West Gate Tunnel Environment Effects Statement

Joint Inquiry and Advisory Committee Hearing
David Barnes, Strategic Planning Evidence

On behalf of
Maribyrnong City Council

2nd August 2017
# Contents

1. **Introduction** ....................................................................................................... 1
2. **Council’s Position** .............................................................................................. 3
3. **Design Response** .................................................................................................. 4
4. **Evolution of Inner Urban Waterways and Ports** .................................................... 5
5. **Northern Tunnel Portal and Maribyrnong River Crossing** ...................................... 7
6. **Maribyrnong River Crossing – Planning Policy Considerations** ............................ 9
   6.1 Plan Melbourne ........................................................................................................ 9
   6.2 State planning policy .................................................................................................. 13
   6.3 Local Planning Policy – Melbourne ............................................................................. 18
   6.4 Local Planning Policy – Maribyrnong ......................................................................... 19
7. **Local area policies** ............................................................................................... 22
   7.1 Footscray Metropolitan Activity Centre (21.11) .......................................................... 22
   7.2 Footscray Structure Plan 2014 .................................................................................. 24
   7.3 Footscray River Edge Master Plan 2014 .................................................................... 25
   7.4 Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines 2010 ..................................................... 28
   7.5 Yarraville Core Employment Area Policy (Clause 22.04) .............................................. 30
8. **Impacts along the River Corridor** ......................................................................... 33
   8.1 Maribyrnong Street, south of Shepherd Bridge ............................................................ 34
   8.2 Looking south from Shepherd Bridge ........................................................................ 35
   8.3 Impacts on the Footscray Activity Centre Riverside Precinct ...................................... 36
   8.4 Longer Term Downstream Impacts ............................................................................. 37
   8.5 Perceptions of the Footscray Activity Centre and Maribyrnong River gateway to the Western Suburbs ......................................................................................................................... 38
9. **Northern Portal** ................................................................................................... 40
10. **Open Space and Landscaping** ............................................................................. 41
11. **Conclusion** .......................................................................................................... 42
1 Introduction

1. My name is David Barnes. I am the Managing Director of Hansen Partnership Pty Ltd, which is located at Level 4, 136 Exhibition Street, Melbourne.

2. I hold the following qualifications:
   - Bachelor of Town and Regional Planning (Hons), University of Melbourne, 1980.
   - Master of Business Administration, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1993.

3. I have practiced as a town planner for over 35 years, working in the public as well as the private sectors. I have also worked overseas in Vietnam on a variety of statutory planning, strategic planning, institutional strengthening and tourism projects.

4. I am both a statutory and a strategic planner. My planning experience covers many aspects of the planning approvals process on a range of projects including infrastructure, residential, industrial, retail, mixed use and rural developments. I regularly appear before VCAT and Planning Panels Victoria. I have been involved in a broad range of strategic planning projects including the preparation of industrial land use strategies, residential development strategies, integrated municipal strategies, township strategies, town centre strategies, structure plans and urban design frameworks for activity centres and transit cities, and rural land use strategies.

5. I have been instructed by Maddocks on behalf of the Maribyrnong City Council to:
   a. Analyse the planning policy history and context for:
      i. the river edge;
      ii. Yarraville Gardens; and
      iii. public open space in the surrounds.
   b. Consider whether the West Gate Tunnel Project, insofar as it affects the above areas, is supported by planning policy and in particular, the impacts of the Project on the public realm.
   c. Consider whether the on and off ramps over the river are supported by policy.
   d. Consider whether planning policy matters raised in the Council submission are relevant to the above three locations, and whether they can be supported.
   e. Address any other aspects of the West Gate Tunnel Project on the above three locations you consider relevant to the material, from a strategic planning point of view.

6. Key documents I have reviewed in preparing this statement include:
   - All relevant documents in the EES document set.
   - Maribyrnong Planning Scheme.
   - Melbourne Planning Scheme.
   - Council’s submission to the Joint Inquiry and Advisory Committee Hearing.
   - Other planning and related policy documents that I have referred to throughout my evidence.

7. I acknowledge that for a project of this scale and complexity, there will be a host of community benefits and disbenefits. It is beyond my expertise as a strategic planner to explore the veracity of the net community benefits espoused for the project. I focus my attention on strategic planning issues associated with a small but important aspect of the proposal, which revolves around the location where the proposed roadway exits the northern portal and crosses the Maribyrnong River.
8. Whilst I have limited my assessment of the project to these issues, it should be noted that my opinions regarding some aspects of the project vary to those of Council. However, I fully support Council’s position in relation to:

- Not constructing the McKenzie Road ramps to the port as part of the delivery of the project, but exploring other options for access to the port from the east side of the river, whilst retaining the option in the design of the project for the McKenzie Road ramps to be provided in the future, if a demonstrated need and no other reasonable alternatives are identified.
- A review of the design of the northern portal.

9. A summary of my opinions follows:

- The West Gate Tunnel Project is a major road infrastructure project that has the potential to reshape the movement of traffic and freight in the inner western region of Melbourne.
- The project has the potential to change the distinctive qualities of the inner western parts of central Melbourne, its image, identity, character and community perceptions of ‘place’, for decades to come.
- State and metropolitan planning policies have been increasingly focussing on the West Melbourne port and former industrial areas. A policy tension is emerging in the area regarding:
  - policies that support the continued operation of the port and associated activities;
  - policies that support improvements to port access;
  - policies that increasingly identify significant urban renewal opportunities in the area; and
  - policies that support the protection and enhancement of key environmental corridors such as the Maribyrnong River.
- In relation to the key issues I have been instructed to consider, I have formed the view that insufficient weight has been given in the design of the project, to protecting and enhancing the Maribyrnong River corridor, as required by State and local planning policy.
- It is my opinion that too much weight has been given to policies regarding port access in the design of the project, at the expense of policies regarding the protection and enhancement of the river.
- It is my opinion that the Committee should acknowledge the importance of the river corridor and recommend a design response that avoids, or at the very least, minimises adverse impacts on the river corridor.
- I have also raised issues in relation to the design of the Northern Portal.

10. This statement has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Panels Victoria Guide to Expert Evidence.

11. I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Committee.
2 Council’s Position

12. As far as relevant to my evidence, Council’s concerns are focused on the area around the northern portal and the proposed Maribyrnong River crossings.

13. Schedule 1 of Council’s submission to the EES summarises the outcomes sought by Council. As far as relevant to my evidence they include the following:

2.8 the McKenzie Road Ramps not be delivered as part of the WGT Project;
2.9 the design of the bridge structure accommodate a future connection for McKenzie Street ramps if required in future;
2.10. an off-ramp commencing on the east side of the river, connecting to Dock Link Road be preferred to the proposed off-ramp from the Northern Portal;
2.11. if the provision of an off-ramp on the east side of the Maribyrnong River to provide access to Swanson Dock is not supported, that the off-ramp be staged, and delivered only in the event that an approval is granted to extend Swanson Dock closer to Footscray Road, and to reconfigure West Swanson Dock such that access via Coode Road from Swanson Dock West would be precluded;
2.12. that the need for delivery of the ramps be the subject of further assessment, depending on how Swanson Dock West is reconfigured, and the extent to which rail freight may displace road based transport under a future scenario;
2.13. the bridge be designed and future proofed to preserve an option for the future delivery of the McKenzie Street ramps;
2.14. as part of any future planning for the Port of Melbourne, further consideration of potential connections to the viaduct along Footscray Road be given so that:
   2.14.1. left turning movements into and out of Appleton Dock be provided to achieve a Level of Service or better;
   2.14.2. the potential for a new connection along Footscray Road is considered, in the context of any proposed revision to:
      (a) the Port of Melbourne Development Strategy by the new lessee of the Port; and possible future reconfiguration of the Port’s internal road connections and the role of Coode Road;
      with a view to avoiding the need for additional ramps over the Maribyrnong River;
2.15. further assessment be provided of the potential for the Northern Portal and bridge alignment to be shifted east, within the existing PUZ4 alignment, to avoid impacts to Yarraville Gardens, and to minimise visual bulk;
2.19. the design of the tunnel portal and exhaust structures be reviewed ….
3 Design Response

14. From my reading of the EES documentation, in particular Section 2 Project Rationale, and Section 3 Project Development, the approach to the design response inherent in the project has:
   - Placed considerable weight on the protection of sensitive residential areas from adverse impacts.
   - Placed considerably less weight on the impacts of the project on existing industrial and port related areas.
   - Given priority to port access.
   - Given little if any priority to the protection and enhancement of waterway corridors such as the Maribyrnong River.

15. The consequences of this approach have been that:
   - Underground tunnels are proposed beneath sensitive residential areas through Yarraville.
   - Elevated structures are proposed through less sensitive industrial and port related areas.
   - Where land identified for port or industrial uses borders both sides of the Maribyrnong River, the design response has been to bridge the river.
   - Where access is required to the western side of the Port of Melbourne (on the east side of the river), the design response has been to utilise the river corridor itself, to accommodate additional elevated structures to provide access to McKenzie Road, rather than seek to locate structures associated with port access within the land area of the port itself.

16. This approach has been applied in inner Melbourne in the past:
   - City Link becomes an elevated structure along the length of the Moonee Ponds Creek and through what is now the Arden Macauley urban renewal area, as soon as it enters the former industrial/commercial areas of Kensington.
   - The West Gate Freeway becomes an elevated structure where it exits the domain tunnel and runs through the existing and former industrial/commercial areas of South Melbourne and Port Melbourne.

17. The areas through which these elevated freeways/tollways run, are now becoming Melbourne’s major inner city urban renewal precincts. The ongoing impacts of such significant, elevated transport infrastructure, in the heart of Melbourne, are profound in terms of the amenity, the character, the identity and the liveability of the inner city.

18. Considerable attention has been given in the design response to what I call ‘existing or immediately foreseeable planning policies’. They are zonings and policies that largely reinforce existing land use patterns or land use patterns envisaged to occur over a planning horizon of 20 to 30 years.

19. Little if any attention has been given to an assessment of possible longer term impacts of the project design on the identity, image and urban form of inner Melbourne. Whilst longer term directions cannot be accurately anticipated at this time, in my opinion at least some consideration needs to be given to implications of the design response proposed on the identify, urban form and structure of inner Melbourne. In the very least, the design response should seek to retain possible options for the future, rather than close them off due to what in the passage of time may be seen to be shorter term, pragmatic decisions.

20. Exiting zonings and planning policies identify the land directly affected by the river crossings, for industrial and port related uses. However, in my opinion, a real likelihood exists that should port and related uses further rationalise, significant longer term urban renewal opportunities will emerge, especially along the western bank of the Maribyrnong River, south of Shepherd Bridge. In my opinion, greater attention should be given in the design of the project to avoid prejudicing such long term opportunities.
4 Evolution of Inner Urban Waterways and Ports

21. Cities around the world are built around waterways and waterways are fundamental to the essence of city image, identity, amenity, function and structure.

22. The role of urban waterways has changed significantly over generations and will continue to do so into the future. From initially being a source of drinking water and access, waterways evolved to become critical routes for supply, trade and business. In key strategic locations they evolved into shipping ports, complete with ancillary road and rail transport connections.

23. In early years industrial development established along the banks of many urban waterways, using them as drains and sewers.

24. Waterways were (and in many cases are still) seen as the location for major public infrastructure that cannot find an alternative route through established urban areas i.e. rail corridors, freeways, transmission lines etc.

25. Of more recent times waterways have been seen as environmental assets, as a critical component of a network of environmental corridors connecting areas of open space and providing opportunities for a network of linear walking and cycling paths throughout a city.

26. Where waterways exist adjacent to areas of high pedestrian activity, they often have a strong civic function, as community focal points and meeting places, and as places for entertainment, events and celebration.

27. In inner city areas, these trends have occurred in parallel with trends towards:
   a. The rationalisation of inner city industrial areas, as industry has either closed, relocated to outer suburban areas or moved off-shore.
   b. The rationalisation of port and logistics facilities, through either the changing needs of shipping, increased port efficiency, landside access constraints, land use conflicts or the need for the establishment of newer, better located and larger port and logistics facilities, away from the constraints inherent in an inner city location.
   c. Increasing demand and an increasing need for inner city urban renewal and higher density living, as cities grow, as traffic congestion get worse, as commuting times become unacceptable, and as an increasing proportion of the population seek to live closer to jobs, service and facilities.

28. Increasingly around the world, inner city ports, logistics and industrial areas, and inner city waterways, have been focal points for change and urban renewal.

29. Planning policy in Melbourne has been responding to these trends for decades. Inner city industrial land has progressively been re-zoned. Port areas have progressively been rationalised and major water front redevelopment has been occurring (Southbank and Docklands).

30. Planning policy, in a search for ongoing opportunities for significant inner city urban renewal, has increasingly turned attention towards former industrial, port and logistics areas in Port Melbourne and West Melbourne (Docklands, Southbank, Fishermans Bend, E-Gate, Dyon, Arden Macauley).

31. Planning policy in Melbourne has increasingly recognised the important environmental and ‘city identity’ role of waterways, especially major waterways such as the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers, and their role as catalysts for urban renewal. Policies and controls to protect and enhance waterways have been strengthened.

32. Existing policy continues to support port and related activities in the West Melbourne area. These policies are appropriate and are necessary to manage potentially incompatible land uses in central city locations and to provide future directions. However, existing policies are unlikely to present the ‘end game’ in terms of the long term balance between port and related uses, and urban renewal opportunities that will exist in West Melbourne and along the Maribyrnong River.

33. With long term initiatives emerging such as the Bay West Seaport and the Western Intermodal Freight Terminal (Plan Melbourne p35), it is possible to envisage a further reduced ‘footprint’ for the Port of Melbourne and for port related activities, particularly along the west bank of the Maribyrnong River. Coode
Island is a potential game changer in this regard. If a future need was seen to replace the Coode Island facility, a major constraint to urban renewal along the Maribyrnong River would be removed. It would provide a catalyst to ‘reimagine’ a very different future for the west bank of the river, south of Shepherd Bridge, to that contained in existing planning policy.

34. In my opinion, it is short sighted and poor planning, to allow major infrastructure works such as the West Gate Tunnel Project, to unreasonably impact on one of Melbourne’s two key river corridors, to the extent that it could prejudice long term riverside urban renewal opportunities, regardless of the fact that such opportunities have not yet been identified by planning policy.

35. In my opinion, it is good planning to design such infrastructure to avoid or to minimise impacts on the Maribyrnong River. I believe this view is entirely consistent with current planning policy that strongly supports the protection and enhancement of key urban waterways such as the Maribyrnong.
5 Northern Tunnel Portal and Maribyrnong River Crossing

36. My evidence focuses on the impacts of the project where the roadway exits the northern tunnel portal and crosses the Maribyrnong River.

37. Figure 3 shows the works that are proposed in this area. Figures 1 and 2 show the existing zoning of the land and an aerial photo of existing conditions.

38. The project involves the following works in this location:
   - The roadway will exit the northern tunnel entrance on the east side of Whitehall Street, adjacent to Yarraville Gardens and Hanmer Reserve.
   - The main roadway will rise on an elevated structure to a height of around 8 to 13 metres and cross the river at an angle to the river bank. In the vicinity of the river crossing the river is approximately 90 metres wide. Given the angle of crossing, the structure will be some 270 metres long where it crosses the river. The structure will be approximately 35 metres wide.
   - A northern ‘off ramp’ will be provided to McKenzie Road, on the east side of the river, to provide access to the port. This ramp will run approximately parallel to the western river bank for a distance of some 200 metres, whilst dropping to a height to around 4 to 6 metres where it crosses the river, north of Parker Street. The structure will have a clearance of around 5 metres at the top of the river bank (west side).
   - The total footprint of the ramps along the western bank of the river will be in the vicinity of 250 metres.
   - A southern ‘on ramp’ will be provided from McKenzie Road to provide access from the port. It will have a height of around 4 to 5 metres above the river and rise to connect to the elevated roadway. The structure will have a clearance of around 5 metres at the top of the river bank (west side).
   - Urban design treatments of the bridge structures and the undercroft of the bridges are proposed where they cross the west bank of the river.
   - Landscape improvements are proposed:
     - Adjacent to the south side of Shepherd Bridge.
     - Along the west bank of the river, north of Parker Street.
     - Beside and beneath the ramp structures, to the south of Parker Street.
     - Along Lyons Street, between Maribyrnong Street and Whitehall Street.
   - A new wetland / retarding basin / landscape feature is proposed on a triangular site to the west of the roadway, fronting Whitehall Street. A maintenance building and substation will be provided in this area.
   - A shared path will be provided along the western river edge, south of Shepherd Bridge. This path will connect with an elevated path that will meander along the west side of the elevated roadway, crossing over Whitehall Street, running along the north side of Hanmer Reserve / Harris Street and continuing along the west side of Yarraville Gardens / Hyde Street. The path will terminate at the corner of Hyde Street and Sommerville Road.
   - A substantial built form feature incorporating a ventilation shaft is proposed at the north tunnel entry / exit.
   - The elevated roadway is proposed to extend along Footscray Road, above the existing road, to an interchange with City Link, near Moonee Ponds Creek.
Figure 1 - Aerial photograph in the vicinity of the river crossing

Figure 2 - Existing zoning in the vicinity of the Maribyrnong River Crossing

Figure 3 - Proposal in the vicinity of the Maribyrnong River Crossing
6 Maribyrnong River Crossing – Planning Policy Considerations

6.1 Plan Melbourne

40. *Plan Melbourne 2017 - 2050* sets out the State government’s strategic planning directions for Melbourne over the next 30+ years to 2050. The policy directions of Plan Melbourne are embedded into the Victorian Planning Provisions and into all planning schemes.

41. Plan Melbourne envisages very significant population growth for Melbourne and sets out directions to accommodate that growth. A focus on investment, jobs, liveability and infrastructure are key elements of the strategy.

42. Three aspects of Plan Melbourne are particularly relevant to the proposed Maribyrnong River crossing of the West Gate Tunnel Project:

- **Outcome 1** – Which identifies the Central City area and surrounds, including West Melbourne, as the focus for major new development, investment, jobs and housing, as well as for continued port and related transport and logistics operations, and as a major transport gateway.
- **Outcome 3** – Which relates to integrated transport planning and providing a transport system that keeps the city productive and improves freight efficiency, whilst also protecting urban amenity.
- **Outcome 4** – Which emphasises Melbourne’s distinctiveness and liveability and the need to protect and enhance Melbourne’s key features, which includes the Maribyrnong River corridor and other waterways and boulevards, and the importance of quality design and amenity in retaining and enhancing Melbourne’s attractiveness and competitiveness as a global city.

**Outcome 1 – A focus on Jobs and Investment in the Central City**

43. Plan Melbourne places emphasis on the Central City as a focus for new investment and development, and as the location for major urban renewal. Much of the focus for new development and urban renewal is to the west of the CBD, in former port, rail and industrial areas extending west to Footscray and the Maribyrnong River.

44. Key urban renewal precincts identified in this area include Docklands, Fisherman’s Bend, Dynon, E-Gate and Arden Macaulay (see Figure 4). The central City and these urban renewal areas are identified in Plan Melbourne as being of State Significance.

**Direction 1.1 Create a city structure that strengthens Melbourne’s competitiveness for jobs and investment.**

**Policy 1.1.1 Support the central city to become Australia’s largest commercial and residential centre by 2050.**

**Policy 1.1.2 Plan for the redevelopment of major urban renewal precincts in and around the central city to deliver high-quality distinct and diverse neighbourhoods offering a mix of uses.**

45. Whilst identifying significant opportunities for urban renewal in West Melbourne, Plan Melbourne also supports the continued operation of the Port of Melbourne and identifies it as a State Significant Transport Gateway. It contains policies to protect the port from incompatible land use and development, and to provide reliable access (including arterial road access) to the port and other Transport Gateways throughout Melbourne.

**Policy 1.1.5 Support major transport gateways as important locations for employment and economic activity**

46. Plan Melbourne shows a potential alignment for a road referred to as the Western Distributor, which is now the West Gate Tunnel Project (See Figure 4). It also identifies possible new State Significant Transport gateways such as the Bay West Seaport and the Western Interstate Freight Terminal (p 35). These
gateways have the potential to further influence long term land use planning directions in the West Melbourne port area.

47. Plan Melbourne identifies the Footscray Activity Centre as a Metropolitan Activity Centre. The Footscray Activity Centre fronts the west bank of the Maribyrnong River, to the north of the proposed river crossings. Metropolitan activity centres such as Footscray are identified as being of State Significance. They are critical to the realisation of the aims of Plan Melbourne to accommodate growth, investment, jobs and housing, and to provide highly accessible and distinctive places within Melbourne, to the benefit of the community (p 36).

Figure 4 – Key features in and around Melbourne’s central city - Plan Melbourne p 26
Outcome 3 – Melbourne has an integrated transport system that connects people to jobs and services and goods to market

48. Plan Melbourne emphasises the need to transform the city’s transport system to keep the city productive, with an emphasis on improving freight efficiency and increasing the capacity of major transport gateways such as the Port of Melbourne. It identifies the need to protect urban amenity whilst doing this.

  Direction 3.1 Transform Melbourne’s transport system to support a productive city.
  Direction 3.4 - Improve freight efficiency and increase capacity of gateways while protecting urban amenity.
  Policy 3.4.3 - Avoid negative impacts of freight movements on urban amenity.

Outcome 4 – A distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity

49. In parallel with the need to accommodate significant future growth, to facilitate investment and job creation, and to provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure an efficient and well-functioning city, a key initiative of Plan Melbourne is to protect and enhance Melbourne’s distinctiveness and the key elements of the city’s form that make it such a memorable and liveable place. Ensuring good urban design and creating great places throughout the city that the community can enjoy, are central elements of Plan Melbourne.

  Outcome 4 – Melbourne is a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity.
  Direction 4.1 – Create more great public places across Melbourne.

50. Distinctive urban features such as boulevards and waterways feature strongly in the policies contained in Plan Melbourne:

  Policy 4.1.3 Strengthen Melbourne’s network of boulevards.
  Policy 4.1.4 Protect and enhance the metropolitan water’s edge parklands.

51. Plan Melbourne identifies that the challenge ahead of the current generation is to:

  … design a version of the city and state that, while protecting the best aspects of the natural and built environment, supports social and cultural diversity and economic activity and creates a sense of place. (p78)

52. Plan Melbourne refers to the way in which the Yarra River has shaped the development of Melbourne and the identity, liveability and prosperity of the city. The Maribyrnong has had a similar influence to the west of Melbourne.

  The Yarra River and its parklands shaped the development of Melbourne and are essential to the identity, liveability and prosperity of the city. The magnificent natural riverscape and network of parklands are a legacy of protection and planning decisions of the past. (p81)

53. Plan Melbourne identifies the significance of the Maribyrnong River, its importance to the health and wellbeing of local communities, and the economic benefits that can be attributed to such places.

  Other significant water’s edge parklands include the Maribyrnong and Werribee rivers and parklands and open spaces around Port Phillip Bay. These parklands are essential to the health and wellbeing of local communities. They also attract tourists and events that generate significant revenue streams for businesses and are the source of considerable historical and cultural importance to Aboriginal Victorians. (p81)

54. The strategy refers to the importance of protecting and enhancing water edge parklands as Melbourne’s population continues to grow:

  As Melbourne’s population grows, it will be vital to protect and enhance Melbourne’s major water’s edge parklands. (p81)
  Stronger planning controls will also be put in place to protect water’s edge parklands from intrusion and encroachment of development that impacts on open space and diminishes their natural landscape setting. (p81)
55. Plan Melbourne refers to the importance of good urban design in every aspect of the built environment, which includes road infrastructure.

*Direction 4.3 Achieve and promote design excellence*

*Policy 4.3.1 Promote urban design excellence in every aspect of the built environment*

56. Whilst considerable design detail has gone into the treatment of the elevated structures proposed to cross the Maribyrnong River, no amount of design detail can remediate the very significant impact the underlying decision to construct an elevated roadway across the Maribyrnong River, with two separate ramps providing access to the port, will have on the river corridor.

**Balancing policy considerations**

57. The port, rail and logistics areas of West Melbourne are located between the central city and Melbourne’s burgeoning western suburbs.

58. Footscray Road and Dynon Road are major and important gateways to the west of Melbourne, and feature elements of Melbourne’s inner city urban form. Their amenity has been significantly upgraded over recent years.

59. The Maribyrnong River and Footscray Activity Centre, represent the beginning of the established western suburbs of Melbourne. After decades of supportive planning policy, the area is now emerging as a focus for urban renewal and revitalisation.

60. The intervening port and rail areas are evolving and changing, and will continue to do so into the future.

61. The West Melbourne area is increasingly seen by planning policy as providing significant urban renewal opportunities in an expanded central city area.

62. Plan Melbourne places considerable emphasis on West Melbourne, for both urban renewal and continued port and related operations.

63. There is tension between the maintenance of port, rail and transport logistics uses, and opportunities for urban renewal and change. This tension will continue for as long as there are port and rail facilities so close to the heart of a rapidly growing international city.

64. In constructing significant road infrastructure throughout this area now, planning decisions should not lose sight of the longer term potential the area holds, and the broader aims of Plan Melbourne to ensure that the city’s distinctiveness and its key urban form features and assets, are not lost or unreasonably impacted upon, but are enhanced. To do so, merely prejudices future opportunities for high amenity and distinctive inner city urban renewal, that may not become apparent for many years into the future. The Maribyrnong River is the key element in this context.
6.2 State planning policy

65. The directions and policies contained in Plan Melbourne flow through into State and metropolitan planning policies contained in the State Section of planning schemes. (Clause 11.06)

66. State planning policies focus on similar things and raise similar issues to those discussed above in reference to Plan Melbourne:

- Jobs and investment.
- A focus on the central city.
- A focus on good and responsive urban design.
- Protecting and enhancing waterways and river corridors.
- Freight movement and urban amenity.
- Substantial urban renewal, especially within and near the central city.
- Footscray as a metropolitan activity centre.
- The port as a major transport gateway of significance to the State.
- Protecting the port from incompatible surrounding land uses.
- Providing access to the port.

Metropolitan Melbourne (Clause 11.06)

67. Objectives and strategies contained in Clause 11.06 echo Plan Melbourne in relation to the emphasis placed on jobs, investment and urban renewal, especially in the central city, on creating a distinctive and liveable city, on quality design and amenity, and on supporting the ongoing role of the Port of Melbourne as a major transport gateway.

11.06-1 jobs and investment

**Objective**

To create a city structure that drives productivity, attracts investment, supports innovation and creates jobs.

**Strategies**

Support the Central City to become Australia’s largest commercial and residential centre by 2050, by planning for office, retail, education, health, entertainment and cultural activity spaces.

Plan for the redevelopment of Major Urban-Renewal Precincts in and around the Central City to deliver high-quality, distinct and diverse neighbourhoods offering a mix of uses.

Support major Transport Gateways as important locations for employment and economic activity by:

- protecting designated ports, airports, freight terminals and their environs from incompatible land uses.
- encouraging adjacent complementary uses and employment generating activities.

Clause 11.06-4 Place and identify

**Objective**

To create a distinctive and liveable city with quality design and amenity.

**Strategies**

Improve the design quality of public spaces and the interfaces between private development and the public domain.

Support the creation of memorable, well-designed places that are distinctive and liveable.

Integrate place making practices into road space management.

Strengthen Melbourne’s network of boulevards and create new boulevards in urban-growth areas and selected existing road corridors across Melbourne.
Protect and enhance the metropolitan water’s edge parklands from intrusion and encroachment of development that impacts on open space and diminishes their natural landscape setting.

Create innovative tourism experiences and encourage investment that meets demand and supports growth in tourism.

Promote urban design excellence in the built environment …

68. Specific policies aim to protect and enhance major open space corridors, create continuous open space links along rivers such as the Maribyrnong and to ensure that development does not comprise river corridors.

11.06-8 Open space network in Metropolitan Melbourne

Objective
To strengthen the integrated metropolitan open space network.

Strategies
Ensure major open space corridors are protected and enhanced.
Create continuous open space links and trails along the …

- Maribyrnong River parklands …

Ensuring development does not compromise the Yarra River and Maribyrnong River corridors and other waterways as significant open space, recreation, aesthetic, conservation and tourism assets.

Rivers (Clause 12.05)

69. State planning policy includes specific policy in relation to river corridors.

70. The Maribyrnong River is specifically referred to, with the objective being to protect and to enhance significant river corridors in Melbourne.

12.04 Significant environments and landscapes

12.04-1 Environmentally sensitive areas

Objective
To protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategies
Protect environmentally sensitive areas with significant recreational value such as the Dandenong and Macedon Ranges, the Upper Yarra Valley, Western Port and Port Phillip Bays and their foreshores, the Mornington Peninsula, the Yarra and Maribyrnong Rivers and the Merri Creek, the Grampians, the Gippsland Lakes and its foreshore, the coastal areas and their foreshores and the Alpine areas as well as nominated urban conservation areas, historic buildings and precincts from development which would diminish their environmental conservation or recreation values.

71. Policies exist to ensure that the cultural, environmental and landscape values of all river corridors are protected, that development responds to and respects significant environmental, conservation, cultural, aesthetic, open space, recreation and tourism assets of all river corridors, and that new development is sensitively designed and sited to maintain and enhance environmental assets, significant views and the landscapes along all river corridors.

12.05-1 River corridors

Objective
To protect and enhance the significant river corridors of metropolitan Melbourne.

Strategies
Ensure strategic planning and land management for all river corridors protects their environmental, cultural and landscape values.

Ensure development responds to and respects the significant environmental, conservation, cultural, aesthetic, open space, recreation and tourism assets of all river corridors.

Ensure new development is sensitively designed and sited to maintain and enhance environmental assets, significant views and the landscapes along all river corridors.
Ensure development does not compromise bank stability, increase erosion or impact on a river’s natural capacity to manage flood flow.

Built Environment and Heritage (Clause 15)

72. The importance of good urban design is reinforced in Clause 15 of the planning scheme.

73. The aims of the policy are to ensure that all new development responds in a positive way to the context of an area, protects places of significance, creates quality built environments that contribute to local urban character and sense of place, and promote attractive cities (Clause 15).

Clause 15 – Built Environment and heritage

Planning should ensure all new land use and development appropriately responds to its landscape, valued built form and cultural context, and protect places and sites with significant heritage, architectural, aesthetic, scientific and cultural value.

Creating quality built environments supports the social, cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities, cities and towns.

Land use and development planning must support the development and maintenance of communities with adequate and safe physical and social environments for their residents, through the appropriate location of uses and development and quality of urban design.

Planning should achieve high quality urban design and architecture that:

- Contributes positively to local urban character and sense of place.
- Reflects the particular characteristics, aspirations and cultural identity of the community.
- Enhances livability, diversity, amenity and safety of the public realm.
- Promotes attractiveness of towns and cities within broader strategic contexts.
- Minimises detrimental impact on neighbouring properties.

74. Policies that are relevant to transport corridors include (Clause 15.01-1):

Objective

To create urban environments that are safe, functional and provide good quality environments with a sense of place and cultural identity.

Strategies

Promote good urban design to make the environment more liveable and attractive.

Ensure transport corridors integrate land use planning, urban design and transport planning and are developed and managed with particular attention to urban design aspects.

Transport (Clause 18)

75. Policies in relation to transport generally, and to the port and surrounding areas more specially, are provided in Clause 18. The essence of these policies is to provide an integrated and sustainable land use and transport system that meets the needs of the community.

76. In relation to new transport routes, strategies refer to locating routes to achieve the greatest overall community benefit, minimising impacts on the environment and minimising disruption to residential communities and their amenity.

Locate transport routes to achieve the greatest overall benefit to the community and with regard to making the best use of existing social, cultural and economic infrastructure, minimising impacts on the environment and optimising accessibility, safety, emergency access, service and amenity.

Locate and design new transport routes and adjoining land uses to minimise disruption of residential communities and their amenity.

Plan or regulate new uses or development of land near an existing or proposed transport route to avoid detriment to, and where possible enhance the service, safety and amenity desirable for that transport route in the short and long terms. 18.01-2
Port Planning – Clause 18.03-2

77. There is specific policy in the planning scheme about planning for ports (Clause 18.03-1) and their surrounds (Clause 18.03-2).

78. The policies identify the importance of ports (including the Port of Melbourne) to the State economy and provide for the ongoing operation and development of ports, the identification and protection of key transport corridors, managing the impacts of port operations on nearby sensitive uses, and managing surround land uses so that they do not impact on port operations.

18.03-1 Planning for ports

Objective
To recognise the transport and logistics role of Victoria’s commercial trading ports at Melbourne, Geelong, Hastings and Portland in supporting the State’s economy and to facilitate their ongoing sustainable operation and development.

Strategies
Provide for the ongoing development of ports in accordance with approved Port Development Strategies. Identify and protect key transport corridors linking ports to the broader transport network. Manage any impacts of a commercial trading port and any related industrial development on nearby sensitive uses to minimise the impact of vibration light spill, noise and air emissions from port activities.

18.03-2 Planning for port environs

Objective
To plan for and manage land in the environs of commercial trading ports so that development and use are compatible with port operations and provide reasonable amenity expectations.

Strategies
Protect commercial trading ports from encroachment of sensitive and incompatible land uses in the port environs. Plan for and manage land in the port environs to accommodate uses which depend upon or gain significant economic advantage from proximity to the port’s operations. Ensure that industrially zoned land within the environs of a commercial trading port is maintained and continues to support the role of the port as a critical freight and logistics precinct. Identify and protect key transport corridors linking ports to the broader transport network. Ensure any new use or development within the environs of a commercial trading port does not prejudice the efficient and curfew free operations of the port. Ensure that the use and intensity of development does not expose people to unacceptable health or safety risks and consequences associated with an existing major hazard facility. Ensure that any use or development within port environs:

- is consistent with policies for the protection of the environment.
- takes into account planning for the port.
Freight (Clause 18.05)

79. Policy supports the further development of key transport gateways, improving freight access and increasing the capacity of transport gateways, while also protecting urban amenity.

18.05 Freight

18.05-1 Develop freight links

Objective

To further develop the key Transport Gateways and freight links and maintain Victoria’s position as the nation’s premier logistics centre.

Strategies

Improve the freight and logistics network to optimise freight handling and maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the network.

Improve freight efficiency and increase capacity of Transport Gateways while protecting urban amenity.

Balancing Policies

80. State and metropolitan planning policy clearly support:

- The protection and enhancement of the Maribyrnong River corridor.
- The continued operation of the port.
- Improved access freight to the port.

81. In my opinion, the aim should be to achieve all policy aims, wherever possible.

82. In relation to the proposed crossing of the Maribyrnong River, there is strong planning policy support for a design solution that “protects and enhances” the river corridor. I do not believe that the current design does this.

83. To achieve the policies in relation to protecting and enhancing the Maribyrnong River, would require the roadway to be constructed under the river corridor, or as a minimum deleting the two additional access ramps that cross the river corridor and which connect to McKenzie Road, in particular the northern ramp. An under river option was apparently considered as part of the initial project design but was discounted, primarily due to the need to provide access to the port via McKenzie Road. (EES 3-28)

84. City of Maribyrnong does not support the proposed access ramps to McKenzie Road. I am aware that Council’s submission questions the need for the access ramps and that Council is calling expert traffic evidence in support of its proposition.

85. As a planner, I am concerned about significant impacts of both the elevated roadway and also the access ramps on the river corridor. I am not convinced that the McKenzie Road ramps are either needed for port access, or if direct port access is needed, if the ramps represent the best option in terms of avoiding or minimising impacts on the river. I believe enquiries made by the Committee should focus on the need for access ramps to the port via McKenzie Road, and if a need is confirmed, alternatives to providing access that does not involve multiple elevated river crossings.
6.3 Local Planning Policy – Melbourne

86. I do not consider it necessary to examine local planning policies on the City of Melbourne side of the Maribyrnong River in any detail. Melbourne City Council policies for the West Melbourne port area are generally consistent with the policy directions contained in Plan Melbourne. Key directions include:

- Emphasis on sustainable modes of transport and a reduced emphasis on cars (21.03).
- Protecting and enhancing the values and amenity of waterways such as the Maribyrnong River (21.05-2).
- Support for port and associated industries and freight functions in the West Melbourne industrial area (21.09-6).
- Support for efficient and integrated freight transport systems that reduce negative impacts on residential and public areas (21.09-6).
- The identification of urban renewal areas that are progressively ‘encroaching’ into the West Melbourne area, generally consistent with Plan Melbourne (Clauses 21.13/14/15).
6.4 Local Planning Policy – Maribyrnong

General policies

87. Local planning policies in the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme are grouped under the following themes (Clause 21.01):

- Settlement (21.04)
- Environment and Landscape Values (21.05)
- Built Environment and Heritage (21.06)
- Housing (21.07)
- Economic Development (21.08)
- Transport (21.09)
- Community and Development Infrastructure (21.10)
- Local area planning (21.11)

88. The themes most relevant to issues concerning the proposed Maribyrnong River crossings include:

- Settlement
- Environment and Landscape Values
- Economic Development
- Transport

Settlement 21.04

89. Local policies note the importance of the Maribyrnong River corridor to the municipality’s identity and its importance as an open space asset and connector between much of the open space within the municipality (21.04-4). Policies seek to provide a continuous linear open space network along the river and to fill in missing gaps.

**Objective 8**
To provide a continuous linear open space network along the Maribyrnong River and Stony Creek.

**Strategies**
Complete the gaps in the linear open space and trail network along the Maribyrnong River with connections to the adjoining urban areas, regional trail system, adjacent open space, community facilities and activity centres.

Improve the biodiversity values along the Maribyrnong River and Stony Creek.
Environment and Landscape Values (21.05)

90. Local environmental policy responds to the Maribyrnong River’s highly valued role as a key metropolitan waterway and its role as an important regional open space corridor. This policy largely implements the directions of the Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines 2010.

91. Key objectives and strategies are to enhance the landscape character of the river corridor and to encourage development that enhances and complements the character of the various lengths of the river corridor.

**Objective 1**

To enhance the landscape character along the Maribyrnong River and Stony Creek.

**Strategies**

- Create a diverse mix of environments within the Maribyrnong River valley from a natural indigenous vegetation corridor in the upper reaches to more hard-edged urban environments in the lower reaches.
- Enhance the interpretation of the cultural heritage of the Maribyrnong River and Stony Creek environs.
- Encourage development that enhances the environmental qualities of the Maribyrnong River Valley.
- Encourage development that complements existing activities along the river.

Economic development (21.08)

92. Policies regarding economic development and employment emphasise the location of the Footscray Activity Centre to the north of Shepherd Bridge (along the river front area).

93. Policies identify the importance of Port of Melbourne facilities in the area. They designate land to the south of Shepherd Bridge as a Core Employment Area (see Figure 5) and as a buffer area to port facilities. Land to the south of Shepherd Bridge (from around Parker Street south to Lyons Street) will be directly affected by the proposed elevated river crossings.

**Objective 4**

To protect and improve Core Employment Areas.

**Strategies**

- Protect the Core Employment Areas from residential encroachment.
- Maintain a stable supply of Industrial Related Employment Land to deliver jobs and economic prosperity.
- Maintain the employment/ economic development role of Core Employment Areas by supporting a greater range of employment generating uses.
- Ensure that the design and layout of new sites provides cost effective and attractive sites for employment generating uses and activities.
- Maintain land buffers around and within the Core Employment Areas.

94. The policy identifies the limited opportunities that exist along the river corridor for tourism, cultural and water based recreational facilities and activities. It identifies the Footscray Wharf (to the south of Shepherd Bridge) as providing the opportunity for a commercial marina. This potential would be significantly impacted upon by the proposed elevated river crossing, in particular by the lower level ramps.

21.08.4 Tourism Facilities

There is limited potential for tourism, cultural and water based recreational facilities and activities along the river corridor.

Identified opportunities for new facilities include the redevelopment of Footscray Wharf as a commercial marina, new tea house / café and moorings south of Dynon Road and a café at the former Dales Stables (Chifley Drive) in Maribyrnong. It is expected that the redevelopment of the Maribyrnong Defence Site will also present further opportunities for community, and limited commercial, facilities.
Figure 5 - Industrial Related Employment Land Framework Plan (Clause 21.08)
The discussion that precedes the policies contained in the Transport section of the planning scheme, focuses on the proximity of the municipality to the port and the significant adverse impacts port and related freight transport has on the Footscray Activity Centre and on residential areas within the municipality.

The policy refers to various options being considered by the State government to address this issue, including Westlink (an east-west tunnel from West Footscray to the Port).

Policies support:
- Protecting the operational requirements of the port.
- Encouraging heavy vehicle traffic to use arterial roads.
- Improving access to core employment areas.

7 Local area policies

Local area policies that are most relevant to the proposed river crossing relate to:
- The Footscray Activity Centre, which is located to the north of the proposed river crossing and which has frontage to the Maribyrnong River, north of Shepherd Bridge.
- The Maribyrnong River itself.
- The Yarraville Core Employment Area, to the south of Shepherd Bridge. This area is directly affected by the proposed river crossing.

I have grouped local planning scheme policies with other policy documents / reference documents that relate to the same theme or locality.

7.1 Footscray Metropolitan Activity Centre (21.11)

Local planning policies identify the Footscray Metropolitan Activity Centre as “the most regionally significant activity centre in Melbourne’s west” and as a “prime location for mixed use, transit-oriented activity centre that will serve as a focus for substantial employment growth, commercial development, housing and public investment” (Clause 21.11-1).

The activity centre extends to the western bank of the Maribyrnong River, north of Shepherd Bridge and extends to the north beyond Dynon Road.

Three existing bridges cross this part of the river. All cross at right angles and are relatively low level, low profile structures. Two are part of the ground level arterial road network that connects the western suburbs to central Melbourne, another is a rail bridge. A new shared pedestrian / cyclist bridge runs parallel Shepherd Bridge, almost abutting it to the south.

Planning of the activity centre identifies a number of precincts (Figure 6). The precinct along the river edge is referred to as the Riverside Precinct. It is identified as a key recreational and cultural focal point for the activity centre and wider community:

The Riverside precinct will continue redeveloping key sites, at moderate heights. It will keep its heritage features and role as a recreational and cultural centre for the wider area, and be linked to the FCAA by attractive pedestrian and bike ways. (Footscray Metropolitan Activity Centre Framework Plan – Clause 21.11-1 – Precinct Futures

Local policy seeks to strengthen the relationship between the activity centre and the river, improve access to open space along the river corridor, protect and enhance the river corridor, and establish it as the recreation and cultural / community focal point of the centre.

Objective 8
Protect and reflect the features of Footscray’s natural environment within the MAC.
**Strategies**

Protect and enhance natural features within and surrounding the MAC, in particular the Maribyrnong River.

*Figure 6 - Footscray Activity Centre Framework Plan (Clause 21.11-1)*
7.2 Footscray Structure Plan 2014

105. The Footscray Structure Plan 2014 provides the strategic basis for existing policies for the activity centre contained in Clause 21.11-1 (referred to above).

106. The vision identified for the Riverside Precinct elaborates on the precinct’s importance to the wider activity centre and its role as a recreation, open space, cultural and arts focal point.

Vision

The Riverside Precinct capitalises on its Maribyrnong River frontage providing multiple access points for people from the wider CAA to access the river. The mixed use precinct offers a range of housing and employment uses, utilising various building and allotment types and sizes, responding to the different urban conditions throughout the precinct. The precinct is the central focus for the arts and creative industries flourishing in Footscray. The aboriginal, archaeological and built heritage is evident and celebrated. Public realm and built form responses minimise the impact of traffic on the residents and deliver high amenity streetscapes. (p46)
7.3 Footscray River Edge Master Plan 2014

107. The Footscray River Edge Master Plan discusses the historic importance of the Maribyrnong River to Melbourne’s inner west, the evolution of the corridor from a trade and industrial area, disconnected from the community, and the opportunity that now exists to reconnect with the river corridor.

108. The Master Plan has been prepared for an area extending from Ballarat Road in the north to Lyons Street in the south. It extends beyond the Footscray Activity Centre boundary to include land to the south of Shepherd Bridge and land north to Ballarat Road.

109. The Master Plan divides the area into four precincts (Figure 9):

- Newells Paddock
- Joseph Road
- The river edge between Hopkins Street and Footscray Road
- The river edge between Footscray Road and Lyons Street

110. The Master Plan is indicative of the opportunities that exist to enhance the Maribyrnong River corridor, consistent with State and local planning policy. It is indicative of the effort government is making to improve the river corridor as a distinctive place in Melbourne, as a high amenity community space, and as a catalyst for urban renewal in the inner west of Melbourne.

111. Land south of Shepherd Bridge extending to Lyons Street, will be directly affected by the proposed elevated crossings of the river, particularly the north ramp. The Master Plan shows that this area is part of current planning to upgrade and enhance the river edge.

112. Key initiatives identified in the Master Plan for the area to the south of Shepherd bridge include (Figure 7):

- The creation of an iconic and pedestrian friendly connection under Footscray Road that also serves as a gateway to the City of Maribyrnong.
- Improvements to Lyons Street, near Button Creek, with landscape improvements to the shared path environment that follows the Creek.
- New street tree plantings will improve and soften the street.
113. The fact that land on the west side of the river, south of Lyons Street, is presently included in an industrial zone and has not been identified for urban renewal, should not in my opinion mean that long term infrastructure decisions taken now, should unreasonably prejudice the opportunity to continue to enhance the river corridor in the future.

114. The Master Plan is clearly seeking to ‘push’ riverside enhancement works into port and industrial areas to the south of the Footscray Activity Centre, south of Shepherd Bridge, where opportunities presently exist. This is consistent with planning policies for continuous open space links and shared paths along the river corridor.

115. The proposed elevated structures over the Maribyrnong within this precinct, in particular the lower level access ramps, would very significantly impact on the amenity and the open space qualities of the area, especially south of Parker Street. Whilst not physical preventing pedestrian access beneath the structures, the combination of bridges would present a dominant built form element that would detract from further efforts to provide high amenity, continuous open space and pedestrian / cyclist connections further to the south, should the opportunity arise in the future.

116. The structures will also have a very significant impact on the realisation of urban renewal opportunities that may become apparent in this area in the longer term, should port and industrial activities be further rationalised along the Maribyrnong River in years to come.

Figure 10 - Footscray River Edge Master Plan - Area south of Shepherds Bridge
Figure 11 - Footscray River Edge Master Plan - Between Shepherd Bridge and Dynon Road
7.4 Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines 2010

117. At a broader scale, the Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines identify the Maribyrnong River as “one of Melbourne’s most treasured and well-used waterways”.

118. The guidelines apply for the length of the river from the urban growth boundary in the north to the river mouth in the south. The guidelines provide a framework to protect open space, to guide development along the river, and to expand and link existing parkland, walking paths and cycling trails along the river corridor. The guidelines are intended to influence the form of proposed buildings and works and to inform prospective developers, land managers, landowners and the wider community. (Executive Summary)

119. Different ‘future characters’ are identified for various lengths of the river corridor. Those river lengths most relevant to the West Gate Tunnel Project are the southern parts of the river. They include (Figure 12):

5. Footscray length – An urban river
Melbourne’s early industrial history is prominent here. Old wharves and warehouses are clearly visible and there is a mix of industrial uses and medium density housing. With spectacular views of the Port of Melbourne, this is where the working heritage of the river can be celebrated. p6
Preferred character - There is potential for mixed use or commercial development in some sections. Industrial and commercial uses could include new advanced manufacturing and service industries, with opportunities for riverside recreational facilities such as cafés and other facilities. p25

6. Footscray Wharf length – An urban river
This area on the western bank of the river is tied to Melbourne’s industrial and commercial fishing industries. However, its proximity to major petrochemical facilities and the Port of Melbourne means it is not suitable for residential development. Its future is likely to include some public access to the river and redevelopment as a commercial marina. p6
Preferred character - Due its proximity to Coode Island and the Port of Melbourne, residential development is not supported in this area. Some level of public access to the river will be maintained and a high level of amenity for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided. The old wharf has the potential to be redeveloped as a commercial marina. p25

7. Port length – A working river
Shipping and heavy industrial activities define and dominate this part of the river. There is potential for further industrial and commercial development that could include advanced manufacturing, maritime and service industries that have a strategic need to be near the Port of Melbourne. p6
Preferred character - Shipping and heavy industrial activities define and dominate the river corridor. There is potential for further industrial and commercial development that could include new advanced manufacturing, maritime and service industries that have a strategic need to be near the Port of Melbourne. p25

120. The document makes a distinction between the area to the north of Lyons Street (approximately) and the area to the south:

- To the north of Lyons Street – The area is classified as an ‘urban river’, and is included in the Footscray and Footscray Wharf Lengths.
- To the south of Lyons Street – The area is classified as in the Port Length of the river corridor.

121. The area directly affected by the elevated river crossings and the northern ramps straddles these two areas.

122. The Guidelines include a specific section about Enhancing Public Amenity at the Port of Melbourne and Footscray Wharf i.e. within the ‘Port Length’ of the river (p33). That section of the Guidelines focuses on the tension between ambitions to improve public open space, public access and amenity along the Maribyrnong.
River, with the ongoing needs of the Port of Melbourne. It acknowledges that the Port of Melbourne occupies a narrow strip of river frontage land south of Shepherd Bridge. The document refers to discussions between Council and the Port of Melbourne and an agreed Memorandum of Understanding that addresses:

- The possible public use of Footscray Wharf.
- Improved landscaping and improved appearance of industrial areas further to the south.
- Upgrading the riverfront at the end of Francis Street (further to the south).
- The understanding that due to existing port infrastructure and existing uses, public access to the river bank is not possible to the south of Lyons Street, towards Francis Street.
- The understanding that whilst the ideal would be a shared path linking the Maribyrnong Trial and Bay Trail along the west bank of the river, practically an inland route will be required.

123. There are a number actions identified under the heading “Enlarge the open space corridor” (p36):

7. Investigate the optimum non-riverfront route for a shared path south of Lyons Street linking the Maribyrnong Trail with the Bay Trail south of the West Gate Bridge. (since completed)
8. Upgrade landscaping and access where there is public access to the river at the eastern end of Francis Street.
9. Investigate opportunities for landscape treatment of the riverfront and improvements to local amenity, transport and access between Lyons Street and Francis Street on the western side.
10. Seek opportunities to provide spectacular views of Port activities, consistent with safety and security requirements, on both sides of the river.

124. The approach taken in the Guidelines indicates that Council and the Port of Melbourne have been actively considering ways to improve and to enhance the appearance, amenity, open space and public access along the river corridor to the south of Lyons Street, despite the continued presence of port facilities and industrial uses along the western side of the river.

125. The Guidelines include a specific section on Infrastructure Design – Guideline 22 (p79), which is relevant to the West Gate Tunnel Project:

*Design guideline 22:*

Ensure infrastructure along or near the river is sympathetic to the river valley landscape.

Bridges should provide for the convenient, safe and attractive continuation of the riverside path.

Bridges and other public infrastructure should be designed to harmonise with the preferred character of the river length and specific locality.
7.5 Yarraville Core Employment Area Policy (Clause 22.04)

126. The river frontage to the south of Shepherd Bridge, which is referred to as the ‘Wharf Length’ of the river corridor in the Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines, is located in what is termed the Yarraville Core Employment Area in local planning policy (Clause 22.04).

127. This is the area that will be most affected by the proposed river crossing.

128. The policy reinforces the future industrial use of the area and its important role as a buffer to the port:

... is well suited for industrial, port related and commercial development and can contribute to local employment and the diversification of the city’s economy.

... provides an important buffer between established residential areas and the Port of Melbourne and the Coode Island Major Hazard Facility (MHF), which are of state significance. The buffer is needed to protect the current and future operational requirements of the port and to minimise potential adverse amenity and risk / health impacts from the port and the Coode Island MHF.

129. The policy identifies 3 precincts within the area (see Figure 14). The characteristics of the three precincts are as follows:

Area A – Comprising offices and commercial uses based around the former warehouse heritage buildings and some industrial uses. The area enjoys an attractive frontage to the Maribyrnong River and Footscray Wharf with views to the Melbourne CBD skyline.

Area B - Large scale industries, such as Sugar Australia and Orica, requiring river access have historically dominated this area and remain in the southern part of the area. The Port of Melbourne is now a major land owner and intends using the northern part of the area for port, logistics and port related industrial uses.

Area C – Small scale light industrial and commercial businesses occur within this area providing a buffer and transition between the heavy industrial area and the residential areas to the west.
130. The existing pattern of zones and overlays reflects the above policy intent:

- Privately owned land along the river frontage (Maribyrnong Street) to the north of Lyons Street is zoned Special Use 3. The purposes of Schedule 3 to the zone are:
  
  To encourage the integrated development of offices and manufacturing industries and associated commercial and industrial uses.
  
  To ensure that the use and development of land do not compromise the long term protection and expansion of port operations, infrastructure and associated storage facilities.

- The area to the south of Lyons Street, between the river and Whitehall Street, is zoned Industrial 1, consistent with its role as a core industrial area.

- The area to the south of Lyons Street, between Whitehall Street and Hyde Street, is zoned Industrial 3, reflecting its role as a buffer to residential areas of Yarraville to the west.

- Land occupied by the port is included in a Port Zone, which applies to the whole of the Maribyrnong River frontage to the south of Shepherd Bridge, and to the waterway itself.

131. An Environmental Significance Overlay 3 applies to land to the north of Lyons Street, up to Shepherd Bridge. The purpose of the overlay is to:

  … manage potential conflicts between land in the port environs and the adjoining Port of Melbourne. Land within this overlay should not be developed for any purpose that might compromise the long term protection and expansion of port operations, infrastructure and associated storage facilities. (Schedule 1, Clause 1.0 Statement of environmental significance)

132. The policy framework provides for the northern part of this area, along the Maribyrnong River (Area A), to transition away from port and related industrial uses, towards commercial and office uses, provided they do not adversely impact on the operation of the port. Residential uses remain prohibited in order to protect port operations. Uses attracting large numbers of people are discouraged due to the location of the area opposite Coode Island.

133. Policies for the Yarraville Core Employment Area, encourage public access and an improvement in the appearance and amenity of the area. General policy includes:

  To ensure new buildings achieve a high quality built form outcome, through the use of various materials, design features, articulation/visual interest, appropriate setbacks and/or landscaping features that will improve and enhance the character and amenity of the precinct. (General objective 22.04-3)

  To provide safe, appropriate and convenient access for cyclists and pedestrians through the precinct.
134. Policy specifically for Area A includes:

   *Encourage the adaptation and reuse of historic buildings.*
   *Encourage improvements to pedestrian and cycling access.*

135. Policy for Areas B and C includes:

   *Present attractive built form and well landscaped frontages to Whitehall Street. Area B*
   *Present attractive built form and well landscaped frontages to Hyde Street, Whitehall Street, Francis Street and Somerville Road.*
   *Ensure that new development provides high quality building facades and built form to improve the amenity of the area.*

136. The proposed roadway will exit the tunnel in Area B and will cross the river near the north-east corner of Area B. The northern access ramp to the port will run parallel to the western bank of the river, largely within Area A.

137. The northern access ramp will have a very significant adverse impact on Area A, especially to the south of Parker Street. The northern ramp will be located between existing private properties and the west bank of the river. It will effectively cut those properties off from their relationship to the river bank and from views towards the Melbourne CBD to the east, which are the features that provide a stimulus to the revitalisation of this river front precinct. The precinct will also be impacted by noise, vibration and air emissions from the river crossings.

138. These impacts will significantly impact on potential longer term opportunities for enhancement of the river corridor in this area, or urban renewal, should they become available through the further rationalisation of port and industrial activities.
8 Impacts along the River Corridor

139. The following pages provide a summary of the adverse impacts I believe will occur as a consequence of the proposal, in the vicinity of the Maribyrnong River crossings.
8.1 Maribyrnong Street, south of Shepherd Bridge

140. Description:
- Located to the south of Shepherd Bridge.
- Is part of the Yarraville Core Industrial Area, is included in a Special Use 3 Zone and is identified as a transition area from port and related uses to commercial and business uses, provided no adverse impacts are caused to the operation of the port.
- Contains the ‘Footscray Wharf Length’ of the river as per the Maribyrnong River Valley Guidelines.
- Upgrading works currently are proposed as part of the Footscray River Edge Master Plan.
- Has experienced low scale commercial redevelopment over recent years and reuse of heritage buildings.
- River frontage is presently fenced off as part of the Port of Melbourne.
- Is presently the southern most area of the west bank of the river that is transitioning from port / industrial uses and which is being landscaped and enhanced.

141. Impacts:
- Will be directly affected by the proposed river crossings.
- Will experience significant adverse impacts on the amenity, outlook and redevelopment potential of existing commercial uses fronting the west side of Maribyrnong Street, especially south of Parker Street.
- Will adversely impact on the realisation of the Footscray River Edge Master Plan in this area.
- Will adversely impact on the operation of the Footscray Wharf and the potential for a commercial marina in this area.
- Opportunities will remain for a shared path under the structures in the longer term, albeit with significantly reduced amenity.
- Proposed landscape improvements in the area are not adequate compensation for river front impacts.
8.2 Looking south from Shepherd Bridge

142. Description

- Footscray Road is the southern of two main east-west arterial roads/boulevards that connect Footscray with Central Melbourne.
- Expansive long distance views are presently available from the shared pathway along the south side of Shepherd Bridge, south towards the Westgate Bridge in the distance and Port Phillip Bay (although the Bay is not visible).
- The openness and scale of this view along the river corridor, is an important element in establishing a river front setting for the Footscray Activity Centre, and establishing a high amenity river corridor, that reinforces the positive aspects of this gateway to Melbourne’s west.

143. Impacts:

- The proposed elevated structures will significantly impact on views along the river corridor from the shared pedestrian bridge and other locations from which southern views are available. They will remove distant views to the south, beyond the structure, and the sense of connection to Port Phillip Bay, beyond the Westgate Bridge.
- The lower level northern ramp will prevent views beneath the main elevated roadway and will add to the visual dominance of the combined structures.
8.3 Impacts on the Footscray Activity Centre Riverside Precinct

144. Description:

- The Riverside Precinct is located to the north of Shepherd Bridge.

145. Impacts:

- Direct impacts on the Riverside Precinct will be largely moderated by the existence of Shepherd Bridge, which will screen views towards the proposed new river crossings from this precinct. The new shared pedestrian / cycle bridge parallel to Shepherd Bridge, is a further element that will assist in screening south looking views (not shown in the adjacent photo images).
- Views of the elevated roadway where it crosses the river and curves around to Footscray Road, will be visible from the Riverside Precinct.
8.4 Longer Term Downstream Impacts

146. Description:
- This area is presently part of the Yarraville Core Employment Area (Part B) and is presently zoned Industrial 1, with the water front being included in a Port Zone.
- Existing policy supports the continuation of industrial and port related uses in this area.

147. Impacts:
- The elevated river crossings, the elevated road leading to the northern portal and the portal itself, would adversely impact on possible longer term opportunities that may arise to both enhance the river corridor and for a continuation of urban renewal, downstream of Lyons Street, should port facilities further rationalise along the west bank of the Maribyrnong, in the future.
- Urban renewal in this area, if it was to include a residential element, would be contingent upon the future of Coode Island.
8.5 Perceptions of the Footscray Activity Centre and Maribyrnong River gateway to the Western Suburbs

148. Description

- Both State and local government have gone to considerable effort over decades to enhance the character, amenity, and perception of the Footscray Activity Centre, as a major metropolitan activity centre and as a significant urban renewal and revitalisation area to the immediate west of inner Melbourne.

- Central to this vision has been the location of the centre close to central Melbourne, at the gateway to the west suburbs, with frontage to the Maribyrnong River.

- Positive impressions about the future role and function of the Footscray Activity Centre are influenced by existing road approaches to the centre from the Melbourne CBD and Docklands, along Footscray Road and Dynon Road, and the quality of views available along the Maribyrnong River.

149. Impacts:

- The adverse impact of the river crossings on south looking views along the river corridor from the shared path beside Shepherd Bridge, combined with the visual impact of the proposed elevated roadway structure that will run along Footscray Road, will significantly change the image, perception, amenity, and character of the Footscray Road approach to the Footscray Activity Centre and the Maribyrnong River corridor.
9 Northern Portal

150. As a strategic planner, I make the following comments in relation to the proposed northern portal:

- I understand that the portal encompasses ventilation stacks and has a practical purpose and is not just an urban design statement.
- The design of the portal, its scale and visual prominence goes, considerably beyond that which is necessary to accommodate the functional needs of the ventilation shafts. The structure has clearly been designed to be an iconic architectural statement.
- In my opinion, major road infrastructure should be designed to be an integral part of the urban environment, rather than something that unduly stands out, unless for functional reasons i.e. the Westgate Freeway.
- The arterial road network at the ground plain level, should be planned to be an integral part of the urban area and to be a component of the land use and built form pattern of its surrounds.
- Freeway or toll road infrastructure has the potential to have very significant impacts on urban form, unless located in a tunnel, which is the design response applied to those parts of the project that run through Yarraville.
- The elevated nature of the roadway where it rises from the tunnel to cross the Maribyrnong River, will itself have a significant visual impact on the area.
- Whilst I support the concept of providing noticeable and iconic design elements in key locations along major transport infrastructure, I believe that the approach should:
  - Be more subtle than proposed for the Northern Portal, which in addition to design, relies on sheer scale and height.
  - Seek to maximise the experience of entering or leaving the tunnel for users of the tollway.
  - Seek to minimise the visibility of the structure from surrounding areas, by members of the community that are not using the roadway.

151. Visual analysis presented in the EES document does not include adequate views of the structure from Whitehall Street and Hanmer Reserve / Yarraville Gardens. On my assessment, the structure will be highly visible from Whitehall Street and from the Yarraville Gardens / Hanmer Reserve. The structure will also be prominent from future urban renewal areas that may emerge along the western side of the Maribyrnong River, should existing port and industrial uses be further rationalised in that area in the future.

152. I support Council’s position that the design of the portal should be reviewed.
10 Open Space and Landscaping

153. Open space and landscape works proposed in response to impacts on the Maribyrnong River area, include the following:

- Architectural and urban design treatments of the bridge structures and the undercroft of the bridges.
- Landscape improvements adjacent to the south side of Shepherd Bridge.
- Landscape improvements along the west bank of the river, largely to the north of Parker Street.
- Landscaping improvements beside and beneath the ramp structures, to the south of Parker Street.
- Landscaping improvements along Lyons Street, between Maribyrnong Street and Whitehall Street.
- A new wetland / retarding basin / landscape feature is proposed on a triangular site to the west of the roadway, fronting Whitehall Street.

154. The landscape improvements proposed do not in my mind constitute compensatory works that will mitigate the impacts of the proposed road crossings on the river corridor. All works proposed are standard enhancements that have been either proposed in existing policy documents and master plans, or are enhancement works that would normally be expected to be undertaken along a major urban waterway.

155. The largest area of landscaping works proposed is on a triangular site between Whitehall Street and the proposed roadway. This feature will make a positive contribution to the appearance of Whitehall Street. However, its function will be largely for drainage and retardation. It will not be useable open space.

156. Given the significance of open space and landscaping along a waterway as a community asset, additional open space or landscaping provided away from the water’s edge, does not in my opinion compensate for the loss of open space or the loss of opportunities for landscape enhancements along the river corridor.
11 Conclusion

157. I have not commented throughout my evidence on the planning merits or otherwise of the West Gate Tunnel Project as such.

158. I have focused on addressing the instructions I received from Council, which centre on the impacts of the project in the area around the northern portal and the Maribyrnong River crossings.

159. However, in reviewing these aspects of the project, fundamental concerns have been raised in my mind, about the significant impacts the elevated sections of the project will have, where it crosses the Maribyrnong River and continues above Footscray Road to a major new intersection near Moonee Ponds Creek, on the fundamental character, amenity, identity and image of Melbourne’s inner west, and the western approach to Footscray and the western suburbs of Melbourne.

160. I understand the reality of a significant project such as this, where compromises must be made between ideals and practicalities. I understand that it is unlikely to be able to tunnel such infrastructure throughout the entire inner city.

161. However, in critical locations such as the Maribyrnong River, I believe that greater effort should be taken to avoid or to minimise impacts on the river corridor. I believe this is consistent with long held planning policy to protect and to enhance Melbourne’s significant waterways, including the Maribyrnong.

162. I am concerned that major infrastructure decisions made now, have the potential to significantly impact on longer terms opportunities that may emerge, to enhance and realise major urban renewal opportunities along the Maribyrnong River corridor that are not yet readily apparent.

163. In my opinion, the removal of the proposed McKenzie Road ramps from the Maribyrnong River crossing and a review of the northern portal, should be seriously explored by the Committee.

[Signature]

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