Beyond Adversarial
Time to Rethink Habitual Endorsement of Life-destroying Subservience to Lies

Kororoit Institute
Presentation to #NELAugh EES IAC
Tony Smith • 6 September 2019
Always was, always will be aboriginal land

The Wurundjeri (Woi wurrung) people

This area has an important history.

The Wurundjeri is one of several main clans of the Woi wurrung language group (often referred to as a tribe). The clan was, in effect an estate ownership group within the larger area of the tribe. This estate ownership carried with it the responsibility to care for the land, renewing and sustaining the local ecology and many other important cultural obligations.

The Woi wurrung was one of five language groups that made up a larger confederacy known as the Kulin Nation. The Kulin Nation was maintained by intermarriage, a common language and mutual interests of various kinds, including trade.

Traditional boundaries of the Woi wurrung extend to the Great Dividing Range in the north, Mt Baw Baw to the east, the Werribee River to the West and Mordialloc Creek to the south.
View from a step back

Global Absurdity

Growing focus on Urban Hydrology
Climate, Ecology, Collapse

New & old themes of Kororoit Institute submission (406)

Collaboration better than Adversary Process vulnerabilities

Engaging with local Expertise beyond advocates

Intrinsic Value Environment Human Amenity

Amplifying neglect of Transport Integration Act

#NELAugh
In KI’s founding document “primary purposes of Kororoit Institute (...) which services growth areas west of Melbourne with an interdisciplinary research focus (on) community consultation, service corridor and public land use planning”

The City of Brimbank is quite central to those purposes.

The Western Ring Road could have been “Brimbank Freeway”.

*During 1995-97, 17 km of the Western Ring Road was opened through the new municipality from Boundary Road, Derrimut, to Melrose Drive, Tullamarine, encouraging rapid growth of road-based freight throughout the region.*

—Smith, Tony, 2017 "Brimbank Rising: From a History of Failed Local Councils, Officers and Administrators Promote and Support Sunshine Rising" in Remaking Cities Conference Proceedings 2018
One practical outcome of a decade of Kororoit Institute, and its progenitors, has been external support for mature age interdisciplinary PhD candidates who otherwise struggle to find understanding supervisors within the silos.

Chapter Six: Main Drains, Planning, Freeways and Watercourses
Main Drains: concrete lining and undergrounding continues
Melbourne’s planning in the 1950s:
  Town planning or planning for road networks?
Melbourne’s first freeway route: An historic path
Watercourses and roads:
  From the picturesque to the utilitarian
Melbourne’s first freeway:
  Cutting travel time by cutting watercourses
Watercourse valleys as easements:
  Landscapes of infrastructure
The second freeway – Tullamarine: Sending
  Moonee Ponds Creek west for traffic to travel north
Moonee Ponds Creek: Coal Canal and further upstream
Undergrounding tributaries: Five Mile and Westbreen
Westbreen: a late undergrounding
Tullamarine Freeway: Traffic along the creek bed
Continued expansion of freeways
  Affecting the Moonee Ponds
The Eastern Freeway: Two realignments of the Yarra,
  Shifting and undergrounding a section of the Koonung
The Infamous Reilly Street drain and the Yarra:
  Industrial drains of Collingwood and Abbotsford
The Eastern Freeway: Melbourne’s third, the Yarra’s second
Lost Yarra tributaries, under Kew
The Koonung Creek stage of the Eastern
Koonung Creek: A typical eastern suburbs creek

The University of Melbourne
Doctor of Philosophy
Awarded 17 April 2019
Marcus Leslie Lancaster

Who developed an urban environmental history of Melbourne’s watercourses, demonstrating that urban watercourses can be viewed as an individual urban network. He showed that rivers and streams had their own unique histories of change which can be used to guide future management, both in Melbourne and elsewhere.
Melbourne Water’s Healthy Waterways Strategy refresh and City of Melbourne’s concern re flooding of Arden-Macaulay led to Catchment Collaborations for the Maribyrnong, and for Moonee Ponds Creek; better ways of involving interested community at the right time than adversarial processes which are increasingly vulnerable to gaming.

Brimbank planners proposed former quarry site housing industrial processes should be rezoned Industrial 1 right to the Maribyrnong waterline. Our solo objection precipitated a Planning Panel, support from other interested parties and, after last minute hiccup, a unanimous vote of Council.
While trying to wrap his research on the evolution of knowledge management with some foresight about where things appear to be heading, KI President, Bill Hall, became more focussed on what became inescapable conclusions about the self-destructive trajectory humanity has landed on. So like any long career scientist he started looking more deeply at the evidence, and those conclusions only became more dismal as exploitation amplified.
After atypical early listening diverted Transurban away from the Stony Creek estuary at Hyde Street Reserve, on 30 August 2018 a toxic waste stockpile ignited upstream.
Channel Deepening environmental assessment committee rejected first EES. Second attempt forced through and Portsea lost its main beach.

Holdgate et al 2011 showed Bay closed at Nepean Bay Bar until breached 1000 ybp. Needed to visit Mud Island before Green friends objected to proposal to reinstate.

Low waves on raised high tide level eroded middens and beach access.
Just weeks after announcement on banks of the Maribyrnong of Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee with chair Chris Chesterfield (for Birrarung Council, 756) Melbourne Victory and the City of Maribyrnong announced, at the same place, enclosure of Footscray Park floodplain for a junior academy, provoking broad campaign to maintain public access to historic park.

Fledgling local chapter of Extinction Rebellion added some extra support, included here as a reminder that the next phase of the wider XR campaign will be going into full swing while the IAC is scheduled to be writing your report. The judgement of history may be kinder if you just say NO! to #NELAugh and grasp the chance to join the good side!
Upper Stony Creek Transformation Project brought together Development Victoria, Greening the West, City of Brimbank, funding from Commonwealth, DELWP, Melbourne Water and City West Water to renaturalise 1.2 km of concrete channel and convert adjacent retarding basin into wetland system. With over $10 million in the kitty and months after resuming full scale work following asbestos remediation, late in July the contractors suddenly packed up, leaving a vulnerable dust bowl with the only information being that the project had run out of money, leaving it to the locals, including council, to tackle immediate and long term consequences.
A couple of weeks back found an unscheduled opportunity to use each of the five V/Line train routes out of Melbourne within six days and a chance to revisit Donnybrook Cricket Ground for the first time this century, in the process getting a look at the transformation of the City of Whittlesea and adjacent areas of the NNE corridor driving #NELAugh.
Panels 9-12 of Exhibit Earth’s *Volcano Dreaming* exhibition which adorns front of DWELP HQ. Recent not unrelated opportunity to finally visit the flying fox colony at Yarra Bend revealed geomorphological similarities between Melbourne’s east and beloved Otways, underlining contrast with the volcanic plains stretching from Melbourne’s west into SE South Australia.
KI presentation to #EWfail inquiry identified long familiar issues with NNE corridor as dominant contributor to misperceived EW congestion and proponent’s misrepresentation of its own minimal recorded data. We also explicitly suggested low cost interventions which might reduce the pressure but, like other constructive contributions from an increasingly interested, informed and competent public, that didn’t interest the gravy train, and these adversarial processes resist anything collaborative.
The City of Melbourne’s Transport Strategy 2030 is scheduled for endorsement this month (September 2019). The councillor and senior officer responsible presented on it last week to another transport-focused group.

In conversation afterwards, it was confirmed that they are as concerned by #NELAugh being contrary to the city’s transport objectives as they were by #WestChoke, but that their experience in leading the opposition to the latter had left them disillusioned with the outcomes and costs to participate to the point of opting to sit this one out.

Meanwhile they got on with their own Moonee Ponds Creek opportunity study in the absence of support from Transurban.

Draft released for CoM Transport Strategy consultation specifies “Outcome 3 - Fewer Non-essential Vehicles in the Municipality” with this heading summary:

Removing non-essential vehicle trips from the city’s streets will free up valuable space to make streets safer, more attractive and more efficient. Fewer cars means better amenity, less noise and fewer emissions. This is good for business, residents, workers and visitors. Fewer non-essential vehicle trips means improved priority for emergency vehicles, on-road public transport, deliveries and servicing. Access for people with a disability will be maintained as a priority.
Unlike almost living at the #EWfail and #WestChoke inquiry hearings, this is just my fifth visit to the Veneto Club, only catching a few of numerous #NELAugh presentations by associates, but more importantly a chance to hear a few locals we’ve had no connection with.

While I’m reminded on each visit that Manningham is too neglectful of pedestrians to become a habit, I strongly recommend that each member of the IAC use one of your remaining hearing days to travel here by public transport and see how different things are on the ground from the view through your windscreen.

The 905 bus gets you to and from the vicinity of Melbourne Central amongst other useful interchanges, though you do need to research the exact stops, and I’m still glad I had the time able to explore via the billabong next door and Bulleen Village on the way to Heidelberg Station after the Directions Hearing.

Those presenters I have heard, like me, have real grass roots organisations behind them, but that still ignores the tragedy of consigning most of the private submitters to a second room that played out so sadly at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

There, one five minute presentation by a local stood out. She had clearly done her research and thus made more reasonable assessments than the IAC managed after their months of professional time.

At the end of that split day, former Mayor of Maribyrnong, Transport Planning Professional and now third term Senator, Janet Rice, made what could have been seen as the closest equivalent to Tom Pikusa’s summing up of the ultimately successful community case against #EWfail. But at exactly the same time Janet’s parliamentary advisor and local resident Georgia Webster was making her own presentation downstairs.
While hearing directly a far from a sufficient sample of new to me #NELAugh presenters, it seemed there are a couple of strong local themes. But it was one presentation that didn’t fit either theme which made it clear that the EES must be rejected as incomplete: Tim Curmi for Native Fish Australia (149) shared lessons about breeding and feeding constraints of the endangered Macquarie Perch, noted the hypocrisy we must loudly reiterate about burying more creeks, and the absence of any consideration of fish from the EES.

Those two broad local themes might be described as:
- desecration of significant assets in the lower Yarra valley
- NNE radial road surfacing to become divider, not linkage

While there were various emphases, there is also little doubt that many submitters have absorbed the meta message that the best they can hope for is trinkets as the juggernaught is unstoppable.

Noteworthy presentations at least partially heard re Yarra valley assets at risk were:
- Michelle Giovas (512)
- Warringal Conservation Society (563)
- Sharon Pfueller for Sustainable Gardening (396)

Alternate plans proposed by competent independents have been a feature of these and other contested infrastructure developments, but generally sidelined on legalistic pretexts.

A useful introduction to Rosanna Road problems was provided within Fred Buono’s SMART Taxpayer Design (646) which wider evidence suggests is an area beyond solution.

Kororoit Institute has not focused on particulate pollution or noise, though we share the concerns about under-regulation of:
- Russel Smith for IMPA (723)
- Barry Watson (60).

On local hydrological specifics we welcome the contributions of:
- Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee chair Chris Chesterfield for Birrarung Council (756)
- Yarra River Keeper Association represented by Environmental Justice Australia (634).

On Transport Integration failures that bedevil these mega projects we favourably note the contributions of:
- Rachel Linskey (215) and for FoE (258)
- Ian Hundley (677)
- Tom Melican (787)
- Michael Reece for VTAG (704)
- Tony Morton for PTUA (792)
- Gerry McLoughlin for T4e (633).
Key theme of KI’s submissions re #EWfail, #WestChoke and #NELAugh has been the counter-productiveness of a push on or perish approach to decision making in response to political timetables. It ought be commonsense that when reaching a point where something doesn’t stack up, retreat to the previous decision point and revisit sidelined alternatives, recursing as deeply as necessary. For any true completion of the Ring Road that first step back to Option C isn’t any more viable, as we saw on a 2013 visit, though at least it wouldn’t be one more radial. The only move left is to abandon toll roads as unsuited for single-occupant passenger vehicle commutes in a city beyond 5 million.