Dear Sir/Madam,

Submission to Smart Planning Program – Reforming the Victoria Planning Provisions Discussion Paper

ConnectEast Pty Limited (ConnectEast) makes the following submission to the Discussion Paper:

About ConnectEast

ConnectEast operates the EastLink Freeway as the freeway corporation under the EastLink Project Act 2004 in accordance with the terms of the Concession Deed entered into between the State of Victoria and ConnectEast.

About EastLink

EastLink is a 39km motorway that is located approximately 25km east of Melbourne’s central business district in a growing residential, commercial and industrial region.

EastLink is a key piece of national and State significant infrastructure. Plan Melbourne acknowledges EastLink as a ‘State Significant Road Corridor’ and the current Victorian Planning Provisions seeks to protect key transport and freight infrastructure (see clause 18).

Recognition for State infrastructure through dedicated planning controls

The Discussion Paper refers to the current CityLink Project Overlay and suggests that the role of the overlay be reviewed and potentially replaced with a clause 52.03 site specific exclusion if a need for any special provisions remain.

Currently there are no dedicated EastLink planning controls within the Victorian Planning Provisions and there are no planning controls which address operational issues associated with freeways and other infrastructure including the use and development of adjacent land and, in the case of EastLink’s tunnels, land above it.

There has been significant change along the EastLink corridor since EastLink was approved and constructed. ConnectEast is not directly notified of any relevant planning permit applications that may be impacted by EastLink. ConnectEast regularly responds to planning permit applications for use and development of adjacent or nearby land, but without the benefit of clear policy and controls to guide land owners, developers, or decision-makers with regard to appropriate outcomes.
The ad hoc policy/planning control context and lack of a clear role for ConnectEast as part of the process has resulted in some poor outcomes. This includes inadequate noise attenuation and drainage and poor urban design outcomes. The potential implications are poor quality amenity for future residents and occupants/users of sensitive uses. If permitted to continue, the cumulative impact of inappropriate planning decisions outcomes along the extent of EastLink corridor may well lead to land use conflicts and impact on the longer-term operation of this significant State asset.

While ConnectEast wants to encourage development along the EastLink corridor, it is important that as critical State infrastructure, EastLink and indeed other State infrastructure is recognised in planning provisions.

ConnectEast would like the Smart Planning review to consider appropriate planning provisions which identify and protect State infrastructure, including roads during the operation phase, not just approval and construction.

ConnectEast has advanced some work on this issue and would be happy to discuss this submission and potential planning controls further.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

CC: