

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

714

Request to be heard?: yes

Full Name: Bruce Plain
Organisation: Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks
Affected property: Yarra Valley Parklands
Attachment 1: EES_FYVP_Managi
Attachment 2:
Attachment 3:
Comments: Submission attached

7 June 2019

Managing for great environmental and community outcomes

This document is prepared by Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks for submission to the North East Link Environmental Effects Statement advisory panel.



The Friends of the Yarra Valley Park is a volunteer group based in Templestowe, that has been planting trees and improving the environment along parts of the Yarra for 28 years.

We look forward to seeing quality vegetation established and maintained along the NELP freeways and in offset areas. Our group will also support NELP local community activities in the future.

Clive Edington President of Friends of Yarra Valley Parklands.

Recently in the United Nations' Sixth Global Environment Outlook, 2019, and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Summary for Policymakers (SPM) of the Global Assessment report, 2019, science has documented that the natural environment is under threat from climate change, deforestation, pollution and increasing species extinction rates. These threats mean that human society is also under threat because it depends on the services of the ecosystem to provide food and an appropriate living environment.

In such a world, managers of projects with footprints as large as the North East Link must take every action to minimize their impacts and, additionally, undertake action to add environmental and social value.

Dr Sharron Pfueller President Sustainable Gardening Australia

Ecosystem management

Acknowledging advice and freeway pictures from Alan Noy. Former Sustainable Gardening Australia board member, revegetation consultant and environmentalist.

We believe that the Environmental Performance requirements (specifically EPR FF2 *Minimise and offset native vegetation removal*) need to be far stronger to provide the intended safeguards and outcomes needed to protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the project corridor.

The following inclusions are recommended to provide a greater probably of improved short, medium and long-term ecosystem outcomes within the context of an urban infrastructure development.

The contractor will work with NELP, local communities and environmental groups, councils and land managers to build a shared commitment to achieving extraordinary outcomes for the world of nature

and all of us who depend on it and love it. This shared vision and commitment will significantly reduce the loss of the 16,000 trees and the many non-weedy plants that stand in the construction path of the North East Link and will also result in significant improvements to the lives of all who we share our beautiful urban open spaces with. The destruction of habitat will have a huge impact on thousands of animals and many more microorganisms. The character and liveability of the suburbs which the freeway travels could be significantly improved or damaged depending on how this project is managed in the very long term.

In collaboration with local and state authorities and local communities the contractor will ensure the management framework and processes through construction and throughout the duration that the toll way will operate will have far better outcomes than what we see on many of existing freeways and similar projects. The image below demonstrates how a poor management plan and/or execution can drastically impact on habitat value.



Eastlink – Dandenong North

Both the foreground strip and the midground batter plantings have failed. Poor monitoring and management have allowed a range of noxious and threatening weeds to establish and proliferate.

The contractor will implement NELP endorsed continually improvement processes that will result in significantly better outcomes compared to other similar projects, both during construction and throughout the life of the freeway.

The contractor is to elaborate on how they will guarantee the overall improvement of vegetation through the offset program over a 30-year period will be delivered on time all the time.

The contractor is to make specific mention of how the offset revegetation program will result in a significant net improvement to biodiversity, ecosystems and habitat corridors in the short, medium and long term.



They will work with stakeholders to demonstrate how they will spend the environmental dollar far more effectively over the long term than sometimes has been the case in the past. The contractor is to document an incentive system for vegetation management sub-contractors to ensure they have continuity of the personnel doing on-ground work. There should also be an incentive system for the managers to drive the continual improvement in their patch over sustained periods. Contractors should also document how high achievers will be rewarded and recognized for outstanding performance.

A dedicated ongoing predetermined annual budget as a small percentage of tolls should be established to maintain and improve plantings. There needs to be specific provision for who is financially responsible for maintaining the landscaping and urban design elements of the project

The contractor will indicate how they will manage offsets to allow for tree and vegetation reduction and the habitat loss during the establishment periods as well as in the medium and long term.

Each and every living organism, from mammals to microorganisms is to have a significantly improved habitat in which they can thrive and expand their populations.

Vibrant messages should be included on the freeway regarding the implications of worldwide and local species loss. The contractor is to present innovative ways they will achieve this, in collaboration with NELP, councils and local communities.

The contractor will document how the community will be engaged and inspired to be active through the offset program. The contractor will very proactively provide opportunities and enticements for individuals and families to become more connected to nature and appreciate we are part of something greater than ourselves.

The contractor will provide opportunities to celebrate the wildness and complexity of the bush/nature we all love on the freeways, adjoining the freeways and in designated offset locations. They will visually inform passers-by that humanity does not have to control nature to survive, in fact we need to do the opposite. The contractor will provide for opportunities to local communities to immerse

themselves in the world of nature and commuters to benefit from the tempting fleeting glimpses through a car window

The contractor must commit to ensuring that the right people are overseeing the offset and revegetation programs. Let the engineering and accounting departments set the constraints but leave room for passionate horticulturalists and ecologists to drive and monitor the revegetation programs. Let their contribution be assessed by what they do on the ground, not what they write or say they will do.

We believe that an offset program driven by passionate people, with a continuity of involvement and a management framework that focused on the long term, might deliver extraordinary outcomes whilst not adding to the overall habitat regeneration and vegetation management costs.

Heritage tree on Manningham Road is greatly valued by the local community



The magnificent redgum on Manningham Road has been a local landmark since well before white settlement and is exactly what NELink, and all of us, need to celebrate and not destroy. When it is retained it should be the key feature in the Western gateway to the cultural precinct and the Valley of the Arts. This tree would have been part of the Wurundjeri people's world pre white settlement and its hollows have been the home for hundreds of generations wood duck, and that matters.

- A national trust competition found that 1045 of 3699 voters chose this heritage listed River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) as their favourite .
- It is estimated at over 300 years old. The National Trust of Australia's Victorian Heritage database outlines that this is probably the oldest tree left from Bulleen's original Red Gum forest.



- Due its presence this local historic and scientifically significant tree has, from what we understand, been successfully saved from the chain saws on three occasions. On one occasion, Eve Fullarton, a founding member of the Friends of the Yarra River Parklands, stood between the tree and the poor guys who were assigned to chop it down.
- It is stated as significant by the Victoria Heritage Council because it is a rare specimen

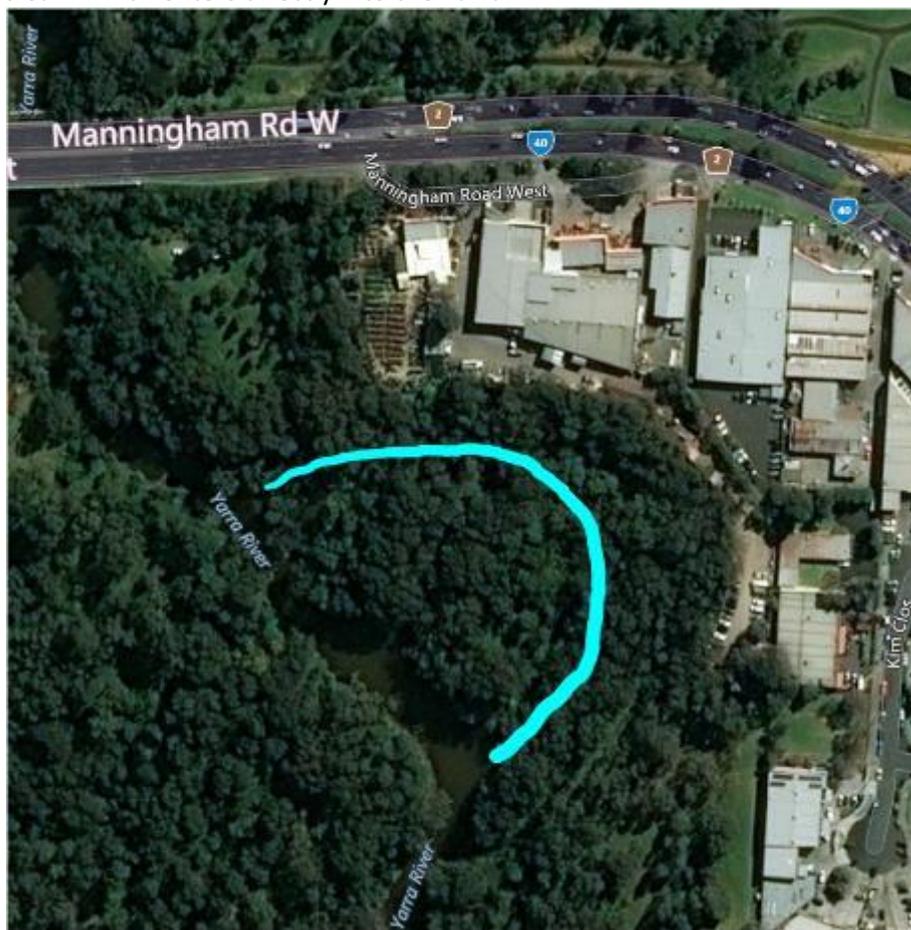
This this signature piece of Bulleen's history must to be saved.

Opportunity for biofiltration of stormwater from the Manningham Road interchange and restoration of Little Bolin Billabong.

The Little Bolin Billabong experiences significant flows of surface water collected from the local road network, the proposed area for the Manningham Road interchange and other sources. This water is not treated or filtered in any form prior to entering the Yarra river. In the past, both rubbish and visible chemical pollutants have been observed entering the Yarra through this catchment point.

Works being undertaken during the construction and the subsequent altered landscape of the North-east Link project are likely to significantly impact on the quality and quantity of water entering the Yarra at this catchment point. This does provide the opportunity to consider the feasibility of the restoration of the billabong. Such a project complements the revegetation works carried out by Bulleen Art and Garden in collaboration with the Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks (FYVP) and Parks Victoria over a 20-year period in the parklands surrounding the billabong. FYVP are of the opinion that this proposal is feasible and will provide strong environmental and social outcomes. This proposal aligns with the 50 Year (Suburban Reach) Vision for the Yarra Strategic Plan.

The network of billabongs through the middle-Yarra region have significant historical and ecological value. The Little Bolin Billabong is a modified remanent billabong located on the north-eastern side of the Yarra river, approximately 300 metres downstream of the Banksia street bridge. Since European colonisation of the region, the billabong has been altered. Under the current form, water from a large stormwater culvert flows along the upstream arm of the billabong creating an active permanent stream which enters directly into the Yarra.



Although the restoration of the Little Bolin Billabong to its pre-European colonisation state is not considered possible due to the external impacts to the site (such as water runoff from hard surfaces, Yarra river flow controls and competition by non-native plant and animals), improvements can be

made to positively impact on the overall river health, ecology, historical and cultural awareness and community amenity of the site.

There are a number of elements to any restoration work that may be considered, including:

- Establishing a filtration basin utilising both arms of the billabong. Water flow into the Yarra could be controlled at either end with design considerations for storm and flood events allowed for.
- Implementing a revegetation program to control exotic plant species and replenish indigenous plants on the site.
- Providing opportunities for community engagement through the revegetation and long-term monitoring and maintenance.
- Reinstating the Bolin Bolin Cultural Trail initiative. The site could be considered as an educational site, highlighting the importance of the chain of billabongs both historically and to the local ecology.
- While still providing the educational outcomes. The site could potentially divert visitors from and take pressure off the Bolin Bolin billabong. The Bolin Bolin billabong is considered to be of significant cultural and environmental value but is less suited to increases in visitation rates.

This project is a strong fit with the NEL objectives and will provide positive long-term outcomes for the environment and the community.