

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

580

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

Full Name: Warren Maher

Organisation: Maher's Tennis Management Services/Boroondara Tennis Centre

Affected property:

Attachment 1: NEL_Submission_-

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Please find submission from Maher's Tennis Management Services/Boroondara Tennis Services attached.

7 June 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

Submission to the North East Link EES

I am the Director of Maher's Tennis Management Services (MTMS) and Director of Tennis of the Boroondara Tennis Centre (BTC). I present this submission in relation to the impact the North East Link (NEL) will have on the BTC.

Based on the options presented in the NEL Technical Report I- Social (Appendix 2, Bulleen Park Area, Sport and Recreation Options Assessment), MTMS supports Bulleen Park design options 6 and 7.

The two designs provide a good location for the BTC, improved access for tennis players, opportunities and synergies associated with a club house facility shared with the BTC and Freeway Golf Course and the opportunity for expansion of the BTC in future years.

The designs provide ample opportunity for NELP to provide a like-for-like replacement facility and land area for the BTC. There is no use providing a like-for-like replacement of the number of courts, the building and the car park without providing the same land area the BTC currently occupies.

If the NEL proceeds and the BTC is relocated, construction of the new BTC must occur before the current Centre closes so that there is no disruption to services. This factor is critical to the continued success of the BTC and tennis in the region. The BTC must suffer an absolute minimal shutdown period when transferring between facilities.

1. Background

The BTC was built in 1983 as a joint venture between the Camberwell Council (now City of Boroondara), Tennis Victoria and the State government through the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation. At the time of construction, the BTC was considered to be a 'state of the art' tennis facility. It is still considered one of the top tennis Centre's in the state and nationally.

MTMS has been managing the Centre for over 12 years and I have been involved personally for the 10 years prior to that. Over that time, I have developed very strong relationships with Boroondara Council officers, Tennis Victoria, Tennis Australia, the tennis playing community from Boroondara, Manningham and Banyule and tennis players from further afield.

I have devoted my whole life to the sport of tennis. I started playing tennis at a young age in club competitions and tournaments, and continued on to compete as a professional player on the ATP world tour for a number of years. Upon

finishing playing professionally I coached at 2 of the largest tennis clubs in Victoria before being offered the job of running the Boroondara Tennis Centre. My son was also a professional player, commencing tennis at the age of 5, and I was with him throughout his career as a parent, his coach, and mentor, at competitions and tournaments both locally and overseas. My interest in and passion for tennis has spanned a lifetime!

The BTC plays a major role in the tennis industry in Victoria. It is one of the largest and most successful public hire tennis Centre's in the State and in Australia with 23 courts, ancillary services including café, coaching services, physiotherapy, pre literacy education and massage. There are numerous suppliers the Centre is involved with, as well as sponsors, many of them being local, plus a number of hard working full-time, part-time, and casual staff numbering around 35-40 people who are dedicated to the success of the Centre.

The BTC is the biggest and busiest tournament venue in Australia. It hosts over 40 individual tournaments each year, as well as being the venue for numerous other bulk bookings for local schools and associations. The BTC has an international profile as it hosts overseas tennis camps with players from across the globe.

The yearly Tennis Victoria and Tennis Australia tennis tournament calendar, within which the Centre plays a major role, along with its own calendar of school and bulk bookings, is planned for and confirmed up to 18 months ahead, so the timing/timeline of the NEL project is absolutely crucial/critical to the Centre's operations.

The BTC has won many awards including:

- Most Outstanding Club or Centre at the Victorian Tennis Awards 2017.
- Most Outstanding Club at the prestigious Newcombe Medal Australian Tennis Awards 2017.

In addition to this we have been a finalist in Tennis Victoria 'Most Outstanding Tournament' category.

2. Impacts of the North East Link project announcement

Once the Victorian Government announced the NEL and the preferred route (Option A), many of the development plans Council had for the facility were put on hold, including:

- Redevelopment to add additional services to the building and grounds.
- A major upgrade to court lights.
- Tennis court replacement.

There are also a number of other items that MTMS consider important for enhancement of the Centre which have also been postponed, such as:

- The Centre needs to be able to accommodate a larger range of services in the current sporting environment as clients would come to expect this of a facility this large and with the enormous profile it currently has. Hence the need to allow for a clubhouse/facility building to be able to accommodate all this, in particular health, well-being and fitness services.
- Additional courts would be a necessity to cater for the number of, and high-profile events currently available to the Centre, along with assisting in player development, and to cater for the future. Paddle courts would also add another dimension to the services on offer at the Centre, and it has been considered in the past.
- The physical location of the Centre should have excellent visibility, as it currently does. This is imperative and a major component for the venue moving forward.
- The actual location and space for the new facility must accommodate the TOTAL VIEWING OF ALL COURTS for the Centre's overall daily operations, the tournament box, major events and bulk bookings, security, and control of court usage.

We have been involved in a number of meetings with staff from the North East Link Project (NELP) and Council officers. NELP has promised that the Centre will be replaced. The conversations with NELP staff have never included any mention of the BTC being demolished and not replaced.

MTMS insists NELP follow through on their ongoing verbal commitment of replacing the BTC and the land on which it sits.

3. Comments on the various options presented in the Bulleen Park Options Assessment

Options 1 and 2 are not supported by MTMS as these options would relocate the BTC within the City of Manningham and close to the Yarra River.

The BTC has been supported by Boroondara City Council since it was first built and our strong preference is to remain in the City of Boroondara. These options would place the BTC at risk from severe flooding, potentially impacting its operations.

The text associated with these options suggests that the buildings and courts would need to be designed and built to be flood proof to minimise maintenance and any impact on the flood plain. Given the BTC is an extremely busy Centre, with scheduled tournaments and social play, it cannot tolerate any court being out of action or damaged due to flooding for any period of time.

Option 3 retains the BTC but it is not located wholly within the City of Boroondara. This option locates the BTC over the covered Koonung Creek. MTMS does not support Option 3 because of access difficulties and potential flooding of the facility.

Options 4 and 5

Options 6 and 7 were prepared by Boroondara Council. These designs incorporate a shared clubhouse for the Freeway Golf Course which avoids duplication of services. We believe either of these two design options will deliver the community a BTC that will be of a very high quality, and, importantly, will provide Council the land area to ensure the BTC can develop into the future.

The above comments are made based on my experience as a parent, tennis coach, tennis administrator, tennis tournament director, former tennis player and through my personal travel experiences.

On top of these factors is my absolute responsibility and duty to provide the most positive outcome for all of the BTC stakeholders, and to ensure there is a genuine vision for what can be developed for the future, long-term stability for Council and the local and wider tennis community.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my opinions/views for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Warren Maher
Director
MAHER'S TENNIS MANAGEMENT SERVICES