AILA PRESENTATION TO NE LINK PANEL 6.9.2019
SPEAKING NOTES

SLIDE 2
Our interest in the sustainable and liveable development of cities.

AILA is a professional organisation representing landscape architects. Landscape architecture is a design profession dedicated to best practice design of public space in cities and towns and rural landscapes for people and nature.

Our members often get involved in infrastructure projects like the NE Link project as contributors to the planning, design and even the with the defence of the projects in panels like this, as in the case of Allan Wyatt’s contribution to the panel or some of the authors of the urban design guidelines.

Our profession's involvement with projects of this nature is usually heavily directed by client interests and we are often given a role of superficial decoration or dressing up infrastructure or building development because we are called in too late in the brief formulation or design process.

The landscape architects involved in “gilding the lilly” at this stage of the NE Link project and others who will no doubt be involved as the project moves forward will certainly make a positive contribution.

In summary our profession’s influence is often limited and projects like this one, rarely represent our professional values.

AILA believes that the NE Link project in its current form, is not a good investment Victoria, Melbourne and the local precinct in terms is impact on sustainability and liveability.

We are here, unconstrained by client briefs, to present the panel with an undiluted view of the merits of the project from a total environment and community interest perspective using the lens of our profession’s code of ethics and an understanding of world best practice in city development.

SLIDE 3
AILA climate and biodiversity emergency declaration.

AILA has just this month declared a climate and biodiversity emergency.

Australian cities, including Melbourne, are not heading in the right direction with its current development model as being rolled out by successive governments.

Climate change poses a dramatic threat to the survival of the planet as we know it. Dramatic change is required in the way we develop cities and manage landscapes over the next decade.

Melbourne is an affluent and liveable city right now by world standards but Australia also has one of the world’s highest per capita carbon footprints driven largely by its continuing car dependent low density growth model, relatively unconstrained by natural boundaries.

If we are to move towards a sustainable and equitable future, low density suburban development need to be halted as a matter of urgency. All new development needs to be of higher design quality, at higher densities, and be largely accessible by active modes, to public transport systems.

We need to ensure all significant new investment in public infrastructure contributes substantially to progressive reduction in per capita carbon footprint and achievement of zero carbon by 2050. This project is clearly a massive road building project created to support existing and future low density suburbs. This expenditure is clearly out of step with the current climate emergency.
Freeways in the world context.

Cities around the world stopped building new urban freeways from the 1970's. Many are being demolished while others are being covered with new development and public space created above them to heal parts of the city divided by earlier construction.

SLIDE 4
Los Angeles

SLIDE 5
Boston

SLIDE 6,7,8
Madrid Rio

A world best practice for project of this nature is the Milan Rio project that achieved substantial improvement in the quality of the city while also accommodating traffic and car parking objectives. Melbourne is going against world trends and best practice by investing so significantly in substantial new road building over city rationalisation around public transport.

The accompanying table is an attempt to compare NE Link with Madrid Rio in terms of process and benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project comparison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Issue</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>location</td>
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<td>Procurement method</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipated cost</td>
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<td>Site area</td>
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SLIDE 9
Approach in Melbourne?

AILA suggest that a massive infrastructure project that has such a simple objective as reducing congestion of motor vehicles, effective in 2028, is a wasted opportunity to enhance the sustainability and liveability of Melbourne.

Are there better ways to make this long planned freeway link?

The process of a consultation on the current reference design followed by design construct bids is unwieldy and is not likely to produce best practice urban design outcomes.

The optimum outcome for the community and environment will not be achieved through such a risk averse engineering led process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open space creation</th>
<th>Replacement of the status quo seems to be the objective both in terms of vegetation and recreation</th>
<th>150ha of new parkland Public and sports facilities, interpretation and art centers, an urban beach, children's areas and cafés, and the restoration of the hydraulic architectural heritage and 12 new pedestrian bridges,</th>
<th>NE Link has no agenda for significant additional open space one new facilities that would enhance liveability or sustainability for the precinct it passes through, it is purely and simple a road building project with limited amelioration,</th>
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<tr>
<td>Intervention in surrounding areas</td>
<td>Apart from parking garages at rail and bus access points there is very little improvement of urban fabric in the corridor and negative impacts on adjoining suburbs because of increased traffic.</td>
<td>Grants for renovation of surrounding medium density apartments and development of 1000 basement parking spaces for residents. Improved amenity for around 30,000 existing nearby residents</td>
<td>NE Link will involve acquisition of land for construction that my be excess to its needs after completion. There is no clear vision for and value capture and enhancement of this precinct to increase the sustainability of Melbourne.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transport benefits</td>
<td>Increase of the freeway network capacity and connectivity is maximised. Limited improvement of a poor cycle network.</td>
<td>10km of the city’s first ring road put below ground. The existing road network was maintained and extensive new active transport and interfaces with editing and future public transport was accommodated.</td>
<td>NE Link will provide for increased car based transport at huge coat to the community. Public transport provisions are inadequate and largely road based when spending a higher proportion of the budget on more efficient rail could substantially enhance Victoria’s carbon footprint long term.</td>
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SLIDE 10
AILA's RECOMMENDATIONS
AILA recommends abandoning the current reference design and commissioning a new urban design led process through a limited competition or other selection process.

the new brief should:

- preference and fully integrate existing and new public and active transport.
- provide for and integrate new medium density mixed use development to replace existing industrial and low density housing in close proximity to public transport using value capture mechanisms.
- substantially increase in the quality and quantity of open space and green infrastructure through the development corridor.
- This could be done but redeveloping along the entire length of the route even if it means making lesser connections to the surface road system.
- prioritise retentions of existing vegetation especially mature trees and ensure that there is a canopy cover increase of last least 100% by 2030.
- design to enhance all surface level streets and public spaces within the 5 km catchment of all stations by refitting street spaces to remove car parking and prioritising active transport and greening.
- Substantially downgrade all interchanges to conventional offramp and street connections.
- Maintain the current Eastern Freeway road profile and abandon the eastern bus way to be replaced with Doncaster rail in the current profile.
- Develop a new NE Link road in tunnel with capacity limited to accommodate heavy vehicles and non peak hour traffic volumes with tolls set to recover on going maintenance and repayment of the cost by 2050.

SLIDE 11
AILA's RECOMMENDATIONS
In summary
AILA believes that the current NE Link Project, as represented by the reference design and EES documentation, together with currently proposed implementation methodology, lacks the necessary vision to implement Plan Melbourne’s vision for a sustainable liveable city and meet zero carbon by 2050 goals.

It needs to be abandoned or quickly modified.

We recommend either of two options:

1. Abandon the project and reallocate resources to building public transport and new low carbon precincts related to existing and new public transport.
2. Reform the project bid process with a new brief developed by the government architects office that has sustainability and good urban design as a core evaluation criteria with no requirement to comply with the reference design. The cost of running such a bid process could be substantially reduced over the current proposal by limiting the level of detail required to select the preferred bid team.