

# Submission Cover Sheet

North East Link Project EES IAC

# 247

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**Request to be heard?:** No, but please email me th

**Full Name:** Victoria Bartzis

**Organisation:**

**Affected property:**

**Attachment 1:** v\_bartzis\_nela\_v2

**Attachment 2:**

**Attachment 3:**

**Comments:** Please see the submission attached

## RESIDENT'S SUBMISSION

**TO: NORTH EAST LINK, PLANNING PANELS VICTORIA**  
North East Link Enquiry and Advisory Committee

**FROM VICTORIA BARTZIS (RESIDENT)**  
Address: 156 Mountain View Road, Balwyn North, 3104.

**RE: Resident's submission concerning impact of North East Link construction on Bulleen Road off ramp and affect on local amenity**

### OVERVIEW

My submission is based on the information per EES documentation released by NELA for public viewing, and its specific sections relevant to me, my property and immediate local neighbourhood.

After carefully considering the NEL plan, it comes across as not having any empathy for residents in Mountain View Road who are directly affected by the off-ramp construction.

I have resided in my family home for many years, and at the age of 72, I am now overwhelmed by the prospect of NELA constructing the freeway and off ramp even closer to my family home. I am opposed to the project which I am facing, and wish to voice my concerns publicly to the Advisory Committee. I would like to be understood with empathy, and documented as a resident asking to be treated fairly.

At recent meetings, NELA representatives asked residents to keep submissions focussed and simple. The NELA representatives also stated that changes to the plans were possible and that the Advisory Committee would consider all submissions and impacts on local residents and neighbourhood amenity.

I am putting forward this submission in good faith in the belief that the Advisory Committee will earnestly consider my concerns. I will endeavour to keep my submission focussed and simple, however I also wish to bring to light the potential disruption to my life should the construction project proceed without changes. Please bear in mind that it is difficult to write a submission about one's family home, without adding some human touch and feelings.

### SUBMISSION POINTS

#### 1. NOISE WALL CONSTRUCTION.

In relation to the proposed construction of the new Noise Wall, I note as follows from the Technical Reports:

- Reference EES. Technical Report H, Landscape and Visual, pages 261 – 263. *"The proposed noise wall would be **5 meters closer** to the viewpoint in this location **with a shared use path and vegetation would be removed**. The proposed noise wall in this location would be approximately **10 meters high** and the proposed viaduct noise wall would be approximately 4 meters. Landscaping would be proposed between the shared use path and existing road surface".* See map on page 261. [emphasis added]
- Technical Report C Appendix 1 – Figure 14 shows a noise wall **9-10 meters high** and a viaduct wall of 4 meters high along the freeway next to Mountain View Road.

- The Technical Report assesses the visual impact on the immediate area as **high**.

Although the proposed high noise wall might diminish some of the traffic noise coming off the viaduct off-ramp, its proposed construction is extremely close to my property, and I cannot tolerate it as a possibility.

NELA representatives informed Mountain View residents affected by the proposed new noise wall that the horizontal distance measurements provided are for the reference designs published in the EES, and **do not** include shared use pathway requirements.

As such the current proposed boundary corner property measurements are

- 154 & 156 Mountain View Road: **14.2 meters**; and
- 156 & 158 Mountain View Road: **12.5 meters**.

The present measurement from the existing noise wall, which horizontally bends slightly, to my front fence is approximately **20 meters**. This is an encroachment of in excess of **5.8 meters** at a minimum, and even more if a footpath and/or bicycle track is added next to the wall.

The new wall's proposed construction and design, given its overall height and encroachment will significantly close off that section of Mountain View Road and cause a claustrophobic effect. The proposal has a high visual impact for all resident's directly affected and will significantly reduce the amenity and personal space enjoyed in this residential area.

I have enjoyed, and still do continue to enjoy the openness of my residential area, for which my property is valued. The scene blends in with the local streetscape of this area and is a vital part of my living here.

Without deviating from the points of reference, which are in fact intertwined, I wish to bring to light that it is a pleasant view to glimpse human activity of walkers and cyclists sharing the walkway path opposite my home. (in front of the existing wall), in so obviously a pleasant nook of my street where the greenery and openness are enjoyed and experienced by me and local and passing folk. For this general aspect to be removed is unimaginable for me, after many years of cherishing this natural environment, so vital to human health and wellbeing.

## **2. LOSS OF GREENERY AND VEGETATION.**

In relation to loss of greenery and vegetation in making way for the Noise Wall's construction, the EES Report Section states "*the existing noise wall, shared use path and vegetation would be removed*".

However, EES Chapter 27, Page 27, EPR Code AR1 involves **maximum tree retention** as an aim for NELA when considering the NEL construction.

I note that next to the existing noise wall, there are significant mature trees which are endemic to the local area, together with other native bushes and plants. The wall's construction means that NEL will remove all of the existing vegetation, without any real prospect of revegetation. This is due in large part to the new wall's encroachment, and that NEL is constrained by the existing Mountain View Road thoroughfare. Basically, to revegetate would take up more than half of Mountain View Road.

I cannot envisage the removal of the existing vegetation in my street opposite my home, and for it to be replaced with an extremely high noise wall with high visual impact. The site would be devastating, colourless and depressing. The existing trees and all vegetation, native evergreen and deciduous,

were planted by my late husband and our children many years ago. My neighbours and I care for the garden for its environmental, ecological, sentimental and aesthetical elements.

EES Chapter 27, Page 27-28 EPR Code AR2 depicts maintenance and replacement of protected plants and trees that suffer stress within the first 2 years. It is obvious that any replaced trees and plants would not be monitored after the 2 year period, and this would become a neglected area without vegetation with the remains of an ugly colourless noise wall.

EES Chapter 27, Page 35, EPR Code FF2 pertains to the protection of fauna.

I am concerned that the removal of trees and plants in my section of the street would disrupt the habitat of the local fauna. Over the years my children have experienced how to protect and care for wildlife, so close to home.

Removing the vegetation from the area will cause a loss in the local fauna. The local wildlife which habitually visits the area include: the rare and protected Tawny Frogmouth, protected species of cockatoos, red-rumped green parrots, other native parrots and birds of this area, finches, swallows, ringtail and brushtail possums, native ducks seen parading in family groups when in season, rare butterflies and native bees.

All have adapted to living near the freeway due to preservation of their natural habitat (in main by the local residents) in this small area of my street.

### 3. SHADOWING.

In regard to shadowing with the noise wall's construction, Technical Report E sets out:

- Technical Report E, Page 32 *“Modelling to establish the existing and proposed overshadowing caused by installation of permanent project infrastructure (noise walls, shared-use overpasses and other elevated structures) at the Spring Equinox (22 September) between 9am and 3pm (which is the date and time frame adopted for recent major transport projects in Victoria)”*.
- Technical Report E – Page 105 suggests that EPRs will address ‘significant adverse effects’ of overshadowing of noise walls on residents *‘through urban design response (EPR LP4) and subsequent detailed design’*. Therefore, *‘residual overshadowing impacts may be minimised or reduced and so would unlikely cause land use change’*.

Despite The Technical Report's statements above, I note that **overshadowing** indicated on the map of my area (Appendix D – Map – Existing and Proposed Shading September 22<sup>nd</sup> 9am – 3pm) shows **significant shading** reaching the trees on my side of the nature strip. I am concerned therefore that overshadowing will undoubtedly occur should a 9 -10 meter noise wall be constructed here, opposite my property.

As already with the existing 4 meter wall I am experiencing shadowing by 2.30pm on the wall side of the street at this present time of year. IN my view, the EPRs do not adequately address the overshadowing I would face.

A most unhealthy lack of sunlight would be the result of the wall casting overshadowing also disabling plant growth (as this is the south side of the wall), and I shall be left with a depressing street site affecting my state of wellbeing. Once again, the shadowing will directly impact the streetscape and increase the loss of local amenity and compound the visual impact of the new noise wall. In all, I am very unhappy with this elementary situation not having been brought into consideration before the proposed plans were drawn up by NELA.

#### **4. WIDTH OF THE ROAD.**

It appears that there was neglect in considering my section of Mountain View Road as a normal residential place where family and friends visit each other. The new wall's construction will encroach on the local road and inevitably narrow the road opposite my property. I fear that the disappearance of the shared bicycle/walkway, removal of the trees and vegetation, my section would not be as inviting to visitors or family in future. Further, visitors will not be able to park their cars on the narrowed street.

This would lead to a significant loss of amenity and enjoyment of the area, and impose an unnecessary burden on visiting friends and family who would have to park further up on Mountain View Road and walk to my home to visit me. I also fear that such a road narrowing would cause obvious traffic inconvenience for residents seeking to enter in and out of the area with their vehicles. After all, I am a resident of an individual house on its own block of land, in a normal suburban street which allows for street parking availability at present.

Due to the road narrowing to a single lane west of my property, there is a widening/turning point opposite 154 Mountain View Road, east of my property. That turning point and road widening is a large convenience for the local area. I have observed large transport vehicles, delivery trucks and council garbage trucks using that turning point in order to exit the lower section of Mountain View Road. The turning point is safe to pedestrians as well, as the alternative is for large trucks and vehicles to have to reverse for a long distance back up the street.

The turning point was also used in previous cases of ambulance emergency during my late husband's illness.

For safety reasons, I am extremely worried that if that section of the road were removed, it would not only cause inconvenience, but also impact emergency services seeking to access this residential area.

#### **5. SHARED BICYCLE PATH/WALKWAY.**

I see the caution with which my neighbours at the present narrowed section of my street reverse onto it to avoid damage to the vegetation on the nature strip opposite their driveway. Should narrowing occur at my section, I would have the added stress for safety of walkers and cyclists on the shared path/walkway. My visitors and family who would have to park on my property, as there would not be space for them to park on a narrowed, single-laned street, would also incur such stress, and inconvenience. I am unclear as to whether the shared bicycle/walkway path is going to be provided for by NELA, and how much of the nature strip (with space for vegetation and trees) is going to remain, if at all, in the proposed plan, and how, as I have not had any answers to this question, which seems to be avoided when asked.

#### **6. AIR QUALITY.**

In relation to Air Quality for the immediate surrounding area, Technical Report B – Air Quality informs of monitoring and management of air quality.

Despite the assurances from NELA that air quality will be monitored and managed, I still maintain that the existing levels of air quality will alter significantly by construction pollutants, increased traffic pollutants and potential proposed ventilation grid pollutants from the construction of such a large off ramp at Bulleen Road.

## **7. NOISE POLLUTION.**

Technical Report C generally is worrisome to me as I tend to be unclear how noise pollution could be minimal approaching 2036; the construction noise projected being much lower than the existing noise levels without construction, traffic only.

Given that the whole purpose of the North East Link is to divert traffic away from major roads and *increase* it onto the freeway, I cannot reasonably see how noise pollution could be reduced. This gives me added distrust to the proposed project.

## **8. DURING CONSTRUCTION.**

Map Book – North East Link Project, Horizontal Plan: Construction, Reference Design, Sheet 23 of 42, Date 05/03/2019 shows the construction area during the project.

This means that Mountain View Road, from house number 148 to 162, will be used as a construction site allowing no street access to residents and visitors during the project.

In short, I will not be able to keep my vehicle on my property during this period and not within the security of my property. It will leave my vehicle vulnerable to weather damage, dirty and dust from the construction site. I envisage that parking my vehicle on the street, at a significant distance from my home will affect my car insurance, should I need to make a claim.

Also impacted is my level of convenience which comes with easy access to my vehicle. It means that I will need to walk to my vehicle parked further up Mountain View Road, no matter what the weather. My daily shopping trips will be made more difficult, particularly to unload the shopping. I am currently 72 years of age, and note that should the project go ahead, I will be older and more reliant on having my vehicle conveniently closer to me.

Of greatest concern however, is that should there be an emergency, vehicles and personnel would be unable to reach me (or other residents in the street) spontaneously.

I imagine I will be wheeling my rubbish bins up and down Mountain View Road during this period of construction. Once again, given my advancing age, I realise how greatly I would be adversely impacted daily, as other usual and practical matters come to mind as a result of the above inconvenience.

Again, I am disappointed and dismayed at the lack of “humane” thought put into this venture, and I object to the ridiculous inconvenience it will cause to my life, and not for a day or month or year, but for a few years!

## **9. LIFESTYLE.**

EES Chapter 27 – Page 43 EPR code LP2, outlines minimal impact to residential area.

As the proposed design impacts grossly on me during and after construction, I wish to point out the very obvious major changes to my lifestyle which will occur as a result of the wall and off ramp’s construction.

At present the freeway noise is diminished by the wall which is 4 meters high at an acceptable distance from my house. I live in a peaceful environment with no overwhelming visual impact, with significant local vegetation and fauna. Although the current wall does cast a shadow onto the road in winter, it only covers half the road and the sunlight does shine onto my half of the road, my nature strip and

house. This would not be the case with the proposed 10 meter high wall encroaching at almost 6 meters, despite whatever materials in which NELA decides to construct it.

Even picturing a transparent upper section of such a wall cannot be accepted by me, as with time it would become obscurely unsavoury to view due to dirt and grime gathering there. Eventually, this section of my street would have a devalued, trashy look to it, with an appearance of neglect. There is an example of such a wall on the Eastern Freeway approaching Doncaster Road on-ramp, opposite the park-and-ride.

In my street, the trees closest to the wall provide shade and vibrant greenery during the summer months, as they thrive in full sunlight. The trees opposite my home have surpassed the wall height in growth by 2 meters, and other vegetation is flourishing.

As I turn towards my end of Mountain View Road I feel comfortable openness and enjoy the greenery without noticing the existence of a freeway wall. This scene blends in with the North Balwyn area and is most pleasant for me to experience daily in this gently tranquil nook of Mountain View Road. This, and the shared pathway leading to Koonung Creek Reserve, allows for me to have a peaceful, rewarding lifestyle in suburbia with a country-life feel.

When caring for my grandchildren, I am steps away from the shared bicycle/walkway which conveniently leads us to the Koonung Creek Reserve, to which we have the option of riding our bikes or walking the dog, to spend healthy recreational times so close to my home. It is a safe and happy lifestyle for me and my grandchildren on many levels including convenience of the freeway, and bus routes close by, however, hidden behind the present wall, trees and vegetation.

These are positively relevant points of enjoyment at my residential area in my section of Mountain View Road. A lifestyle without the interruption of unnecessary claustrophobic, noisy, desolate, ugly, dangerous aspects which would impinge on my health and wellbeing, as it would on my grandchildren in the years ahead, should the project proceed without changes to it.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

For the various reasons set out above, the proposed noise wall's construction (particularly at 10 meters in height) would be catastrophic, and significantly impact on me as a resident of this section of Mountain View Road, North Balwyn. There would be a major loss of amenity to the area, and there would be significant inconvenience to me as a senior citizen.

I suggest that the existing wall remain in place, together with the shared bicycle/walkway and the established vegetation and trees. I also suggest that the proposed freeway interchange onto Bulleen Road be shifted away from this site of contention with an added high sound-barrier wall at the new point, for obvious reasons, rather than constructing an encroachment onto the present streetscape, with all its negative impacts.

It is not a privilege but an entitlement for me to continue my present lifestyle in this my residential area of choice; and for the Advisory Committee to seriously consider all the clearly referenced points set out in my submission concerning my future health and wellbeing.

Victoria Bartzis

