

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

862

Request to be heard?: No, but please email me the

Full Name: Gina Croce-Yap

Organisation: Mountain View Road Residents

Affected property:

Attachment 1: North_East_Link_i

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Please see street submission attached.

North East Link Submission Statement

To: The North East Link Inquiry and Advisory Committee

From:

Dennis Biasotto and Julie Biasotto	148 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
June Harley	150 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
Daniel Chen	152 Mountain View Rd, Balwyn North
Carmen Yiu	154 Mountain View Rd, Balwyn North
Vicky Bartzis	156 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
Joseph Yap and Gina Croce-Yap	158 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
Tuan Nguyen and Muoi Huynh	160 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North
Insuk Song and EunSoon Song	162 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North

Re: The North East Link design and its impact on our residential area.

As residents of Mountain View Road, Balwyn North we are shocked, frightened and outraged by the proposed design for the North East Link and its very significant and detrimental impact on our street.

We submit this submission to change the current plans for our area as they pose significant negative impacts on our livelihoods. This process is made stressful by the fact that what we are asking for is what should be reasonable and fair.

EES References

In reference to EES, Technical Report H, Landscape & Visual, pages 261-263. "The proposed noise wall would be five meters closer to the viewpoint in this location with a shared use path in front and proposed viaduct with viaduct noise wall behind. The existing noise wall, shared use path and vegetation would be removed. The proposed noise wall in this location would be approximately 10 meters high and the proposed viaduct noise wall would be approximately four meters. Landscaping would be proposed between the shared use path and existing road surface." See map on page 261.

Technical Report C Appendix I – Figure I4 shows a noise wall 9-10 meters high and a viaduct wall of 4 meters high along the freeway next to Mountain View Rd.

The visual impact is assessed as **high**. We are gravely troubled about the impact of the interchange and the noise wall given their proximity to our homes.

Potential Impacts

1. Encroachment of personal space enjoyed in residential areas

A closer and higher noise wall and the visibility of the viaduct only meters from our properties may feel overbearingly heavy for us as they weigh down visually and sensationally, creating a feeling of entrapment. It is likely to diminish the sunlight, greenery and openness currently enjoyed, changing the feel of the street.

2. Loss of greenery and vegetation

- a. Our proximity to the freeway is compensated by the beautiful garden opposite our properties, which partially hides the freeway wall. [The Urban Design Strategy](#) points to buffer planting used to mitigate views and enhance the appearance of walls. We are anxious that the current plans for the new noise wall and walking and cycling path will not allow the space for such planting.
- b. [EES Chapter 27, page 27, EPR code AR1](#) points to maximum tree retention. We are worried about removal of the garden to allow the construction of the noise wall and the upgraded walking and cycling path. If the vegetation cannot be maintained the potential visual impact would be high for us. The garden also holds sentimental importance for one of our residents. Vicky and her late husband lovingly planted the garden themselves many years ago. Together as neighbours we have cared for and nurtured the garden and its removal is deeply saddening. While efforts may be made to replant, the noise wall and its shadow will likely block out sunlight for any new vegetation to grow.
- c. [EES Chapter 27, page 27-28, EPR code AR2](#) points to the maintenance and replacement of protected plants and trees that suffer stress within the first two years. We are afraid that any replaced plants and trees will not be monitored beyond the two-year mark, eventually leaving barrenness and the ugliness of a noise wall.
- d. [EES Chapter 27, page 35, EPR code FF2](#) points to the protection of fauna. We are also uneasy that the removal of plants and trees in our street will disturb the habitat of the fauna which call our street home. Over the years our children have learnt firsthand about our wildlife and how to care and protect it. They have developed caring natures through their observations and care of the wildlife. The potential loss of fauna as a result of the removal of flora is upsetting for us all.

3. Over Shadowing and Aesthetics – Height and Visual Impact of Wall

Technical Report E - Page 32 discusses “Modelling to establish the existing and proposed overshadowing caused by installation of permanent project infrastructure (noise walls, shared use overpasses and other elevated structures) at the spring equinox (22 September) between 9 am and 3 pm (which is the date and timeframe adopted for recent major transport projects in Victoria).”

Technical Report E - Page 105 suggests that EPRs will address ‘significant adverse effects’ of overshadowing of noise walls on residents ‘through urban design response (EPR LP4) and subsequent detailed design’ Therefore, ‘residual overshadowing impacts may be minimised or reduced and so would unlikely cause land use change.’

Overshadowing indicated on the map of our area (Appendix D – Map – Existing and Proposed Shading September 22nd 9am/3pm) shows significant shading reaching the trees on our nature strip.

We are gravely concerned and afraid that in the winter months there will be greater shadowing, casting us and our gardens into what can best be described as a depressing and unhealthy lack of sunlight. We do not believe that the EPRs adequately address the overshadowing issues we will face. The streetscape will be greatly altered by the removal of plants and we are extremely doubtful that there will be adequate sunlight for the growth of new plants and trees.

Urban Design Strategy, page 92 points to the detailed requirements and benchmarks for walls, fencing, barriers and screens.

- a. In reference to **9.1 Noise and visual mitigation**, the ten-meter-high wall proposed for our area may successfully block traffic noise to acceptable levels. Our concerns however are for the landscaping which should enhance and soften the appearance of the wall, reducing its height and bulk. With the proposal for the wall to be moved closer to our properties, we fail to see how there will be sufficient space and light to grow the vegetation which will integrate the wall into the area. We are extremely anxious that we will be left facing a large, high and ugly noise wall with very little greenery to beautify the area.
- b. The current design shows that the noise wall will move closer to our homes and a shared walking/bike path will be created spanning 3 meters wide, at between half a meter and a meter from both the noise wall and the road on either side. Potentially 4 to 5 meters will be used up for the walking/bike path and given the space we currently have, very little space would be available for garden beds let alone trees.
- c. **9.4 Interfaces** points to minimising the creation of narrow areas between noise walls and residential properties and employing innovative solutions to ensure narrow spaces are pleasant and safe. We are distressed that the height of the wall is too great for the space between it and our residential properties. The higher the wall, the narrower our street will appear and feel. A lack of greenery will also make it a considerably less pleasant space.

- d. In reference to **9.6 Visual connectivity and solar access**. A semi-transparent barrier to reduce the bulky appearance of the wall and minimize overshadowing would optimise sunlight for growth of vegetation but we are anxious that the sight of moving traffic will impact greatly on our sense of privacy, community and peaceful enjoyment of our street. It would change the feel of the street greatly. We are also troubled that over time the transparent sections of the wall would gather dust and grime, making it a truly ugly site.

4. Width of the road

We are concerned that the turning point opposite Property 154 will be removed to allow for the construction of the noise wall. Council rubbish collection trucks use the turning point as do drivers who make their way to the end of Mountain View Road, not realizing that it is a dead end. We worry that the width of the road might not be wide enough in the event of an emergency. We and our visitors also depend on the width of the road for extra parking, particularly those of us at 158, 160 and 162 as the road in front of our properties is a one-way dead-end street and does not allow street parking.

5. Bike path

We are agitated about the width at all sections of our road to allow a bike path and the safety of riders. Visitors backing out of driveway 158 often accidentally drive over the vegetation in order to allow themselves enough space to maneuver their vehicle. If this vegetation were to be removed to allow for the bike path, there may be safety concerns for bike riders and walkers. It has been suggested that our plants could grow vertically up the noise wall in the form of vines but that there wouldn't be space to have both vines growing up the wall and a garden bed with plants and trees on the road side of the path. If we were to choose vines what would separate bike riders and walkers from the cars?

6. Air quality

We are distressed that the North East Link interchange will increase traffic volumes and diminish the air quality over time. While we expect that vehicles in the future will be hybrid and electric, it is a projection and not a certainty that an uptake in popularity of such vehicles will mitigate air quality impacts. The current projected safe pollution levels are not convincing. The volume of traffic will continue to increase with population growth, and we are very anxious about our health and the health of our families in the coming years should the air quality fall below safe levels.

Technical Report B – Air Quality addresses air pollution controls. Despite the assurance that air quality will be monitored and managed we are dubious that the existing levels of air quality will not be altered significantly by construction pollutants, increased traffic pollutants and potential proposed ventilation grid pollutants.

Noise Pollution

Technical report C – page 77 indicates current noise levels at 150 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North

dBA 60 – 6 am to midnight

dBA 55 – 10pm to 6 am

dBA 56 – Day

dBA 56 – Evening

dBA 49 – Night

Technical Report C – page 128 - 9.5.3.3 Noise mitigation recommended to achieve EPR NV01 suggests “The proposed mitigation in Noise Precinct 3 includes:

- Low-noise, open-graded asphalt (OGA) on the main carriageway. The use of OGA has been extended to include two of the viaducts at the southern portal (the viaduct transporting vehicles travelling west along the Eastern Freeway into the tunnel, and the viaduct transporting vehicles from the tunnel in an easterly direction on the Eastern Freeway), subject to detailed design acceptance. If the use of OGA proves not to be feasible, several additional dwellings in the surrounding area may qualify for treatment.”*
- Thirteen properties in Noise Precinct 3 are subject of residual impacts, which may qualify for at-property noise mitigation. “*

It is unclear in the report what such treatments would be, and we are keen to know whether our homes fall into this category and what the treatments entail.

Technical Report C - Table 9-4 Calculated typical road traffic noise levels – Noise Precinct 3

We are closest to Belle Vue Primary. Below are the Road Traffic Noise Levels (dBa) at this location

<i>Existing (2018)</i>	<i>60 to 69</i>
<i>Do Nothing (2036)</i>	<i>62 to 70</i>
<i>With Project (2036)</i>	<i>59 to 70</i>
<i>With/without project (2036)</i>	<i>-3 to 0</i>
<i>Change from current (with project)</i>	<i>-2 to 1</i>

Technical Report C – Appendix H – figure H4 shows a construction noise level of 51-55 dBA.

As far as we can see the improvement to noise levels once the project is completed and projecting forward to 2036 appears minimal.

The construction noise indicated is considerably lower than the existing noise levels without construction and traffic only. We wonder how this can be possible.

7. During Construction

Map Book – North East link Project, Horizontal Plan: Construction, Reference Design, Sheet 23 of 42, Date 05/03/2019 shows the construction area during the project.

The road will be used as a construction site from house number 148 to 162. We speculate that this will allow no street access during the project. We will possibly not be able to keep our vehicles on our properties during this time, leaving them vulnerable to weather damage, dirty and dusty from the construction site and not secure within garages and carports, thus affecting our insurance, should we need to make a claim.

Also impacted would be our level of convenience and comfort which comes with easy access to our vehicles. It will mean that we will need to walk to our cars parked further up Mountain View Road, whether there be rain, hail or shine. Our food shopping trips will be made more difficult, particularly to unload the shopping.

How safe would we feel in leaving our homes for a short trip or holiday? Making several trips to the car to pack for the trip, possibly in the light of day, under the watchful eyes of workmen suddenly aware that the home will be unattended to for days, weeks, possibly months doesn't leave us feeling secure, but rather exposed.

On a more practical level, rubbish collection will not be possible on our street during construction and we imagine we will then be wheeling our bins up and down Mountain View Rd.

Should there be an emergency, emergency vehicles and personnel would be unable to reach us in timely fashion.

The list goes on and we suddenly realise how much we take for granted and how greatly we will be impacted.

8. Lifestyle

EES Chapter 27, page 43, EPR code LP2 points to the minimization of impacts to residential areas. We feel that the proposed design for the North East Link delivers absolute maximum impact to our area during construction and beyond.

We currently enjoy a relatively peaceful environment. The freeway noise is blocked by the current wall which is about five meters high and at an acceptable distance from our homes. It casts a shadow onto the road that nevertheless allows sufficient sunlight to reach our properties. In summer, the trees nearest to the wall along the shared bicycle/walking path provide balanced shade and vibrant greenery. We enjoy fully mature evergreen and deciduous trees, now higher than the wall, and other vegetation, originally planted by the residents and nurtured by us all to-date. This scene blends in with the local streetscape of the area and is a vital part of our living here. It even compensates for the five-meter wall, detracting from its sheer existence.

Our street is tranquil. We feel the serenity of this section and enjoyment of living in Balwyn North, all of which is vital for our well-being. We are steps away from the walking and cycling path that runs through the Koonung Reserve and many of us walk with our partners, children and dogs regularly. We have all the convenience of a freeway and bus routes close by but hidden behind a wall of trees and plants which buffer the noise wall and the idea of a freeway beyond. It feels safe and mostly local traffic drives through.

All this contributes to the feel of our street where we are all happy. So happy that we have firstly chosen to live here and secondly chosen to renovate, extend and build new homes. The space and the garden between our properties and the current noise wall are among the most influential elements of our street and impact greatly on our happiness as residents here.

For the proposed wall of 9 to 10 meters in height to be permitted would be catastrophic in relation to overshadowing, loss of greenery, width of the road and the other relevant facts stipulated above; again, impinging on health and well-being.

We ask that the enjoyment of our residential area, our well-being and our happiness be carefully considered and that the various potential impacts be taken into serious consideration regarding the building of the North East Link and all associated upgrades to the Eastern freeway. We reiterate strongly that we are opposed to the current plan for the North East Link and how it impacts on our area.

9. Our Proposal

We suggest that the existing freeway noise wall stays at its current location or is moved further away. This may allow sufficient space for the new shared bicycle/walking path and the maintenance of our established vegetation. We are already compromised enough by the fact that the Eastern Freeway runs just over the other side of the wall opposite our homes. At the very least the existing garden must remain so that our quality of life is preserved into the future, despite an ever-increasing population and busier freeway. The proposed freeway interchange onto Bulleen Road should be shifted away from this site of contention with an added high sound barrier wall, for obvious reasons, rather than constructing an encroachment onto our streetscape. We plead that the abovementioned clearly referenced points be taken seriously in our favour.

The impact of the project in our area is far too great with obvious effects on our health and well being individually and as a community and we therefore reject the current design.

We ask that the Inquiry and Advisory Committee seriously consider our submission and represent us as residents who are potentially being forced to live meters from a major freeway, in a project designed for the wider community.

Yours sincerely,

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