

Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

295

Request to be heard?: yes

Full Name: Judith Voce

Organisation: Harp Golf Club Inc.

Affected property: Freeway Golf Course, 47-49 Columba Street, North Balwyn

Attachment 1: HARP_GOLF_CLU

Attachment 2:

Attachment 3:

Comments: Please refer to the attached submission.



HARP GOLF CLUB INC.

P.O BOX 495, KEW EAST, 3102.

HARP GOLF CLUB INC. SUBMISSION **ON THE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT REPORT FOR NORTH EAST LINK**

The Harp Golf Club Inc. submission does not address the political question as to whether the State Government's preferred Option A for the North East Link Project is the most sustainable and environmentally sensitive outcome for the State of Victoria.

Our submission focuses on the effect of Option A on the Freeway Golf Course located within City of Boroondara on the boundary with the City of Manningham at the Bulleen Road intersection with the Eastern Freeway. The effect of Option A in relation to the Freeway Golf Course is the removal of three holes which dramatically affects the viability of this well utilised and highly regarded competition 18 hole public golf course. As a consequence, our Club is extremely disappointed and concerned for the future sustainability of the golf course on behalf of all Victorian golfers who value the opportunity to play at Freeway.

However, we thank the Andrews State Government and the North East Link Authority (NELA) for providing our club the opportunity to meet on a regular basis with NELA to present our concerns and work through proposals for the Freeway Golf Course as result of the North East Link Project which we will address below.

History of the Harp Golf Club Inc.

The Harp Golf Club was established in 1983 as a social golf club situated within the City of Boroondara. In June 1991 the Club became incorporated and for the past twenty-two years has maintained a rental property as our Clubhouse within Boroondara.

We are a public competition golf club registered with Golf Australia. We pride ourselves on being a public golf club encouraging membership from all age groups and the club reflects representation across the age spectrum from late 30's to 75+ years. Our current membership of 62 Members has equal gender representation and currently we have three living life members. We play mixed A, B and C grade competitions every Sunday throughout the year with the exception of a four week Christmas break.

Our club provides a safe playing and social environment for players, particularly females. We are non-discriminatory and inclusive of all new comers and welcome players who have yet to achieve a handicap to play competition golf. Private golf clubs are costly to join and to maintain membership playing rights. In fact, many of them do not offer the same welcome or

benefits for women golfers as they do for men (e.g. restricted playing times, etc.). We ensure our annual membership fee, which basically covers our club affiliation fees and insurance each year, is affordable by undertaking fundraising activities with the support of our sponsor the Harp Hotel who also generously supports a number of other sporting clubs in the Boroondara area.

Social advantages to membership of our club are promoted by providing regular Sunday games with luncheon provided at our clubhouse after the game each week; networking opportunities, and many established friendships. While the majority of our members reside in both Boroondara and Manningham, we also have members who make the weekly trip from the outer suburbs to play golf, and ex members who attend the 19th hole from their now rural homes as visitors.

Our annual weekend golf trip to Tocumwal is one of the highlights of the golfing year where partners also enjoy the competitive spirit of the matches played followed by social activities each day, along with our annual end of year presentation dinner for members and partners to celebrate the overall winners for the year. In addition, each year we play a challenge match with the Camberwell Golf Club for the honour of the perpetual trophy.

General benefits of playing golf

Golf is a great social and physical activity for any age and it provides for variable capacity to play. It is a game for life!

It has erroneously been stated elsewhere that golf is a declining sport. This statement is not correct. Statistics for 2018-2019 show there were 55,000 rounds of golf played at Freeway Golf Course which has been experiencing a steady growth over the past number of years. As the only public golf course in Boroondara, and an 18-hole facility which services the surrounding local government areas, Freeway Golf Course is an important sporting venue which should not be diminished in its existing structure. In fact, more than 220 Freeway golfers have signed a petition to Manningham Council requesting the Council to demonstrate their interest in preserving the integrity of the Freeway Golf Course by entering into sincere negotiations around contributing land for this purpose.

Golf promotes a culture of inclusiveness, welcoming to players at all levels of experience and ability, with core values inherent in the approach to the game: *Respect, Integrity, Etiquette and Self-discipline* as well as *pride in individual presentation* (i.e. dress the part, act the part). It is a game of self-scoring and self-umpiring which is unique in the sporting world.

Increasing evidence is available citing exercise as a means of preventing disease through aging and promoting physical, mental and emotional good health.

Those who play golf describe the enjoyment they derive from the peaceful environment of the landscape. They appreciate the public open space with its flora, fauna and birdlife which provides respite from the usual busyness of suburban life.

Golf contributes significantly to the local economy in a variety of ways. The Freeway Pro Shop and facilities are also well utilised by walkers and cyclists along the Koonung Creek Trail. Lessons are available for children and adults at reasonable rates, and carts are available for those who find the 5-6km walk pushing a buggy challenging.

As amateur golfers there is the opportunity to play in various competitions through Golf Australia which extends the benefits of social engagement and friendships throughout the broader Australian golfing community.

Consideration of Bulleen Park Area Sports and Recreation Options Assessment

The North East Link Project has provided seven concept options along with their assessments of the viability of each option for accommodating the proposed changes to the Bulleen Park Sports area which incorporates the Freeway Golf Course.

The Harp Golf Club considers there are only three options which provide the opportunity to maintain the integrity of a competition standard 18 hole public golf course: namely, options 3, 6 and 7.

These options provide for either an 18-hole par 69 or par 68 golf course which would maintain its existing competition standard, with offset site options to accommodate all other current users of this area.

The Appendix in 4.6 of the Assessment document provides more detailed preliminary ratings of options 3, 6 and 7 which supports them as the most feasible to options to pursue as an outcome for this area, in particular the Freeway Golf Course.

Recommendation

In conclusion, the Harp Golf Club Inc. would support any one of Options 3, 6 and 7 as part of the North East Link Project to accommodate a competition standard 18 hole public golf course.

I would be pleased to expand on our submission at the public hearings to commence July 25th.

Judith Voce
President
Harp Golf Club Inc.

5 June 2019.