on, or focused on, Air Emissions/Air Quality and tunnelling.

Document 1: Email Letter to The Chairperson North East Link Inquiry and Advisory Committee from Sallyanne Everett, Partner, Clayton Utz, 7th June 2019

Page 1, Presentations Box, Group 4, dot point 4 had Air Quality as a subject heading. I hoped that in either this presentation or the following one — Human Health — Air Emissions would feature.

Document 74: Interim Report on Air Emissions and Air Quality, submitted by the Advisor, Catherine Wilson, in response to the Committee’s request.

Page 3, (ix) A Summary of the opinion or opinions of the expert

Statement 2: However I cannot form an opinion regarding the impact of the project on a sub-regional level.

This was a huge concern to me, as was her following statement (which included a number of dot points — the first one being on emissions) that she was of the opinion that further assessment of vent stacks was required.


When I read his report, I understood why my queries could not be addressed, as it was not within the parameters he was given, from what, as a layperson, I could see.


The information was good, as was his requirement for detail.

I attended a local community meeting where designs for a tunnel extension north of Lower Plenty Road were presented. I could not locate it in the list of tabled documents. It was referred to as the Smart Taxpayer Design. It may not have been tabled at the Hearing.

I looked at the information and plan for a tunnel extension: Document 98, NELP Technical Note 30. I could see the feasibility of a tunnel extension. It would require time to fine-tune a plan, I felt.

Document 62: NELP Technical Note response to Catherine Wilson’s queries outlined emergency exhaust inside the tunnel. I thought Catherine had additional enquiries.

It isn’t easy keeping up with Responses and understanding when they are met!

I noted the revised heading. (That is, I did not see Air Emissions included.)
I noted that the Vent stack design area appears to be unresolved, if I am reading correctly. The sections I am referring to are 1. Vent stack Controls and 2. Emission Impacts of re-entrained dust.
It appeared to me that there would be further investigations occurring.

I submit my praise to all Advisors for their work and its quality!
I also realise the huge scope of the task for the NELP people and I appreciate all the documents that have been produced.

Document/Pamphlet: Noise And Air Quality EES study update September 2018.

Air Quality

I noted that the Alphington Monitoring Station is the closest, most representative monitoring station measuring key air pollutants and that installation of monitoring equipment at locations along the North East Link project corridor will occur. This eased my mind to some extent, as I am assuming there is a close relationship in time of publication of the pamphlet to the documentation of the undated Executive Summary Report.

My next questions would be:-
Where will these locations be?
What built-in strategies/processes would be in place if the local air quality conditions deteriorate?

I would like to see appropriate time given for people to address issues as they arise.

Looking at the information that I have had the time and the health to access, I would like to see an extension of the tunnel continuing north of Lower Plenty Road, beyond Grimshaw Street and that the entrance to the tunnel be made from the M80.
If vehicles local to the Grimshaw Street area require access to the tollway, is it possible for them to gain access to the M80 and then the tunnel?

I feel a number of tunnel options would have been studied, like the North East Link corridor options were, but I would like to see investigation into tunnel extensions continuing.
It is an extensively, and long-established built-up area.

Thank you for your time, patience and consideration given to a layperson in the field.

Giselle James
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