

Opening Remarks Traffic and transport

Objectives

1. The relevant EES evaluation objective from Table 1 of the Scoping Requirements is set out below:

***Transport capacity, connectivity and traffic management** – To increase transport capacity and improve connectivity to and from the west of Melbourne and, in particular, to increase freight movement via the freeway network instead of local and arterial roads, while adequately managing effects of the works on the existing broader and local transport networks, including road, public transport, cycling and pedestrian transport networks*

2. In the exhibited EES, this evaluation objective can be understood in the context of the specific Project Objectives, which are set out below:

- (a) To improve transport performance in the M1 corridor:
 - (i) To support the increased travel demand generated by future population and economic growth trends;
 - (ii) To enhance connectivity between economic clusters;
 - (iii) To enhance safety along the M1 corridor; and
 - (iv) To enhance access to jobs and services;
- (b) To reduce reliance on the West Gate Bridge:
 - (i) To improve network resilience and redundancy;
 - (ii) To mitigate strategic risks to the State and national economies; and
 - (iii) To improve travel reliability;
- (c) To improve freight access to the Port of Melbourne and greater Melbourne:

- (i) To improve reliability of access to the Port of Melbourne and on the freight network;
 - (ii) To support the travel demands arising from the future freight task; and
 - (iii) To enhance state and national competitiveness through freight productivity improvements; and
- (d) To improve community amenity on local streets in the inner west:
 - (i) To reduce freight on local streets; and
 - (ii) To improve safety on local streets.
- 3. As is established through the evidence of Mr Michael Barlow and Mr John Kiriakidis, there is strong strategic support for the achievement of those objectives.
- 4. The Project objectives provide a particular context within which the benefits of the Project are to be understood. This context is critical to the analysis of the traffic evidence and the scope of the IAC's task. The objectives set the framework against which community benefit is to be measured.
- 5. Three further observations are made here:
 - (a) First, the project objectives support specific traffic measures centred around the improved efficiency of the M1 corridor, reduced reliance on the West Gate Bridge, improved Port access and removing trucks from local streets.
 - (b) Secondly, the project objectives describe the broad outcomes. There will necessarily be measures which are not described in the objectives but align with them.
 - (c) Thirdly, the project objectives have metropolitan if not State relevance. For example, the M1 corridor is not limited to the West Gate Bridge. The achievement of the project objectives weighs heavily against some local

detrimental impacts of the Project where the evaluation objective calls for “adequate management”.

6. Whether or not the environmental effects or outcomes of the Project are “acceptable” is properly assessed:
 - (a) in an integrated manner, balancing sometimes competing objectives;
 - (b) in the context of applicable standards; and
 - (c) through the prism of net community benefit.

Agency consultation

7. VicRoads worked closely with the WDA in developing the Reference Design, assessing the Project Design and preparing the EES. VicRoads also had a formal role in the EES process through participation in the Technical Reference Group.
8. In particular, VicRoads satisfied itself that the strategic, spreadsheet and microsimulation models were fit for purpose, and based on valid assumptions.
9. Other relevant agencies represented in the Technical Reference Group were Public Transport Victoria, VicTrack, the Port of Melbourne and the Cities of Melbourne, Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay.

Relevant project notes and EPRs

10. The IAC’s attention is drawn to the following Project Notes:
 - (a) PN1 and 41 regarding sensitivity testing
 - (b) PN11, 18, 19, 35 and 36 regarding construction haul routes;
 - (c) PN15, 16 and 17 regarding intersection performance;
 - (d) PN22 and 23 regarding road closures and works areas;
 - (e) PN25, 38 and 39 regarding Port access;

- (f) PN29 and 40 regarding microsimulation modelling;
 - (g) PN37 regarding Melbourne Metro Rail Project road network enhancements;
and
 - (h) PN43 regarding the Dynon Road connection and Wurundjeri Way
extension and widening.
11. The IAC's attention is drawn to EPRs TP1 to TP9.
12. It is also noted that further requests for Project notes have emerged from the expert witness conclaves. These requests are summarised below:
- (a) Replicating Figures 141, 160 and 161 in the Transport Impact Assessment for city connections Options 1, 2 and 3 and Mr Hunt's Option 5;
 - (b) Clarification of the additional 9,000 vehicles crossing the Dynon Road link in the 2031 Project case;
 - (c) Intersection analysis of Dock Link Road;
 - (d) Modelling of the impact on Kensington Road and the broader network; and
 - (e) Peak hour traffic volumes for the Port connections.
13. WDA has asked the author of the Transport Impact Assessment to respond to these requests by way of Project note. He can be made available for questioning if this would be of assistance to the IAC.

Key aspects of municipal submissions

Dynon Road link and Wurundjeri Way extension

14. The necessity for the Dynon Road link and the Wurundjeri Way extension is explained in section 3.9.4 of Chapter 3 of the EES Main Report Volume 1, and in greater detail in PN43.

15. In short, the Dynon Road link is critical to achieving the Project objective of improving the performance of the M1 corridor, specifically by supporting the increased travel demand between the western suburbs of Melbourne and the central city; enhancing connectivity between economic clusters; and enhancing access to jobs and services.
16. The Dynon Road link does not create an additional access point into the central city, but rather uses an existing connection. Demand will also be managed through tolling of vehicles exiting the West Gate Tunnel towards the city during the AM peak.
17. Without the Dynon Road link, increased traffic in Footscray Road and Dudley Street would lead to significant congestion, flow breakdown and reduced travel speeds, which is an unacceptable impact.
18. The Dynon Road link is modelled to generate an additional 9,000 vehicles per day, which is moderate and manageable in the North and West Melbourne local road network. Network capacity within North and West Melbourne is discussed in greater detail in PN47.
19. The Wurundjeri Way extension redistributes traffic heading south off Dynon Road, Spencer Street and Dudley Street, thus continuing the city bypass function of the existing Wurundjeri Way alignment. When compared with a scenario providing connections at Footscray Road and Dynon Road only, the addition of the Wurundjeri Way extension improves the performance of those roads.

Port access

20. Connections to the Port in the Project Design are explained in section 3.9.2 of Chapter 3 of the EES Main Report Volume 1.
21. It is a project specific assumption that Coode Road is closed west of Dock Link Road, with DP World accessible via Mackenzie Road only (see para 4.3, Appendix F to Technical Report A, p 18).

22. This assumption is supported by the Port. More importantly, it is appropriate in the context of the objective that the road is being provided to support the Port and freight connections. The EES is not framed in terms to direct the development or growth of the Port itself.
23. In order to achieve the Project objective of improving freight access to the Port of Melbourne and greater Melbourne, access to both Swanson Dock East and West is necessary. This is in part because of the planned closure of Coode Road, but also to ensure efficiency, equity, redundancy and superior performance from a traffic engineering perspective.
24. Two links to the west of the Port of Melbourne were explored: access via Dock Link Road; and access via Mackenzie Road. The benefits and disbenefits of these alternatives are set out in Table 3-4 of Chapter 3 of the EES Main Report Volume 1, which concludes that, apart from any other considerations, access to the western side of the Port via Mackenzie Road is preferable from a traffic engineering perspective.
25. In either scenario, a crossing of the Maribyrnong River would be required.

Millers Road

26. Millers Road is a divided four-lane arterial road that already performs an important function in providing direct access onto the M1 corridor. Its functional role and classification supports a high movement of traffic.
27. Millers Road absorbs some of the truck traffic diverted from local residential streets in Footscray and Yarraville by reason of truck bans. While it will experience a significant increase in truck traffic in the 2031 Project case, this is consistent with its designated role, and is a question of residential amenity rather than traffic performance.
28. By 2031, monitoring will have been undertaken, allowing better definition of potential mitigation measures by VicRoads.

29. PN1 demonstrates that removal of the tolling point between Grieve Parade and Millers Road would have a significant reduction in the volume of additional truck traffic, as a result of reduced toll avoidance. WDA acknowledges that this is an appropriate matter for IAC to consider given its direct implications for the amenity of Millers Road.

Grieve Parade

30. West-facing ramps at the intersection of the West Gate Freeway and Grieve Parade are not part of the Project, but are discussed at page 3-19 of Chapter 3 of the EES Main Report Volume 1.
31. They are not safe or practical given the available land and the tight geometry in this area, and given only access to/from Princes Freeway (rather than the M80) would be possible.
32. They are also not required by reason of the Project.

Veloway

33. The veloway is a worthy addition to the Project, not a Project objective in itself. It facilitates active transport for commuter cyclists, in addition to the at-grade shared use paths created or upgraded as part of the Project.
34. Its design is innovative and efficient, requiring no additional land acquisition and minimising the visual impact of the Project. It can be altered through the detailed design phase.
35. Its proposed width achieves a safe balance between being wide enough to allow commuter cyclists to use it at speed, while not being so wide that it encourages overtaking at speed.

EPRs and modifications to the Project Design

36. WDA will consider the EPRs in light of the evidence given to the IAC. It is noted that the focus of expert evidence and submissions appears to be upon broader implications of the Project.
37. Some design changes to the Project have been discussed in expert evidence. For the purposes of these opening remarks it is acknowledged that:
- (a) Mr Kiriakidis agrees that there is merit in reviewing the design detail at the outbound southern portal.
 - (b) Mr Kiriakidis agrees there may be merit in widening the veloway subject to design and engineering considerations.

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