

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

703

Request to be heard?: yes

Full Name: John D'Aloia

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Submission_to_N

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: please refer to attachment

Submission to the Environment Effects Statement (EES) Inquiry & Advisory Committee Re: North East Link Project, (NELP) Victoria

By John D'Aloia - June 2019

I am John D'Aloia, and I have been a resident of Banyule for more than 30 years. I have volunteered with a number of community groups in the protection of wildlife and the rehabilitation of habitat. This is especially the case with Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands.

I have a Masters of Environmental Science. I was president of Warringal Conservation Society from 2000-2017, and was a community representative on Banyule Council's Environmental Advisory Committee from 1992 – 2016. I am currently a committee member of Friends of Banyule.

I am seriously concerned about the adverse environmental impacts of this project, both real and projected, and, therefore, oppose the North East Link Project (NELP) for the following reasons:

- The scale of the project is such that its construction and operations will have significant, and catastrophic consequences on habitat, open space, parklands and waterways.
- The adverse impacts on indigenous Flora and Fauna are significant
- The construction and operation of the NEL will contribute to climate change.
- The freeway/tollway will reduce tree canopy and significantly reduce habitat in the corridor for many decades.
- The proposed design for a trench through the Simpson Army Barracks will decimate the population of *Eucalyptus x studleyensis*, (Studley Park Gum). This Eucalypt is a fertile, naturally evolving hybrid that is unique to Victoria, and most prevalent in the middle and Lower Yarra reaches. The Simpson Army barracks site is considered to be the only viable stand in existence. This hybrid is listed as rare and endangered on the Advisory list of Victorian Plants. NELP's proposal to offset the loss of Studley Park gum, is not possible. The Simpson Army barracks site has the right conditions to allow this hybrid to continue to persist and evolve naturally. The parent species are present, the soil, the topography, and moisture levels and rainfall all combine to provide conditions for the hybrid to thrive. Replanting individual propagated Studley Park Gums does not recreate the intact and evolving hybrid habitat.
- I support Banyule Council's proposal for extending the tunnel north of the Simpson Army barracks.
- NELP proposes to provide offsets relating to vegetation loss. However, there are already vegetation offsets in Simpson Army barracks. Offsets are supposed to be in perpetuity.
- There is a net loss of green open space within the north-south corridor, and the eastern freeway. The community will lose over 50 hectares of open space permanently, with no proposals for replacement.
- The project states that approximately 26,000 trees will be lost, of which, approximately 67% are semi-mature, mature and over-mature trees. The proposed 30,000 trees to replace those lost, and the canopy replacement plan are woefully inadequate. According to the Westgate Tunnel Project Environmental Effects Statement summary report, that project will replant six(6) trees for every tree lost; at the very least, this should be matched by NELP.

- There is no habitat management plan proposed. Tree planting needs to be done in conjunction with planting of understory and groundcover species to achieve reasonable habitat.

Should the NELP be approved for construction, the following conditions should be rightfully considered:

1. The Northern section of tollway/freeway (North of Simpson Army Barracks) should be re-designed to commence tunneling at Grimshaw Street. This would protect remnant indigenous vegetation, including Matted-Flax lily and Eucalyptus x studleyensis (Studley Park Gum), habitat.
2. The Simpson Barracks should be a no-go zone.
3. Banyule Creek and Koonung Creek should be retained as open, unlined waterways
4. There should be specific plans to protect Banyule Flats habitat from changes to stormwater flow regime and water drawdown.
5. NELP should avoid operating on minimal standards. NELP should employ international best-practice standards in all aspects of construction, operations, and mitigation efforts.
6. Compensation of lost open space should be made with replacement open space.

In conclusion, I do not support the current reference design for NELP, as there is extensive loss to habitat and biodiversity. The mitigation plans put forward by NELP are either inadequate or non-existent.

I support the submissions put forward by Warringal Conservation Society and Friends of Banyule, as well as the Banyule City Council.