



## PART 1 INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS

# 6 Communications and Engagement

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## 6.1 Introduction

Community and stakeholder engagement have played an important role in developing the Project. Engagement and consultation with key stakeholders and the broader community has been critical to ensuring the design and development of the Project considers the views of the community and meets the needs of commuters, businesses and the wider arterial road network of Melbourne's north.

Major Road Projects Victoria (MRPV) has undertaken dedicated engagement to keep the community and stakeholders informed about the Project, seeking input on project design and development while identifying and responding to community and stakeholder concerns.

This chapter describes MRPV's approach to communication and engagement activities during the planning phase of the Project and preparation of this Environment Effects Statement (EES). It identifies the relevant project stakeholders, summarises engagement activities, tools and feedback received and outlines the proposed approach for future engagement.

Further details of previously undertaken community and stakeholder engagement activities are provided in Attachment IV *Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report*.

## 6.2 EES Scoping Requirements

On 14 October 2018, the Minister for Planning determined an EES would be required under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to assess the potential for significant environmental effects from the Project. Consultation is a key aspect of the environmental assessment process in Victoria and includes informal consultation by the project proponent during the various EES investigations and formal opportunities for public input into the review of the EES.

The *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects* under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (Department of Sustainability and Environment, 2006) state that a specific objective of the EES assessment process is 'to provide public access to information regarding potential environmental effects as well as fair opportunities for participation in assessment processes by stakeholders and the public'.

In line with this objective, the EES Scoping Requirements set out by the Minister for Planning in June 2019 state that MRPV is responsible for preparing a stakeholder consultation plan to familiarise the public and stakeholders with the Project and EES investigations, as well as provide opportunities for input and engagement on specific issues. The plan must:

- Identify stakeholder groups
- Characterise the stakeholder groups in terms of their interests, concerns and consultation needs and potential to provide local knowledge
- Describe the consultation methods to be used and outline a schedule of consultation activities
- Outline how inputs from stakeholders will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the preparation of the EES.

In response, MRPV developed and implemented the Yan Yean Road Upgrade – Stage 2 Environment Effects Statement Engagement Plan. This plan has been available on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) website since April 2019 and can be viewed at [www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/yan-yeen-road-upgrade-stage-2](http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/yan-yeen-road-upgrade-stage-2).

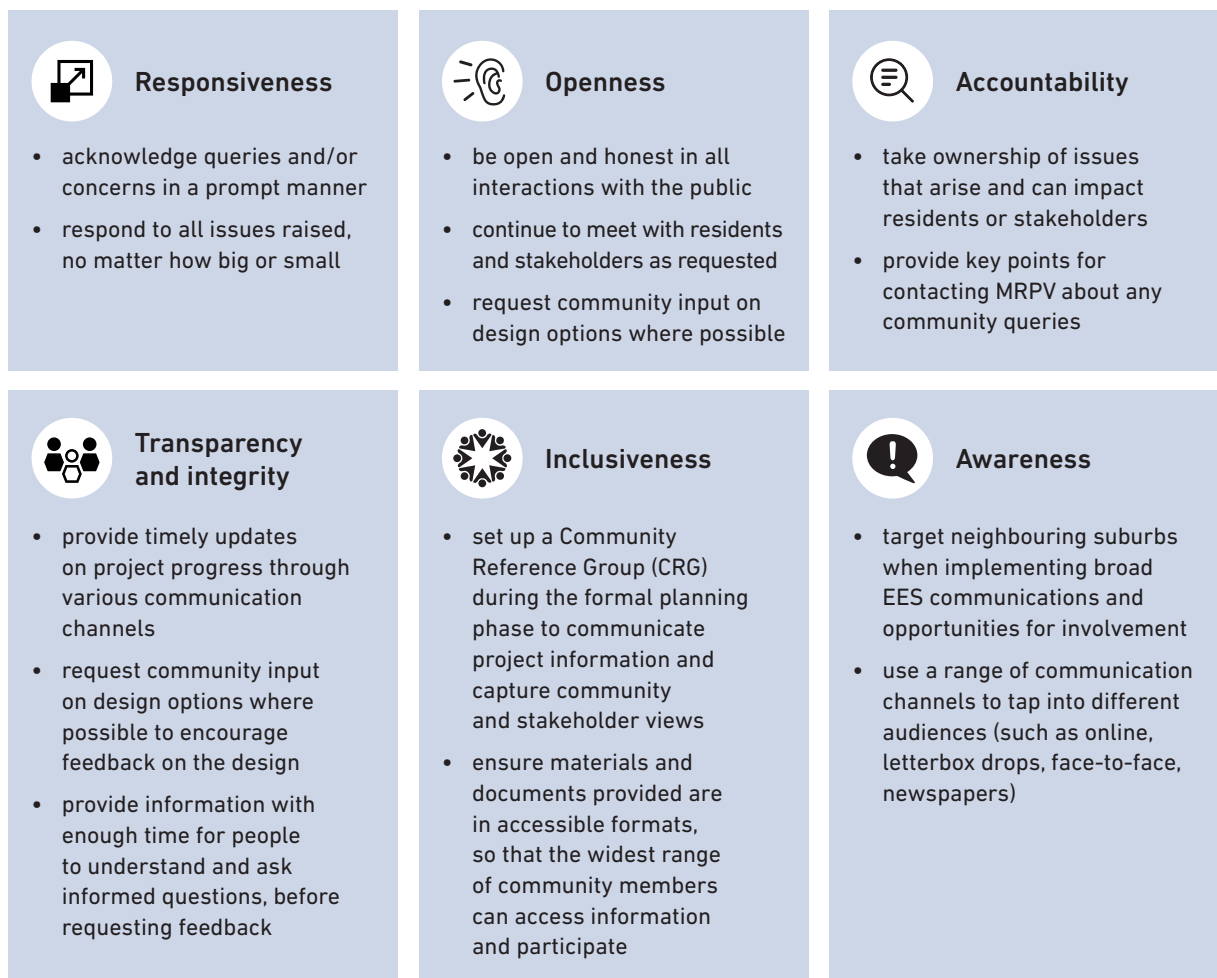
## 6.3 Engagement approach

The EES process is a comprehensive and transparent analysis of potential environmental impacts associated with the Project and how they will be addressed. This provides an opportunity for public participation, and facilitates consideration of the views of the community, local councils, businesses and industry in planning decisions.

MRPV has carried out, and will continue to carry out, communications and engagement activities in accordance with the Victorian Auditor-General's Office *Public Participation in Government Decision-making – Better Practice Guide 2015*.

For consultation to be meaningful and valuable for both the project and the broader community, the principles shown in Figure 6.1 were adopted and have guided MRPV's approach to engagement.

**Figure 6.1 Guiding principles for engagement**





During the development of the EES and ongoing development of the project, MRPV's engagement objectives are to:

- Inform stakeholders and the affected community of the EES process
- Raise awareness of opportunities to formally participate in the EES process
- Build awareness about the Project's purpose, scope and timelines amongst key stakeholders
- Investigate stakeholder and landowner needs, ideas and any issues to inform delivery and refinement of:
  - project design
  - potential environmental and social impacts
  - contractor performance standards
- Engage with residents and businesses at a local level about the Project, seeking local knowledge, experience and feedback on the proposed project design.

### 6.3.1 COVID-19

During the development of the EES for the Project, the Australian and Victorian Governments (based on advice from the Chief Health Officer) developed physical distancing restrictions with the intent to manage the spread of COVID-19. Due to this, public gatherings were restricted and face-to-face engagement was not allowed for some consultation milestones.

To ensure compliance with the government requirements, from April 2020 consultation was shifted to an online interactive forum. MRPV recognises that parts of the community may not have online access and has maintained some traditional forms of communication, including hardcopy communications (such as letter box drops and hard copy feedback forms).

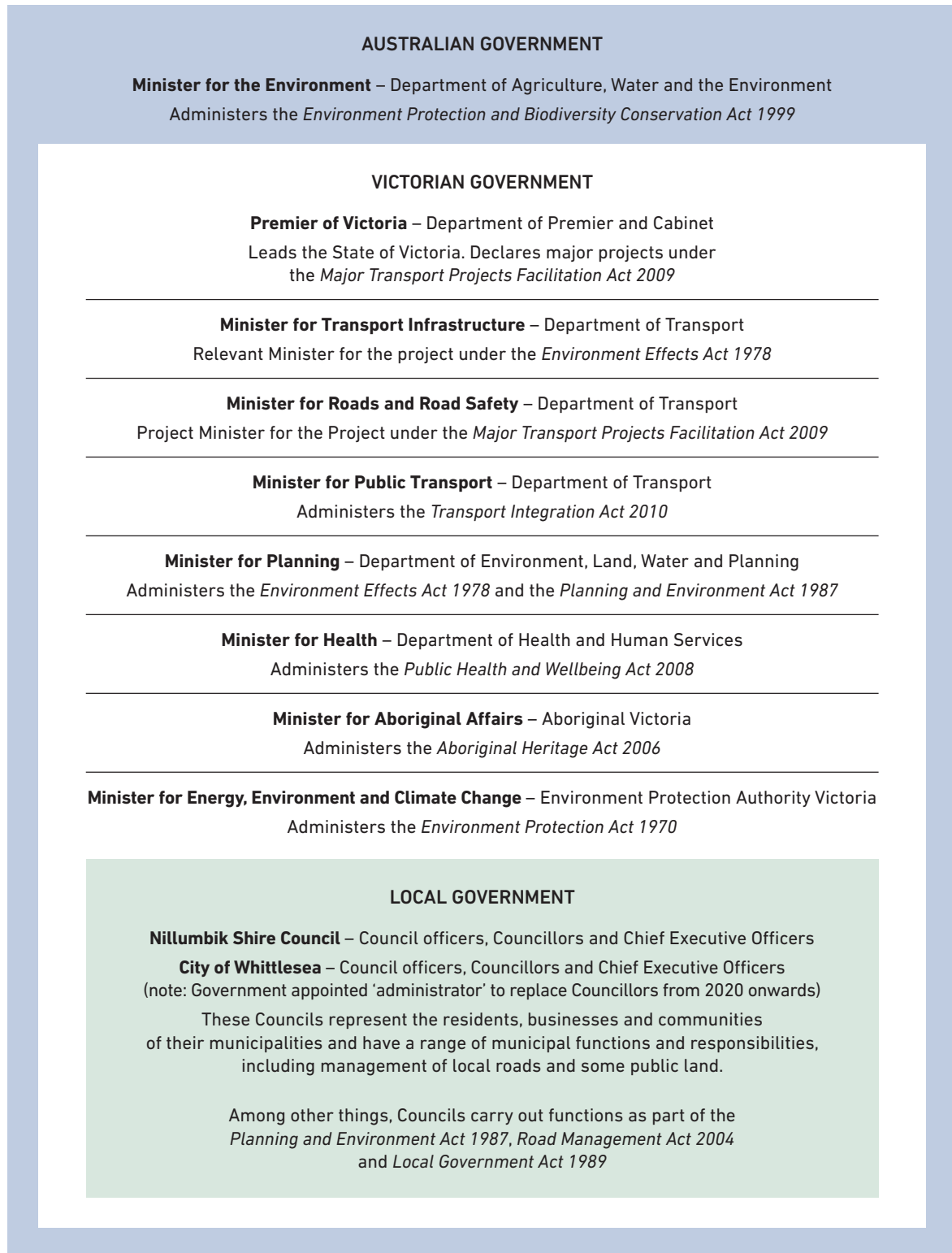
As the Project proceeds, MRPV's consultation approach will remain flexible in compliance with the current health advice from the Victorian Government.



## 6.4 Stakeholders

The Project impacts a range of stakeholders including people and interest groups who live, work and travel near the project area, as well as local, State and Federal governments. An overview of the Project's stakeholders is shown in Figure 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4.

**Figure 6.2 Federal, Victorian and local governments**



**Figure 6.3 Key government agencies**

<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT</b> (including VicRoads, Public Transport for Victoria)	Administers the <i>Road Management Act 2004</i> Manages arterial roads and will manage the operational aspect of the Project once complete Manages the public transport system
<b>DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, LAND, WATER AND PLANNING</b>	Administers the <i>Environment Effects Act 1978</i> and the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> Manages the Environment Effects Statement Process
<b>WURUNDJERI WOI-WURRUNG CULTURAL HERITAGE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION</b>	Traditional owners of the land and the Registered Aboriginal Party of the area in which the Project is located and supports the development of the <i>Cultural Heritage Management Plan</i> for the Project
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA</b>	Provides advice to the Victorian Government on the state's infrastructure needs and priorities
<b>MELBOURNE WATER</b>	Manages Melbourne's water supply catchments, sewage treatment and rivers, creeks and major drainage systems Responsible for leading development of the Yarra Strategic Plan
<b>OFFICE OF THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT</b>	The Office of the Victorian Government Architect is an administrative office of the Department of Premier and Cabinet. It provides leadership and strategic advice to government about architecture and urban design
<b>PARKS VICTORIA</b>	Manages Victoria's parks, reserves, waterways and other public land under the <i>Parks Victoria Act 2018</i> Waterway Manager for the Yarra River

**Figure 6.4 Key stakeholder groups**

## 6.5 Key engagement activities and tools

Since 2018, a wide range of engagement activities and communication tools have been used to support engagement on the Project and to provide opportunities for stakeholders and the community to be involved in the consultation process. These activities and tools have been instrumental in building awareness about the Project, ensuring that information is disseminated, and that feedback from the community and stakeholders is received and addressed appropriately.

An overview of key engagement activities and communication tools used for the Project is provided in this section. These include:



Print and digital  
communication



Community pop-up  
& information sessions



Stakeholder  
briefings



Community  
Reference Groups



Technical  
Reference Group

In addition, members of the project team have been in contact with all directly affected landowners and businesses. The team has also conducted face-to-face meetings with all landowners affected by land acquisition. These meetings have been ongoing since the initial development of the Project in late 2017.



### 6.5.1 Print and digital communications

MRPV has used a variety of print and digital communication tools to engage as many people as possible in the planning stages of the Project. An overview of these tools is provided in Table 6.1.

**Table 6.1 Print and digital communication tools**





Letters and postcards	Letters and postcards delivered directly to households and businesses within and surrounding the project area with digital copies sent to Councils and the local MP.
Fact sheets and brochures	A suite of material has been made available online and in hard copy for face-to-face events and distribution as requested. These include a project overview, timelines and study information, design progress and option information. Accessible versions are available on request.
Media and advertising	Local print and digital advertising helped to inform people about feedback opportunities for the Project. This includes sponsored posts on MRPV's social media channels and advertising on popular news sites during consultation/engagement periods.
Maps and other visual aids	Clear maps displaying the proposed design, alternative Project options and other aspects of the Project made available online and at information sessions.
Engagement reports	'What we heard' reports outlining the comments, ideas, suggestions and issues raised by stakeholders and communities in both mid-2018 and May 2020, which have been considered and incorporated into the Project, EES documents and technical reports.
Website (including engagement hub)	Updated promptly as new information becomes available on the dedicated Project page on the MRPV website: <a href="http://roadprojects.vic.gov.au/yyr">roadprojects.vic.gov.au/yyr</a> . Content prepared in line with Victorian Government accessibility guidelines.  Engagement hub providing opportunities for community to view the Project and alternative options through an interactive map and provide feedback by online or hardcopy feedback forms.
Email updates	Sent at key consultation milestones during Project development to keep people informed and highlight opportunities for further involvement.
Social media	Communicating key consultation milestones and updates on the Project where possible through the MRPV (and previously VicRoads) social media channels. MRPV is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn.  This was complemented by support from other government accounts such as the local MP and Big Build, and in coordination with local governments to re-post to reach a larger audience.

### 6.5.2 Community information and pop-up sessions

Community information sessions and pop-ups at local community events have been an important way for the project team to collect feedback and engage face-to-face with the community on the Project. Table 6.2 lists the dates and details of these sessions. The project team also undertook Webinar information sessions during May 2020 in lieu of face-to-face sessions due to the physical distancing requirements outlined in Section 6.3.1.



**Table 6.2 Details of community information and pop-up sessions**

●	<b>April-May 2018</b> Community information sessions		<p>Face-to-face sessions with the project team to discuss the Project. Over 400 people attended the three sessions held:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Saturday 17 February 2018</b> – 9am-11am [Plenty Hall]</li> <li>• <b>Wednesday 18 April 2018</b> – 6pm-8pm [Plenty Valley Christian College]</li> <li>• <b>Saturday 21 April 2018</b> – 9am-11am [Yarrambat Primary School]</li> </ul>
●	<b>September-October 2019</b> Community pop-up sessions		<p>The project team attended local shopping centres to answer questions from the community and explain the EES. Over 300 people attended the events and asked questions about the Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Saturday 14 September 2019</b> – 10am-4pm [Diamond Creek Fair]</li> <li>• <b>Thursday 2 October 2019</b> – 4pm-7pm [Laurimar Town Centre]</li> <li>• <b>Wednesday 16 October 2019</b> – 4pm-7pm [St Helena Marketplace]</li> </ul>
●	<b>May 2020</b> Online webinar information sessions		<p>Due to the physical distancing requirements, face-to-face community information sessions were replaced with online webinars, where the community could submit questions online to the project team who responded live. Approximately 150 people were online and watched webinars, with over 60 questions raised during the times below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Saturday 9 May 2020</b> – 10.30am-11.30am</li> <li>• <b>Wednesday 13 May 2020</b> – 6pm-7pm</li> </ul>
●	<b>August-October 2020</b> Information sessions		<p>During exhibition of the EES, information sessions will be arranged online and face-to-face (in line with government advice at the time) to provide the community and stakeholders the opportunity to view the impact assessments completed for the EES and understand how to provide feedback and make submissions on the EES.</p>

### 6.5.3 Stakeholder briefings

At critical milestones during the development of the Project and EES, key stakeholders were briefed on the Project. These key consultation milestones include the initial design consultation, Scoping Requirements consultation and during consultation about the design options.

These stakeholder briefings were undertaken with the local Yan Yean MP, local Nillumbik and Whittlesea Councillors and other key stakeholders, as required. Further details of these meetings are available in Attachment IV *Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report*.

### 6.5.4 Community Reference Group

The first Yan Yean Road Upgrade Community Reference Group (CRG) was established to support the delivery of Stage 1 of the Yan Yean Road Upgrade and the development of Stage 2 of the upgrade (the Project). Community members participated during 2018 and 2019. The group met monthly during 2018 and bi-monthly during 2019.

The first CRG comprised local residents and business owners representing the community, landowners impacted by acquisition, emergency services, local traders and local interest groups including the Plenty Community Action Group, Plenty Historical Society and other local environmental groups. To participate, members were required to live, work or volunteer within two kilometres of the project area or have a vested interest in the Project.

The second Yan Yean Road Upgrade CRG had their first meeting prior to the exhibition of this EES. The purpose of this group is to continue to promote consultation with the local community and support the ongoing development of the Project. Similar eligibility criteria were required for this group and several group members from the 2018/2019 CRG have been accepted to participate in the 2020/2021 CRG.

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- ➔ The Stage 2 CRG is comprised of 12 community members who represent landowners and residents, community, emergency and environmental organisations and groups that reside or have a special interest in the area.
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*Below: Image of the previous Yan Yean Road Upgrade Community Reference Group*



### 6.5.5 Technical Reference Group

In accordance with the Minister for Planning's decision that the Project undergo an EES, DELWP has convened an agency-based Technical Reference Group (TRG) to advise it and MRPV on a range of matters associated with the EES and statutory approval processes. DELWP established the TRG for the Project in February 2019. The TRG comprises representatives from a variety of key stakeholders, as shown in Figure 6.5.

**Figure 6.5 TRG members**



Matters specified in the TRG's Terms of Reference include providing DELWP and MRPV with advice on:

- Applicable policies, strategies and statutory provisions
- The proponent's public information and stakeholder consultation program for the EES
- The Scoping Requirements for the EES
- The design and adequacy of technical studies for the EES
- Responses to issues arising from the EES investigations
- The technical adequacy of draft EES documentation
- Coordination of statutory processes.

These matters have been covered in regular meetings with the TRG (held around bi-monthly throughout 2019 and 2020), as well as through one-on-one discussions with TRG members as required. The TRG had several opportunities to review and provide feedback on this EES, the supporting attachments and technical reports.

## 6.6 Overview of engagement

An ongoing staged approach to communicate and engage with communities and stakeholders about the Project has been occurring since the Project was initially announced by the Victorian Government in 2017.

This approach has allowed feedback and input to be considered at key stages in the Project's development.

- Stage 1 – Initial design of the Project
- Stage 2 – EES preparation
- Stage 3 – Design options and landscape values
- Stage 4 – EES exhibition

Engagement will continue the Project proceeds and will underpin further refinements wherever possible.

### 6.6.1 Stage 1 – Initial concept design

Early engagement with landowners commenced in late 2017, advising of the initial proposal and the potential impacts of the Project (either as a result of land acquisition and/or changed access arrangements). This engagement was undertaken via face-to-face meetings with the project team.

In April and May of 2017, VicRoads (at the time) undertook wider community consultation, seeking to raise public awareness of the Project, understand key areas of interest and obtain community feedback on the initial concept design. The key methods of engagement included letterbox drops to a distribution of three kilometres either side of the nine kilometre stretch Yan Yean Road (between Diamond Creek and Bridge Inn roads), face-to-face meetings and information sessions, print and online advertisements and email distributions, as well as an engagement website that presented the initial concept design and provided feedback forms.

During this period, the project team received 236 pieces of feedback including 116 hard copy feedback forms and 120 online surveys. Analysis of the feedback indicated the community was predominantly concerned about safety, traffic flow, local access and environmental impacts. More information about this engagement is documented Attachment IV *Stakeholder and Consultation Report*.

### 6.6.2 Stage 2 – EES preparation

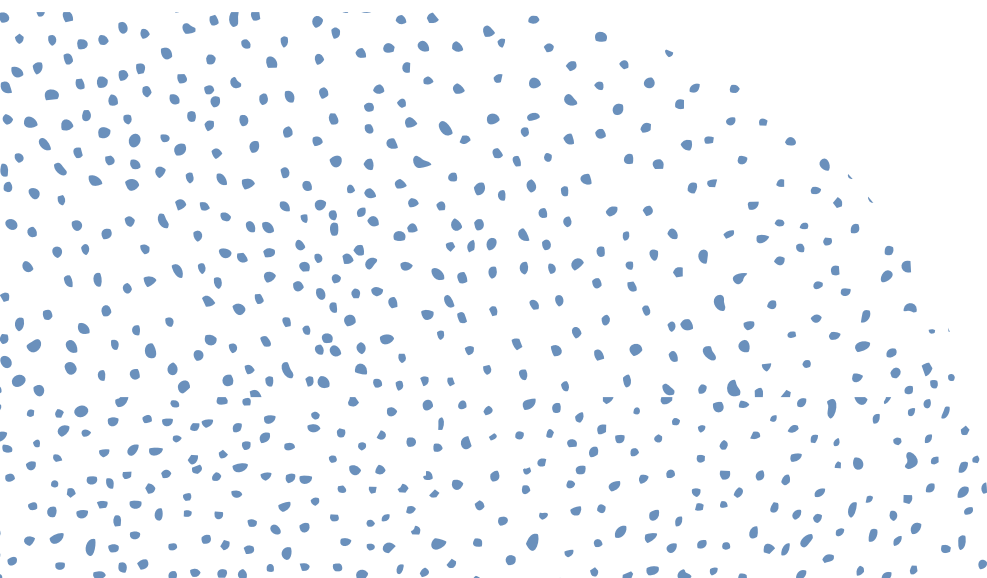
During this phase, the objectives of engagement were to raise awareness of the Project and the requirement of an EES, as well as explain the EES process and timelines. The key activities undertaken during this stage were letterbox drops to over 16,000 residents and businesses, emails to over 1,600 project subscribers and social media advertising that reached more than 22,000 people on Facebook.

During April and May 2019, the exhibition of the draft Scoping Requirements was advertised in accordance with the requirements of the regulatory process. DELWP received 76 submissions in the relation to the Scoping Requirements. Of the 76 submissions, 62 referred to the Doreen River Red Gums on the Bridge Inn Road / Yan Yean Road / Doctors Gully Road intersection, with other submissions noting their concerns about the total vegetation loss from a flora and fauna perspective.

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→ In October 2019, the project team held further community pop-up sessions to continue to raise awareness of the Project and answer questions from the public. More than 300 people attended these sessions and asked questions about the Project. More information about this engagement is documented in Attachment IV *Stakeholder and Consultation Report*.

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### 6.6.3 Stage 3 – Design options and landscape values

This latest stage of engagement undertaken in May 2020 continued to build on previous feedback about the project design that was provided in early 2018. Previous community concerns were concentrated around the Doreen River Red Gums and landscape of the area, and this stage asked for community feedback on design options that mitigated these concerns, as well as other key design updates along the road that were under consideration, including:

- Bridge Inn Road / Yan Yean Road / Doctors Gully Road intersection
- Jorgensen Avenue intersection
- Youngs Road intersection
- Bannons Lane to Laurie Street

During this stage, it was explained to the community how their previous feedback was being considered in impact assessments and used to inform refinements to the Project's design. Additional feedback was sought to help further refine the design and inform measures to avoid, mitigate and manage potential impacts. Engagement activities undertaken during this stage are summarised in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3 Stage 3 engagement details**

Activities	Overview
Project website	Over 1,957 visitors to the project webpage via roadprojects.vic.gov.au between 1 and 24 May 2020.
Engagement website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9,481 visitors to the engagement webpage between 1 and 24 May 2020.</li> <li>• Over 4,000 video views across four videos.</li> <li>• 32 questions submitted and answered via the public Q&amp;A tool.</li> <li>• 181 pin comments received via interactive maps.</li> </ul>
Electronic direct mail (eDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two eDMs sent to 1,660 project subscribers, one on 1 May and the other on 13 May 2020. The average click-through rate was 35%.</li> <li>• eDM sent to key stakeholders including local Councils, local schools and community groups on 1 May 2020.</li> </ul>
Letterbox drops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notification DL postcard delivered to 16,060 residents within 5 km of project area by 6 May 2020.</li> <li>• Letter distributed to 175 properties in the immediate project area by 3 May 2020.</li> <li>• Feedback form distributed to 175 properties in the immediate project area by 3 May 2020.</li> </ul>
Social media	Paid social media post for consultation ran from 1 to 24 May 2020 and reached 160,096 social media users, receiving 33 comments and 93 reactions, and resulting in 16 shares and 2,985 click throughs.
Community information sessions *undertaken online only due to physical distancing requirements	<p>Two webinars held: the first on Saturday 9 May 10.30am to 11.30am and the second on Wednesday 13 May 6pm to 7pm.</p> <p>Approximately 120 people were online and watched the webinar livestreams</p> <p>Over 60 questions submitted to the Project team panel during the webinars.</p>

Activities	Overview
Briefings with key stakeholders	<p>Six face-to-face and video conference briefings held with key stakeholders (including but not limited to Councils, Yarrambat Primary School and Diamond Creek Police) between 2 March and 24 May 2020.</p> <p>55 key stakeholder briefings over the phone to provide brief project update and advise that consultation was about to commence and how to participate. Calls were made on 30 April and 1 May 2020.</p>
Project telephone line and community email address	67 phone and email enquiries were received between 1 and 24 May 2020.
Communication with landowners and tenants	<p>Two physical, face-to-face meetings held with landowners on 11 March 2020.</p> <p>Three phone conference meetings held with landowners on 15 April 2020.</p> <p>Nine video and three phone conference meetings held with landowners and tenants between 10 March and 25 May 2020.</p>
Digital advertising and promotion	<p>Two digital mobile banner ads on domain-listed websites between 7 and 24 May 2020, geo-targeted to 5 km radius of Yarrambat and Doreen.</p> <p>Two digital display screens at shopping centres in Diamond Creek and St Helena between 7 and 24 May 2020.</p> <p>Digital display trailer set up at the Bridge Inn Road roundabout and moved to the Bannons Lane intersection between 10 and 23 May 2020.</p>
Community surveys	300 feedback forms completed and submitted.

*\* Note that engagement during Stage 3 was predominately online in response to COVID-19 health advice.*

#### 6.6.4 Stage 4 – EES exhibition

This stage of engagement consists of activities to support the public exhibition of the EES and the anticipated inquiry and formal public hearings. The EES is on exhibition for a minimum of 30 business days. During this period members of the public can make written submissions about any matters described in the EES for consideration in both the preparation of the Inquiry and Advisory Committee's Assessment report and the Minister for Planning's final Assessment.

This phase involves a variety of communication and engagement activities including stakeholder briefings, community presentations and webinars, notification letters and community updates, information on the Project website with access to EES documentation, and a variety of print, social and digital advertising.

The specific objectives of these activities are to:

- Explain the Project to stakeholders and present the impact assessments that were completed as part of the EES process
- Provide information about formal avenues through which to provide feedback and make submissions on the EES
- Report back to key stakeholders and the community on engagement and planning outcomes and how their feedback has been used, in conjunction with the Minister for Planning's recommendations as per the Minister's Assessment, to further refine the Project's design.

The key outcomes of this phase are anticipated to be:

- Community and stakeholders provided with a formal opportunity to have their say on the Project's potential benefits and impacts
- Community and stakeholder feedback to be factored into the assessment and approvals process
- Community and stakeholders to understand how, in conjunction with the Minister for Planning's requirements, their feedback has helped to shape the Project.

### 6.6.5 Engagement during the Project delivery

MRPV recognises that a range of issues may emerge during the delivery phase of the Project. Identification of these issues and risks along with appropriate strategies and plans to manage them to achieve acceptable outcomes in accordance with the Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) is a critical part of ensuring the effective delivery of the project. Project specific processes would be established to respond to new and emerging issues in accordance with the Environmental Management Framework and EPRs for the project.

Engagement with the community and stakeholders, together with regular updates and information about the Project, would continue through the delivery of the Project. Innovative and existing communication and engagement channels would continue to enable stakeholders and the local community to ask questions and provide feedback on the delivery of the Project.

Engagement requirements during the construction, operation and maintenance phases of the Project are set out in the EPRs, which are detailed in Chapter 12 – *Environmental Management Framework* specifying that the Project is required to:

- Design and construct the project to reduce disruption to businesses and residences as much as possible, including minimising land acquisition, temporary occupation of land and impacts on access as far as practicable.
- Prepare and implement a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan for the delivery of the Project to engage and consult with the community, businesses and affected stakeholders, and to notify in advance of key construction activities and milestones.
- Ensure issues and complaints management is handled in accordance with the Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations.

## 6.7 Response to feedback

Feedback received from the community and stakeholders throughout the engagement process has helped to identify areas of community interest and highlight areas of concern relating to the design and construction of the Project, and also provided suggestions for improving the Project's design and minimising its impacts.

### 6.7.1 Key feedback themes

An analysis of the broad range of information, comments, issues and ideas raised from all the feedback received reveals five high-level themes that capture community and stakeholder views to date:



Access,  
community and  
businesses



Project scope,  
construction  
and timing



Environment,  
amenity and  
landscaping



Safety issues that are  
current or presenting  
in the design



Traffic flow,  
accessibility and  
connectivity

Attachment IV *Stakeholder and Consultation Report* provides a summary of the key issues raised for each theme and the Project's responses to this feedback.

## 6.7.2 Considering feedback

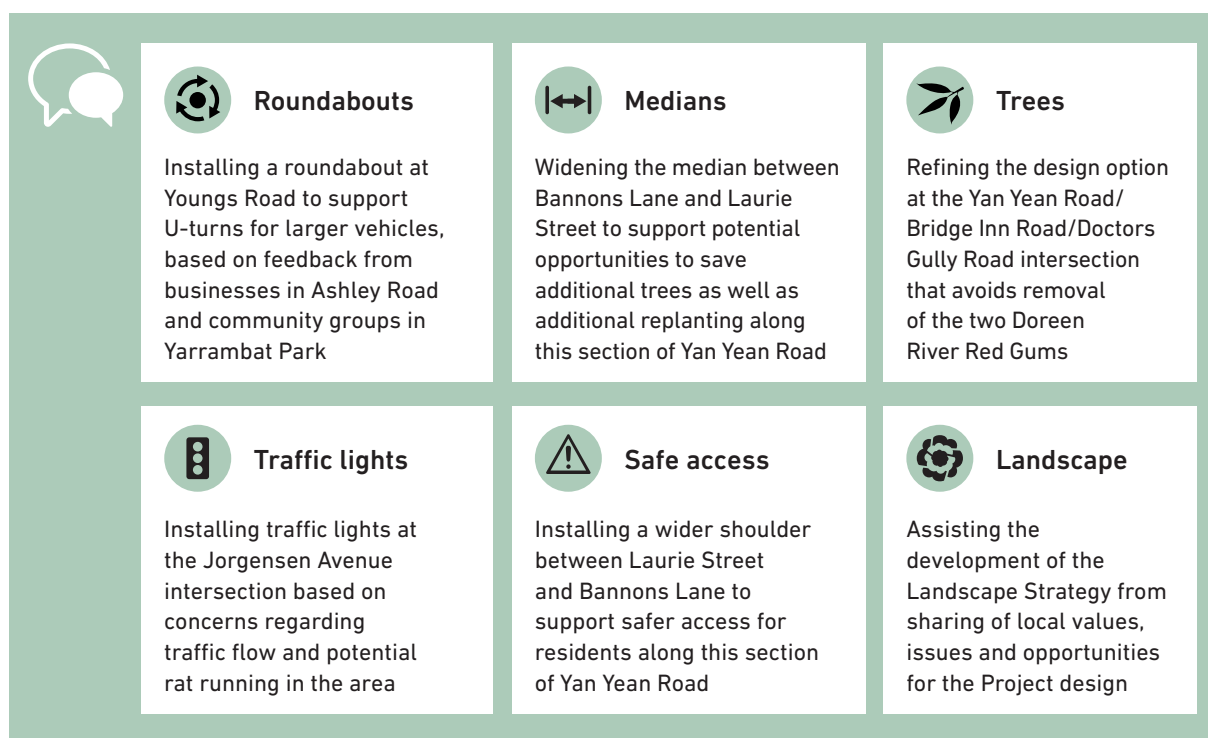
Community and stakeholder feedback has informed the development of the design for the Project, with aspects of the design being refined following input from the community and stakeholders.

Feedback has been considered by the specialist technical assessments conducted for the EES. Key issues raised by the community have been addressed through further specialist investigations and have also helped to identify and refine the Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) for the Project. This input is discussed in the relevant specialist technical reports appended to this EES.

Feedback received during the preparation of this EES led to changes in the initial design that was the subject of earlier consultation for the Project. One of the key changes adopted by the Project based on feedback is the design option of the Yan Yean Road / Bridge Inn Road / Doctors Gully Road intersection. The adopted design avoids removal of the two Doreen River Red Gums, acknowledging community support for retaining these and the strong appreciation of their cultural and social importance within the area.

Changes made to the Project's design as a result of community and stakeholder feedback are shown in Figure 6.6 below.

**Figure 6.6 Changes to the design based on community feedback**



Consultation and engagement will continue throughout the planning and environmental approvals process, as well as during the continued development and future construction of the Project. These stages include:

- Inquiry and Advisory Committee public hearings
- Contract award
- Detailed design
- Construction of the Project.

Incorporating community feedback into the next phases is crucial to the Project's success. MRPV will continue to engage with those directly impacted, including landowners and businesses in the area, as part of its commitment to ongoing community involvement in major road projects across Victoria.