Opening remarks

Group 5: Business and social impacts

Relevant evaluation objectives

1 The evaluation objective relevant to business and social impacts is at section 4.4 of the scoping requirements, as follows:

To manage effects of the project on land use and the social fabric of the community with regard to wellbeing, community cohesion, business functionality and access to goods, services and facilities.

EES

2 The following chapters of the EES, and technical reports, are relevant to business impacts:

(a) EES Chapter 14 – Business; and

(b) Technical Report F – Business.

3 The following chapters of the EES, and technical reports, are relevant to social impacts:

(a) EES Chapter 17 – Social; and

(b) Technical Report I – Social.

4 Technical Report I included as Appendix F a Sport and Recreation Preliminary Options Assessment. An update to that assessment was provided in Technical Note 37.

5 A report entitled “Overview of social impacts of North East Link,” authored by Public Place Pty Ltd and dated May 2019, was published on the North East Link website as an information update.¹ The purpose of that document was to provide an overview of the Project’s more significant potential social impacts as identified in the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for the Project and accompanying materials, using maps and figures to highlight changes and impacts.

EPRs

6 The following EPRs are relevant to business and social impacts:

(a) The Business suite of EPRs;

(b) The Land Use Planning suite of EPRs;

(c) LV1 – Design to be in accordance with the Urban Design Strategy; LV2 - Minimise landscape impacts during construction; LV3 - Minimise construction lighting impacts; and

(d) The Social and Community suite of EPRs.

Of those EPRs, NELP proposes to amend the EPRs in the following way (see hearing document 130):

(a) Amend B1 in response to the Business conclave;

(b) Amend SC1 and SC4 in response to expert evidence;

(c) Introduce SCNEW1 and SCNEW2 in response to expert evidence;

(d) Amend LP1, LP2 and LP4 in response to submissions, expert evidence and the Business conclave; and

(e) Amend LV1 and LV2 as a correction.

As has been foreshadowed through cross-examination of earlier witnesses, NELP also proposes to amend SC2 to provide that the Communications and Community Engagement Plan called up by that EPR expressly include schools and other educational institutions as a relevant stakeholder, and to provide for the appointment of a dedicated liaison officer as appropriate.

**Witnesses**

The following witnesses are relevant to business and social impacts:

(a) Michael Barlow on behalf of NELP on land use planning;²

(b) Marianne Stoettrup on behalf of NELP on business impacts;³

(c) Glenn Weston on behalf of NELP on social impacts;⁴

(d) Brian Haratsis on behalf of the City of Manningham on business and economic impacts;⁵

(e) Judith Stubbs on behalf of the City of Manningham on social impacts;⁶ and

² Documents 24va.
³ Document 24t.
⁴ Document 24h-j.
⁵ Document 29a.
(f) Richard Simon on behalf of the Cities of Banyule, Boroondara and Whitehorse on open space.\textsuperscript{7}

10 A joint report dated 29 July was prepared following the expert meeting in respect of business impacts, attended by Ms Stoettrup, Mr Barlow and Mr Haratsis.\textsuperscript{8}

**Technical notes**

11 The following technical notes are relevant to business and social impacts:

(a) TN15 – Crown land and private recreational facilities;\textsuperscript{9}
(b) TN16 – Open space areas: operation impacts;\textsuperscript{10}
(c) TN17 – Bulleen industrial precinct;\textsuperscript{11} and
(d) TN37 – Sport and recreation relocation update.\textsuperscript{12}

**Issues**

12 The Project will have both positive and negative effects on the community, including businesses. When assessing the effects of the Project on communities, the approach should not be to assess whether or to what extent there will be a change from the existing circumstances. It is implicit from the evaluation objective that there will be change, and change is not an impact in itself.

13 Rather, the approach should be to assess whether the extent of change can be managed or mitigated so as to make the effects acceptable, and whether those effects (as mitigated) will produce a beneficial outcome when balanced against the benefits of the Project.

14 The focus of the assessment in the EES, as well as the submissions and the evidence, is on the negative effects of the Project on the community. This is appropriate because it is the negative effects that require management and mitigation.

15 But this focus should not obscure the significant positive effects of the Project for the local and regional community, including reduced travel times, improved active travel linkages, improved vehicle safety, reduced congestion and truck traffic on arterial

\textsuperscript{6} Document 29c.
\textsuperscript{7} Document 28j.
\textsuperscript{8} Document 108.
\textsuperscript{9} Documents 49 and 49a-f.
\textsuperscript{10} Documents 50 and 50a.
\textsuperscript{11} Document 51.
\textsuperscript{12} Documents 105 and 105a.
roads, overall noise reductions and greater connectivity for the local and regional population, workforce and freight task.

16 The Project has sought to minimise the extent of acquisition, particularly of residential properties. The Reference Project would require the acquisition of 36 residential properties.

17 The most significant business impact is the acquisition of businesses in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct for the purposes of the construction of the Manningham interchange.

18 The most significant social impacts relate to:

(a) The acquisition of businesses in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct and consequential impacts on business owners, employees and customers;

(b) The temporary and permanent relocation of sport and recreational facilities, particularly in Bulleen Park, and consequential impacts on user groups; and

(c) The temporary and permanent occupation of open space, and consequential impacts on users.

19 The intention behind the Business and the Social and Community suites of EPRs is to establish a framework for the management and mitigation of effects on businesses, community facilities and open space, and on particular stakeholders.

20 NELP has undertaken significant work, in consultation with local government, businesses, community facility operators and user groups, to develop strategies to mitigate impacts. That work is ongoing.
However, there is sufficient material to satisfy the IAC that the business and social impacts of the Project are understood and can be managed and mitigated so as to result in acceptable outcomes, through application of the relevant EPRs.

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