

Opening Remarks

Noise

The Report

1. In preparing the Environment Effects Statement, AECOM, on behalf of the WDA, prepared a surface noise and vibration impact assessment. This forms Technical Report H, dated 9 May 2017, to the EES ('the Report').
2. As discussed in Section 9 of the Report, the Project has adopted various mitigation measures for address airborne noise impacts associated with the Project. These include:
 - a. The adoption of 'Project Specific Noise Objectives' for both construction and operational phases. In both cases, the Objectives adopted are more protective of amenity than those typically applied in Victoria.
 - b. Adoption of a detailed Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan ('CNVMP') for the construction phase.
 - c. Construction (or extension) of noise barriers along the West Gate Freeway to reduce noise during the Project Specific Noise Objective for the operational phase.
 - d. Provision of 'off site' noise attenuation where necessary to meet the Project Specific Noise Objective for the operational phase.
3. The Report anticipates that, by complying with these measures, that the majority of roads near the Project will experience no perceptible change in noise (+/- 1dBa). As against 2031, as depicted in Figures 30 and 42 of the Report, it is expected that only two streets – Millers Road north of the Freeway and one small section of Simcock Avenue – would see an increase of 2dBa or more.
4. In respect of Millers Road, it is noted that Mr Stead's witness statement identifies that, if a single toll point were adopted (as discussed in Project Note 1), the increase would be reduced from > 2dBA to 1.3 dBA.
5. In respect of Simcock Avenue, the majority of Simcock Avenue is predicted to experience a small decrease (between 0 – 1 dBA). The section that experiences that increase is located > 300m from the nearest sensitive receptor.

Model choice and noise impact assessment

6. For the purposes of the Environment Effects Statement, the Project has adopted the results of a single distribution traffic model. As explained by Mr Veitch in evidence, the adoption of a single distribution model results in higher estimated traffic volumes than the use of a loop through model.
7. As noise is – partially – a function of traffic volumes, the adoption of a model which produces higher traffic estimates results in a more conservative noise assessment.
8. A further element of conservatism is added through the adoption of the upper range figures for post-processing traffic volumes. This is referred to at page 330 of Appendix D to the Report (page 416 in the PDF).

9. The combined effect of this is to build a degree of conservatism into the noise impact assessment.

Mr Stead's Role

10. Mr Stead has undertaken three peer reviews of the Report:
 - a. In April 2017, Mr Stead undertook a preliminary peer review of a draft of the Report;
 - b. In May 2017, Mr Stead under a final peer review of the Report;
 - c. In August 2017, Mr Stead prepared a witness statement for this matter which included a further peer review.
11. Through those processes, Mr Stead has recommended the carrying out of further investigations and refinements to the EPRs.

Environmental Performance Requirements

12. The EES included a number of EPRs relating to the management of noise and vibration impacts (both surface and underground).
13. In preparing for this hearing, Mr Stead held conclaves with Mr Elkin (for Hobsons Bay City Council), Mr Zerbst (for EPA), and Mr Tardio (for City of Melbourne) and was able to reach agreement with them on a number of matters. The points of agreement and disagreement are included in the conclave report, dated 14 August 2017.
14. Version 2 of the EPRs, circulated on 18 August 2017, incorporates a number of proposed changes arising from the conclaves. While the WDA has not currently implemented all agreed actions, this does not necessarily reflect a decided refusal to incorporate those actions (or aspects of those actions). For example, where recommendations have been made to incorporate policies or documents (whether in whole or in part), consideration has to be given to not just the appropriateness of incorporating those policies and documents, but how that should be done.

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