



Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

North East Link Project • January 2021



Sign up for project updates
northeastlink.vic.gov.au



Printed on 100% recycled paper.
When you're finished, please recycle.



1 Introduction

1.1 About North East Link

North East Link (the project) provides a new freeway standard connection between the M80 Ring Road and an upgraded Eastern Freeway, completing the missing link in Melbourne's metropolitan ring road.

In 2016, Infrastructure Victoria – Victoria's independent infrastructure advisors – named North East Link as the State's next priority road project, and the Victorian Government committed to building it.

Since then, the project has been through more than three years of extensive planning and consultation with communities, included the preparation and public exhibition of an Environment Effects Statement (EES) – Victoria's most robust and transparent impact assessment process.

More than 15,750 pieces of community feedback have helped shaped the project to date. At the end of 2019, the Minister for Planning released his assessment of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) and approved the Planning Scheme Amendment to allow the project to proceed to construction.

In April 2020, CPB Contractors began early works for the project to move power, water, gas, sewer and telecommunications lines so major construction for North East Link can start in 2021.

The North East Link main package of works is being delivered through a Public Private Partnership (PPP) and we are currently evaluating bids from two world class consortiums.

The North East Link will be open to traffic in 2027 and slash travel times between Melbourne's north and south-east for 135,000 vehicles every day, take 15,000 trucks off local roads and link key growth areas and access to 56,000 more job opportunities for workers in the north-east.

1.2 About this document

The Communications and Community Engagement Strategy establishes the overarching principles, guidelines, objectives and approach to engaging with the community and stakeholders throughout North East Link's three work phases – early works construction, main works construction and ongoing operation.

It informs the specifications contained in the Project's Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) relating to Communications and Stakeholder Engagement. This Strategy also informs the Communications and Community Engagement Strategies to be developed by each primary contractor.

Findings and insights from qualitative and quantitative research, and lessons learned have informed development of this document. It also considers the Victorian Auditor General's Office's (VAGO) Public Participation in Government Decision-making Guidelines and the International Association of Public Participation's (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum.

1.3 Environmental Performance Requirements

Environmental Performance Requirement (EPR) SC3 requires North East Link to prepare and implement a Communications and Community Engagement Plan to engage the community and potentially affected stakeholders, and communicate progress of construction activities and operation. The Plan must be published on the project's website prior to and for the duration of construction.

The table below sets out the requirements of EPR SC3 and where in this Strategy further information can be found.

EPR SC3 Requirement	Section of this plan
A process for identifying community issues and the recording, management and resolution of complaints from affected stakeholders including business owners, community service providers, education providers, public and active transport key user groups and residents, consistent with Australian Standard AS/NZS 10002:2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in Organisations.	Section 9.2, page 36
Approach to stakeholder identification.	Section 9, page 35
Enquiry management and record keeping approach and procedures including making available an attended 24-hour telephone number, postal address, and an email address and publishing these on the project website.	Section 7, pages 18 Section 11, page 43
<p>Approach to communicating and engaging with the community and potentially affected stakeholders in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction activities including temporary facilities and impacts that may affect the community, businesses or individual stakeholders (e.g. dust, noise, vibration and light) and relevant mitigation (e.g. relocations policy) • Changes to transport conditions and relevant mitigation (e.g. road closures, detours) 	Section 10.3, page 41 Section 10.4, page 42
Timelines and an outline of works that will affect particular local areas, to be updated to reflect current and anticipated conditions.	Section 3.4, page 11 Section 8.2, page 24
Identifying how stakeholders can access information on environmental performance that is to be made publicly available.	Section 10, page 40
Incident and emergency communications, including notification methods and timeframes in the event of a major incident or overrun.	Section 10.5, page 42
Approach and processes to ensure that the workforce has appropriate community awareness and sensitivity including to prevent the workforce from parking in local roads and in public parking in the vicinity of local shopping areas except when frequenting those areas for private purposes.	Section 10.1, page 40
Innovative communications tools and methods to enhance the project's ability to effectively communicate and engage with the community and stakeholders including best available technology in addition to conventional means.	Section 7, page 18

EPR SC3 Requirement continued	Section of this plan
Approach to engaging with local schools to ascertain safety requirements (including evacuation opportunities) and to provide education opportunities on project activities.	Section 9.5, page 38
Approach to making relevant project information available to the community with specific consideration to vulnerable groups (including culturally and linguistically diverse groups) and a responsive process for resolving complaints by vulnerable groups or individuals.	Section 9.6, page 39
How it will evaluate the effectiveness of the communication and engagement under the Communications and Community Engagement Plan.	Section 12, page 44

All contractor's plans must consider, and where appropriate, address matters of interest or concern to the following stakeholders, and provide for the appointment of a dedicated liaison officer (as appropriate):

 <p>Municipal councils</p>	<p>Other public facilities in proximity</p> 
 <p>Recreation, sporting clubs and community groups</p>	<p>Religious and worship groups</p> 
 <p>Schools and other educational institutes</p>	<p>Vulnerable groups</p> 
 <p>Potentially affected residents and property owners</p>	<p>Traditional Owners</p> 
 <p>Potentially affected business</p>	<p>Public transport users</p> 

In accordance with EPR SC3, dedicated liaison officers will need to be engaged by the contractors to work proactively with the stakeholders listed above to consider and, where appropriate, address feedback and complaints.

Contents

1	Introduction	1	9	Stakeholders	35
1.1	About North East Link	1	9.1	Stakeholder identification and analysis	35
1.2	About this document	1	9.2	Stakeholder groups	36
1.3	Environmental Performance Requirements	2	9.3	Community Liaison Groups	38
2	Overarching strategy	5	9.4	Business Liaison Groups	38
3	Project description	9	9.5	Approach to engaging with schools	38
3.1	Scope	9	9.6	Approach to engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups	39
3.2	Benefits	10	10	Managing disruptions	40
3.3	Overarching key messages	10	10.1	Disruptive works	40
3.4	Timeline	11	10.2	Notifying the community of works	41
4	Governance	12	10.3	Managing noise, vibration, dust and light impacts during construction	41
4.1	NELP's Communication and Stakeholder Relations Team	14	10.4	Managing traffic conditions	42
5	Communications and Engagement Principles and Objectives	15	10.5	Incident and emergency communications	42
5.1	Principles	15	11	Enquiries and complaints	43
5.2	Objectives	16	12	Evaluation	44
6	Engagement approach	17	13	Appendix	45
7	Engagement tools and methods	18	13.1	Phase One Planning, Environmental Effects Statement, Stakeholder Consultation Report	45
8	Engagement phases	21	13.2	Complaints Handling Policy	45
8.1	Phase One: Planning (complete)	21			
8.2	Phase Two: Early works construction (current)	24			
8.3	Phase Three: Major construction	30			
8.4	Phase Four: Completion and ongoing management	33			

2 Overarching strategy

Purpose

Establish systems and procedures to develop and maintain a collaborative relationship with the community and stakeholders.

Outline communications and community engagement tools and activities to be used during the design and construct phase.

Ensure the stakeholder and engagement approach, tools and activities are consistent with the Project EPRs.

Phases and objectives

1

Planning

Establish systems and procedures to develop and maintain a collaborative relationship with the community and stakeholders.

Outline communications and community engagement tools and activities to be used during the design and construct phase.

Ensure the stakeholder and engagement approach, tools and activities are consistent with the Project EPRs.

2

Early works construction, sports relocation and land acquisition

Support landowners and tenants through the land acquisition process through one-on-one case management with NELP staff.

Establish clear processes for notifying stakeholders and the community about potential impacts from works, including a transparent complaints management process.

Engage with and provide advance notice to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about early works, including the public exhibition of the early works construction schedule.

3

Major construction of North East Link

Support the detailed design work undertaken by the appointed construction contractors, including providing opportunities for stakeholder and community input and feedback.

Engage with, and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about major works construction activities, including the public exhibition of development plans and impacts to travel by road or public transport.

4

Completion and ongoing operation

Support the transition from major works delivery to operation of the tunnels and North East Link road network.

Engage with and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about operation of the new tunnels and road network.

Timeline



Stakeholders

 <p>Associations and peak bodies</p>	<p>Local councils</p> 
 <p>Business and industry</p>	<p>Local traders</p> 
 <p>Community and interest groups</p>	<p>Sports and recreation groups</p> 
 <p>Directly affected residents and landowners</p>	<p>Utility providers</p> 
 <p>Public transport and road users</p>	<p>Vulnerable and Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Groups (CALD)</p> 
 <p>Education providers including primary and secondary schools and early learning centres</p>	<p>Traditional owners</p> 
 <p>Government entities</p>	<p>Religious and worship groups</p> 

Communications tools

A variety of engagement tools and applications should be used to communicate and engage with the community and stakeholders including:



Project website
northeastlink.vic.gov.au



Meetings with individuals or community groups



Social media
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn



Stakeholder meetings



Signage and hoarding displays



Phone calls and briefings



Advertising
Print, radio and TV



Printed materials
fact sheets, newsletters, letters, works notifications



Videos, 3D animations and photography



SMS notifications



Email newsletters (EDMs)



Site tours and visits



Information sessions



Translation service



Pop-up sessions at community events



Door knocks and home visits



Visitor information centres (Hubs) - Watsonia and Bulleen



Community information line via 1800 105 105

3 Project description

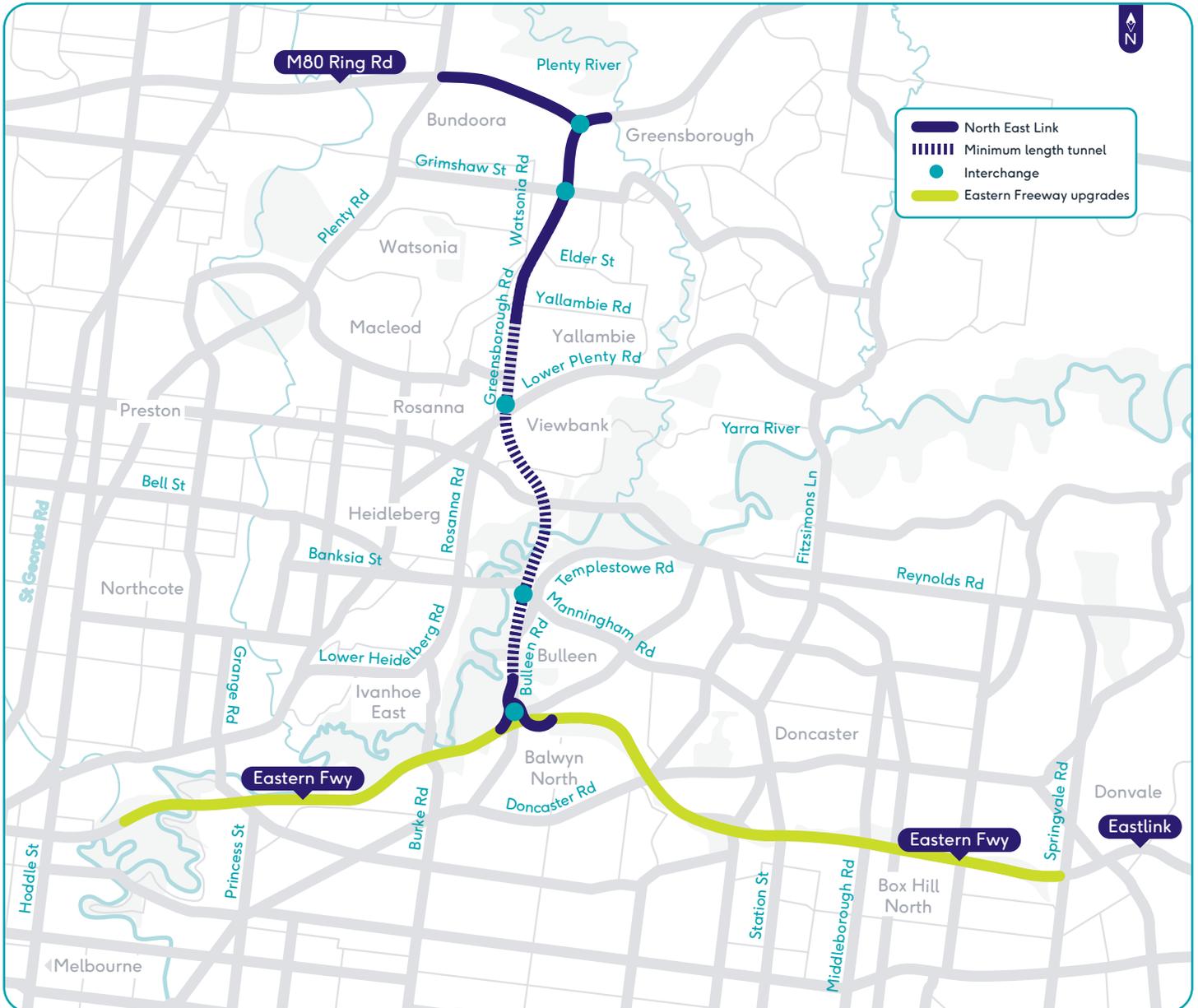
3.1 Scope

North East Link is a new freeway-standard road connection that will complete the missing link in Melbourne's M80 Ring Road giving the city a fully orbital connection. The Project includes Victoria's longest twin road tunnel and delivers Melbourne's first dedicated high-speed busway, new public open space and extensive walking and cycling links.

North East Link is a new express connection with more than six kilometres of the link constructed in tunnel to minimise impacts

on residential areas and communities as well as sensitive environmental areas. As part of the project, the Eastern Freeway would be upgraded to include additional lanes and new technology for safer and faster trips. The upgrade would incorporate dedicated express bus lanes between Doncaster and the city separated from cars and trucks. It will also deliver more than 25 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths.

North East Link project alignment map



Under the project's current reference design, there are three key elements:

- M80 Ring Road to the northern portal – From the M80 Ring Road at Plenty Road and the Greensborough Bypass at Plenty River Drive, North East Link would extend to the northern tunnel portal near Blamey Road using a combination of above, below and at surface road sections. New road interchanges would be provided at the M80 Ring Road and Grimshaw Street.
- Northern portal to southern portal – At the northern portal of the tunnel, the road would transition into twin tunnels that connect to Lower Plenty Road via a new interchange before travelling under residential areas, Banyule Flats and the Yarra River to a new interchange at Manningham Road. The tunnel would then continue to the southern portal located south of the Veneto Club, Bulleen.
- Eastern Freeway – From around Hoddle Street in the west through to Springvale Road in the east, modifications to the Eastern Freeway would include widening to accommodate future traffic volumes and new dedicated bus lanes for the Doncaster Busway. A new interchange at Bulleen Road would connect North East Link to the Eastern Freeway.

3.2 Benefits

North East Link is the biggest road transport project in Victoria's history. Up to 135,000 vehicles will use North East Link every day, reducing congestion while maintaining local roads for local trips. Key benefits include:

Slashing traffic and travel times

- Slashing travel times between Melbourne's north and south-east by up to 35 minutes
- Taking 15,000 trucks off local roads a day
- Additional lanes on the Eastern Freeway will eliminate some of Melbourne's worst bottlenecks
- Seamless trips to Melbourne Airport from Doncaster, Ringwood and beyond
- Improved management of traffic flow through new technology
- 9000 to 11,000 cars and trucks off Rosanna Road a day

Improving public transport

- Building Melbourne's first dedicated busway along the Eastern Freeway
- Creating a new park and ride at Bulleen
- Improve access and upgrade car parking at Watsonia Station

Creating walking and cycling connections

- Delivering more than 25 kilometres of new and upgraded walking and cycling paths
- Upgrading bridges and adding more signalised crossings for walkers and bike riders
- Completing the North East Bicycle Corridor – a new commuter cycling route to the city along the Eastern Freeway between Chandler Highway and Merri Creek

Growing industry and the economy

- Creating more than 10,000 jobs
- \$427 million annual economic boost from better freight connectivity
- Access to 56,000 more job opportunities for workers in the north-east

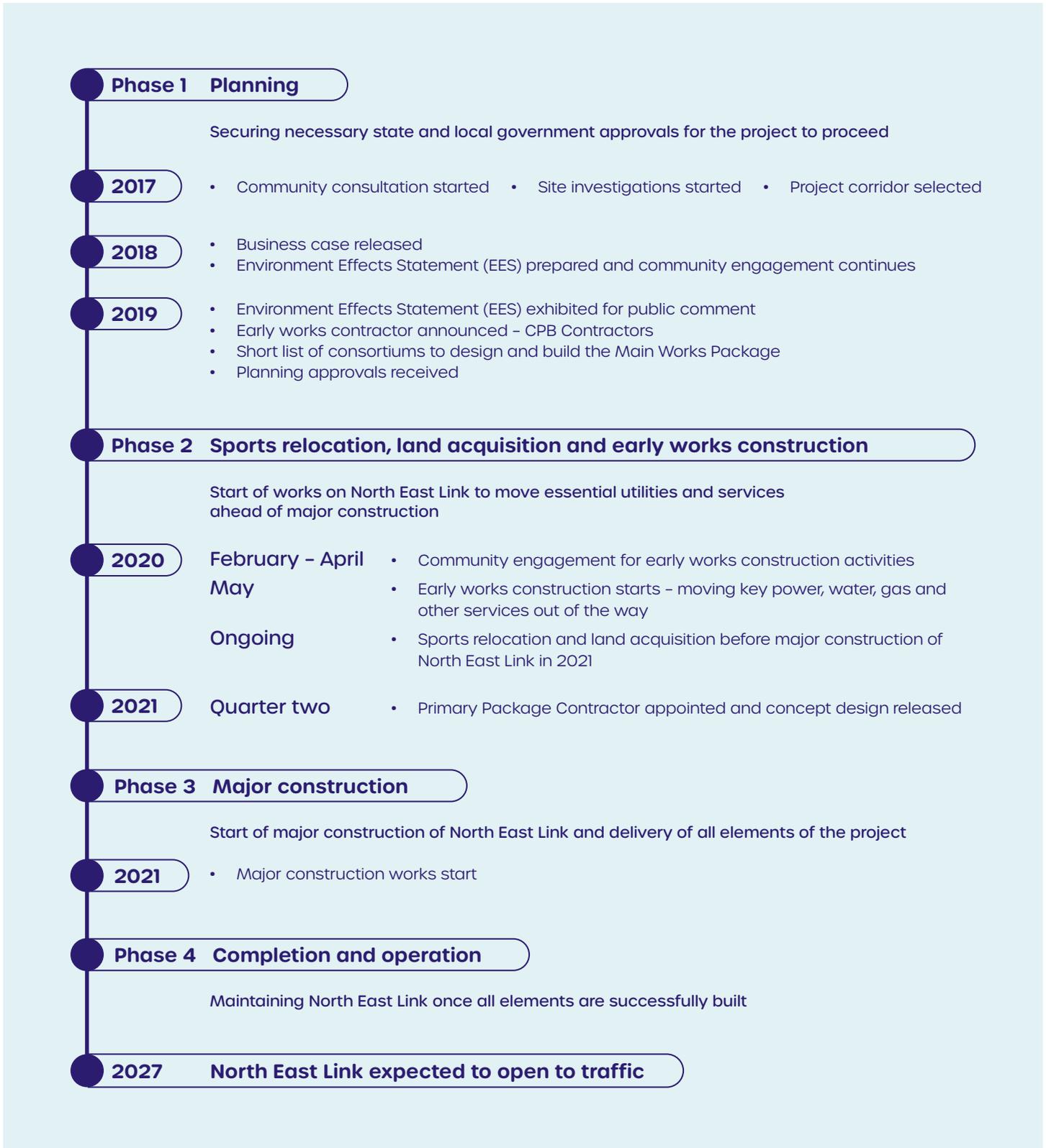
3.3 Overarching key messages

In addition to the above key benefits, these key messages will be consistently used in communications material.

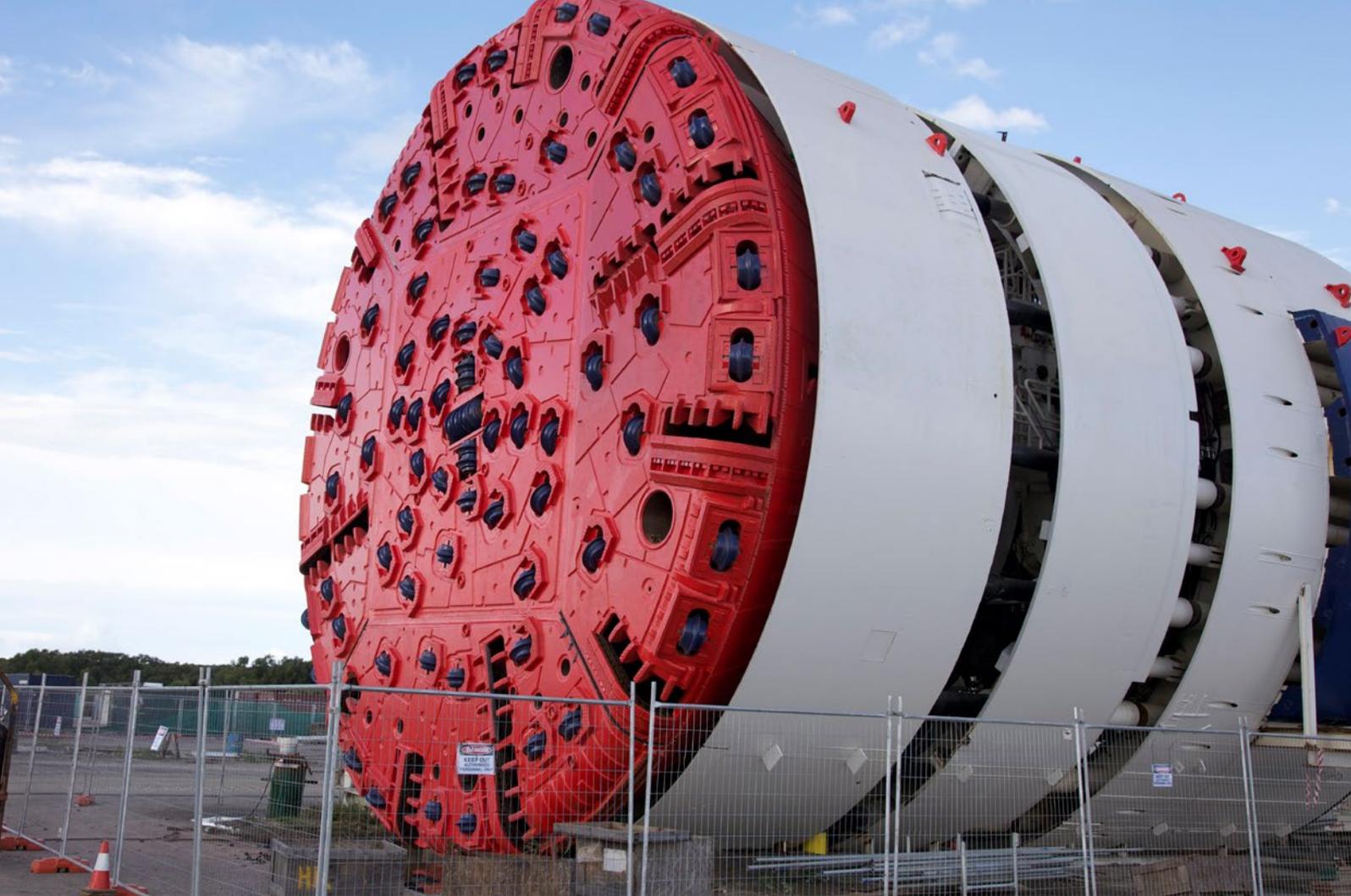
- First considered in 1929, the North East Link will be the single biggest investment in road transport infrastructure in the State's history and has been identified as Victoria's priority road project by Infrastructure Victoria.
- North East Link will slash travel times for up to 135,000 motorists and create more than 10,000 jobs.
- North East Link will connect an upgraded Eastern Freeway to the M80 Ring Road in Melbourne's north-east.
- Melbourne's first dedicated busway with express lanes along the Eastern Freeway from Doncaster towards the city will also be delivered as part of North East Link.
- The Eastern Freeway will connect to North East Link at a new interchange next to Bulleen Road.
- North East Link will then continue into a tunnel of approximately six kilometres heading north, with interchanges at Manningham Road and Lower Plenty Road. The tunnel will extend to Blamey Road and then keep travelling north in a deep trench running next to Greensborough Road.
- These will be Victoria's longest road tunnels with three-lane twin tunnels travelling for approximately six kilometres, protecting properties and the sensitive Banyule Flats area.
- North East Link will rise to surface level road just past Watsonia Station and connect to two new interchanges at Grimshaw Street and the M80 Ring Road.
- Building a project like North East Link through urban areas is challenging and this project has strict requirements in place to manage impacts.
- The North East Link Project team is working closely with impacted residents, businesses, local governments, sports clubs and community groups in delivering this long-awaited project.
- Scheduled to be open to traffic in 2027, the North East Link project will make sure Melbourne remains a liveable, productive and competitive city where residents and businesses have continued access to jobs, services, customers, suppliers and workers.

3.4 Timeline

The North East Link Project will be delivered across four phases. These phases are highlighted below and explained in greater detail in Section 7 'Engagement Phases'.



Note: The North East Link website will be updated regularly to reflect the current timelines of the project in greater detail. Please visit northeastlink.vic.gov.au/works/works for more information.



4 Governance

North East Link is a Victorian Government project that is being delivered through several different contractual and delivery methods due to the scale and nature of the project.

The Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA) is the government body responsible for the delivery of the project on behalf of the Victorian Government.

The MTIA manages the following major transport projects across the state:

- Level Crossing Removal Project
- North East Link Project
- West Gate Tunnel Project
- Major Road Projects Victoria
- Rail Projects Victoria

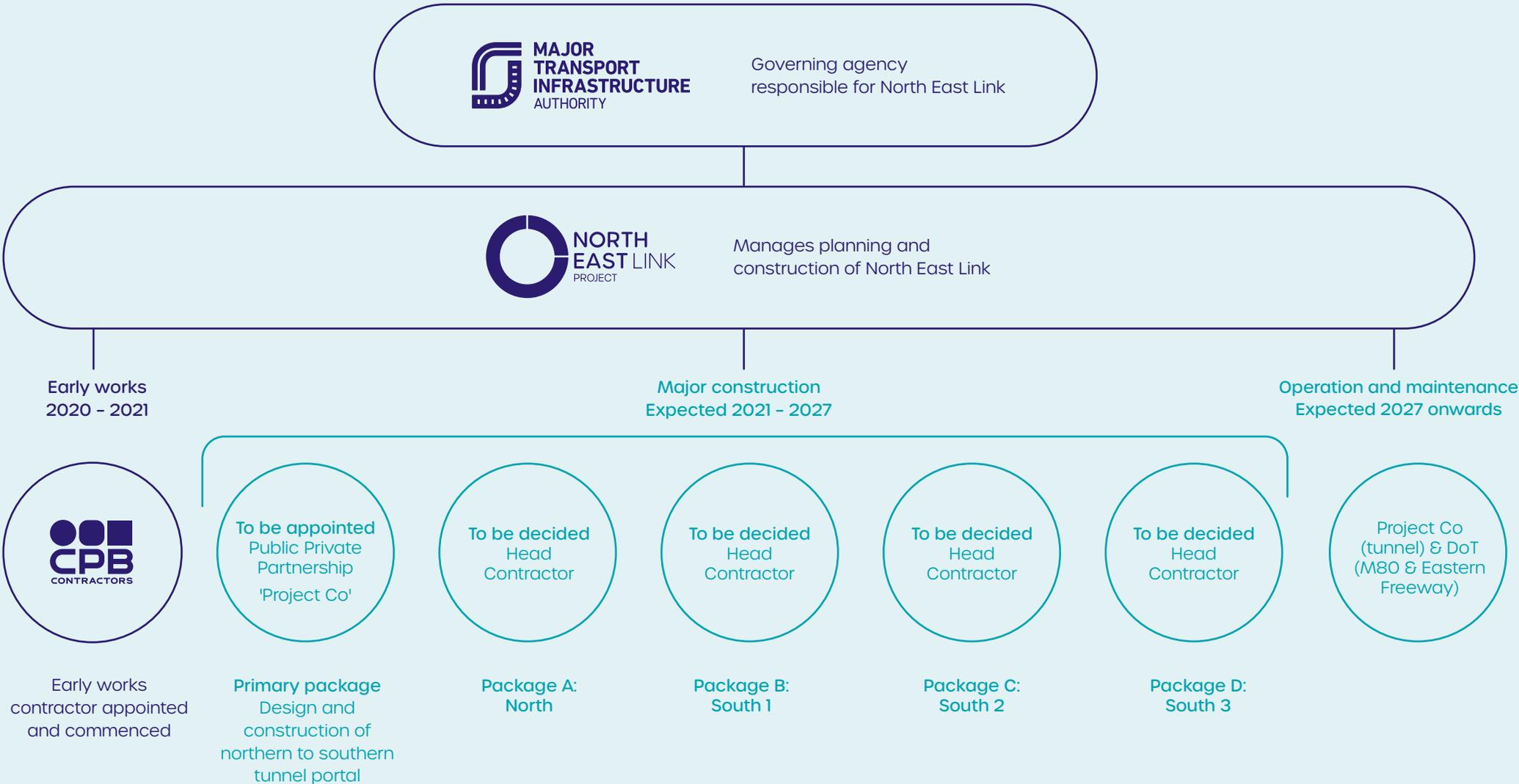
North East Link Project is responsible for overseeing the delivery of North East Link on behalf of the Victorian Government, including the development of the business case, stakeholder and community engagement, project approvals, design, construction and operation.

The Victorian Government will procure a number of separate work packages with multiple contractors to deliver the North East Link, including:

- A managing contractor to deliver early works program in preparation for major construction of the North East Link
- A primary package to design and construct the tunnels (Project Co)
- Multiple secondary packages to construct the northern and southern aspects of the North East Link

Under this structure, NELP will enter into a contract with each contractor on behalf of the Victorian Government.

Governance chart



4.1 NELP's Communication and Stakeholder Relations Team

The Communication and Stakeholder Relations team oversees NELP's communications with stakeholders and the community. They lead engagement with the community through planning, early works, major construction, and monitor and manage relationships across all aspects of the project.

The Communication and Stakeholder Relations team support all NELP teams and are responsible for media management, government relations, design and digital, internal communications, and landowner and stakeholder engagement, including staff who manage our information hubs in Watsonia and Bulleen.

NELP has dedicated communications and engagement advisors assigned to address matters of interest or concern with different stakeholder groups including:

- Councils
- Recreation and sporting clubs
- Potentially affected residents, property owners, and businesses
- Schools and other educational institutions
- Community groups and other public facilities/groups including religious and vulnerable groups within the project boundary

These dedicated advisors work directly with stakeholder groups and communicate via phone, email or face-to-face as required and record interactions and concerns throughout the project.

The Communication and Stakeholder Relations Team also liaises with a number of stakeholders within government including Department of Transport (DOT), and the Office of the Director-General (ODG) to ensure communications and engagement activities are coordinated and broader stakeholder groups kept informed of project impacts and milestones.

Sharing information and project knowledge is an important part of the successful transition from the planning and design phase of North East Link to detailed design and delivery.

NELP's contractors will also have dedicated communications and engagement teams. NELP will work together with contractors to ensure they have a strong understanding of the project's stakeholders, their interests, concerns and desired outcomes for the project, based on engagement undertaken to date. This will minimise the need for contractors to revisit matters that stakeholders have previously raised with NELP.

To ensure ongoing information sharing, NELP will establish regular coordination meetings with the work package contractors, involve contractors in the community reference groups and encourage contractors to engage with each other and work collaboratively, particularly where work packages overlap, or construction issues are similar.

5 Communications and Engagement Principles and Objectives

5.1 Principles

North East Link will be built and operated in a highly urbanised area with a significant number of homes, critical businesses and community assets. NELP are committed to engaging the community and stakeholders every step of the way to build trust, respect and understanding of the projects planning and delivery stages, and future impacts. The contractors appointed to work on North East Link are expected to follow these principles when developing their Communications and Community Engagement Plans.

The project's communications and engagement approach is guided by the following principles outlined in the table below:

Principle	Definition	Actions
Proven approach	Designing community engagement activities and programs using best-practice framework that maximises exposure and community participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed stakeholder mapping/planning Tailoring engagement to stakeholder needs, opportunities and project objectives Adapting what's worked on previous projects into the development of the engagement approach Reflecting and evaluating on our achievements, being as curious about our wins as we are about our losses and building on best practice for continuous improvement.
Meaningful communications	Providing information that matters to the community/stakeholders that demonstrates our understanding of their concerns and explores possible solutions by being clear with what is and isn't negotiable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowing our stakeholders and what matters to them Proactively engaging/communicating with the community on the project's impacts, outcomes and how it will affect them We're realistic and clear about how community engagement will shape the project and we're upfront with our reasoning for why some feedback wasn't incorporated.
Expanding reach and accessibility	Broadening the community's understanding of the project by using multiple communication channels and providing accessible material to ensure inclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and considering diverse audiences and targeting those who are hard to reach Making information accessible to everyone and including translation when needed to ensure all members of the community have understood our message Using a mixture of digital and traditional communications channels to ensure widespread awareness of the project and its impacts Use existing community networks, media and other third parties to provide advance notice about disruptions, build on project recognition and generate understanding of project impacts.
Closing the loop	Demonstrating how community feedback was considered and reflected upon to shape the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate recording keeping processes Analysis of key community issues, concerns and opportunities Synthesise and present feedback into a clear and easy to understand format for internal and external purposes Determining the balance of information that is released publicly or to certain stakeholders Maintaining transparency where feedback has and hasn't shaped the project and developing community understanding on the reasoning behind this Keep the lines of communication open and the conversation going.

5.2 Objectives

Phase One: Engagement to support planning process (Completed)

Objectives:

- Provide a forum to enable stakeholder and community knowledge and views to be considered in the planning and formal decision making for North East Link Project.
- Describe the specific environmental matters to be investigated and documented in North East Link's Environment Effects Statement (EES) – a requirement under Section 3(1) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*.
- Inform stakeholders and the community about decisions and actions being undertaken during the planning process and following the delivery of the ESS.

Outcomes:

- Ensure stakeholders understand the potential environmental impacts of North East Link and how they will be managed.
 - Provide opportunities and mechanisms for the community to learn more about the planning process for North East Link and provide feedback online and in person.
-

Phase Two: Engagement to support early works construction, sports relocation and land acquisition (Underway)

Objectives:

- Support landowners and tenants through the land acquisition process through one-on-one case management with NELP staff.
- Establish clear processes for notifying stakeholders and the community about potential impacts from works, including a transparent complaints management process.
- Engage with, and provide advance notice to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about early works, including the public exhibition of the early works construction schedule.

Outcomes:

- Ensure multiple communications channels and opportunities are provided for stakeholders and the community to ask questions on the project, raise issues and provide feedback
 - Community and stakeholders are aware of the project benefits, timing and impacts.
-

Phase Three: Engagement on major construction

Objectives:

- Support the detailed design work undertaken by the appointed construction contractors, including providing opportunities for stakeholder and community input and feedback.
- Engage with, and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about major works construction activities, including the public exhibition of development plans, and transport timetable changes as appropriate.

Outcomes:

- Multiple communications channels and opportunities provided for stakeholders and the community to ask questions about the project and raise issues.
 - Community and stakeholders are aware of the project benefits, timing and impacts.
-

Phase Four: Engagement upon completion and ongoing operation

Objectives:

- Support the transition from major works delivery to operation of the tunnels and road network.
- Engage with, and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about operation of the new tunnels and road network.

Outcomes:

- Community and stakeholders are aware of the project's completion and understand how North East Link will operate.
 - Community and stakeholders have the opportunity to take part in celebrating North East Link's project achievements.
-

6 Engagement approach

North East Link Project’s approach to communications and engagement is based on the International Association of Public Participation’s (IAP2) Public Participation Spectrum. The Public Participation Spectrum is based on the premise that the ability to influence the decision-making process differs across various stakeholders, communities and projects.

Many Victorian Government departments and agencies also refer to the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) Public Participation and Community Engagement Guide in addition to referencing the IAP2 spectrum to decide how to work with project stakeholders. This Strategy also considers those principles.

Inform and educate	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Goal			
To provide the community and stakeholders with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the issues, alternatives and opportunities.	To obtain community and stakeholder feedback on options and/or decisions.	To work directly with the community and stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the community and stakeholders in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
Promise to the community and stakeholders			
We will keep you informed and provide you with tailored information for you to better understand key concepts.	Your voice will be heard. We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns, and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.

The North East Link Project has expanded the first level of engagement from ‘inform’ to ‘inform and educate’. This recognises that all written materials need to assist in building capacity of the community and stakeholders to understand the project concepts, timing and rationale, and potential impacts on them.

7 Engagement tools and methods

A variety of engagement tools and communication channels should be used to communicate and engage with the community and stakeholders. These are in line with best practice engagement outlined in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) framework and NELP will continue to look for innovative ways to provide information, seek feedback and resolve issues.

A list of communication and engagement tools to be used is listed below.

Marketing

Advertising

Print, online and TV and radio advertisements will be used to notify the community prior to the start of construction, to provide updates on construction activity, future disruptions, notify of upcoming community engagement events and announce project milestones.

Signage

Project signage, barriers, roadside signage and hoarding displays will be installed at key sections of the project corridor that are visible to the community and road users. This signage will have a dual purpose to display important messages about the project and protect community and road users from the project areas.

Digital

Website

A project website, northeastlink.vic.gov.au has been in operation since 2016 and will be maintained throughout the duration of the project. The website will be a repository of key project information and milestones and will host fact sheets, works notifications and other key documents and frameworks relating to the environment.

Engage Victoria website

Engage Victoria is the Victorian Government's Online Consultation platform and provides a range of tools to enable the community to readily share their ideas and opinions regarding issues, topics and projects across the state. NELP has a dedicated Engage Victoria page that is coordinated under Victoria's Big Build which represents MTIA projects. Information regarding engagement sessions and activities will be available via **Victoria's Big Build**.

Social media

NELP has dedicated Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn pages which will be used to proactively provide updates to the community on construction milestones and potential disruptions. These channels are also a medium for the community to engage with the project directly and manage feedback and complaints.

Social media will also be used to advertise information sessions and events and share information to targeted suburbs within the project boundary at various stages of the project where works or disruptions are concentrated at specified times. In addition to NELP social media pages, project milestones and announcements will also be published on the Transport Infrastructure social media channels and respective local members of parliament.

Media

NELP will work proactively with print, TV, radio, online metropolitan and local media outlets, and CALD publications to distribute media releases communicating project milestones, project progress, disruptions and other news worthy information. NELP will also provide timely media responses to media enquiries and work to provide appropriate spokespeople as required.

Video

NELP will release progress videos of construction throughout the project and include on the ground footage of works, informational graphics and time lapse footage where possible. The videos will be hosted on the Project website and via NELP's social media pages. NELP will also look to develop videos with project experts to explain key concepts and technical information.

3D fly through animations

Lifelike animations will be developed and released via the Project website and NELP social media pages at various points of the project to convey complex technical information, visually communicate the project boundary and corridor, and other key aspects of the project.

Photography

NELP will proactively release photography of construction activities throughout the project to showcase progress and visually display the transformation of key sites within the project boundary. Time lapse photography will also be shared on NELP's social media pages to document progress.

Electronic Direct Mail (EDM)

Email updates/enewsletters will be sent to the NELP subscription list throughout the project and feature construction updates, road and other transport network changes, community events and project news. Subscriptions are encouraged through the Project website and are at the discretion of each user/stakeholder to sign-up. EDMs will also be used on a weekly basis to send works notifications emails to specific areas of the project.

Video conferencing

Where face-to-face engagement is not possible, video and conferencing platforms including Skype and Zoom should be used to engage with residents and stakeholders.

Direct communication

Stakeholder meetings

Stakeholder meetings will be used to discuss project activities including work in progress, upcoming work or any issues in connection with the activities. Meetings will also be used to discuss the potential impacts of the project and, where relevant, mitigation strategies to offset impacts.

Phone calls and briefing meetings with directly impacted residents and businesses

NELP will meet one-on-one with residents and businesses who will be acquired or highly impacted during early works and major construction. These meetings will be held on an 'as required' basis with each impacted resident/business to ensure appropriate mitigation strategies can be delivered.

Meetings with individuals or community groups

Briefings will be held with key interest groups or individuals to help secure support for the project or address issues. These meetings will also be used to consult with directly impacted residents and businesses.

Visitor information centres (Hubs)

A visitor information centre at 17 Watsonia Road, Watsonia has been established at the northern end of the project alignment to support the project and provide a location for the community to view information and talk directly with project team members about North East Link, including design features, construction activities, and timing and project benefits. The centre is open from Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm. A similar arrangement has also been established at the southern end of the project alignment 7A Kim Close, Bulleen which is open from Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm.

Community email address

An email address has been established to give stakeholders access to the project team and enquire about the project – community@northeastlink.vic.gov.au. All communication materials will include this email address, and correspondence will be recorded in accordance with privacy requirements.

Community information line

The project will use MTIA's 'Big Build' phone number **1800 105 105** for people to contact the project team. Calls will be directed to a 24/7 call centre and, as appropriate, forwarded to the project team 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All communication materials will include this number and correspondence will be recorded in accordance with privacy standards.

Information sessions

A range of public information sessions will be delivered, ranging from informal pop-ups to advertised sessions at local venues, and attendance at community festivals and events. These sessions will be designed to provide members of the public with the opportunity to talk with members of the project team and view information on project activities.

Door knocks

Door knocking will take place across the project alignment with residents, businesses, schools and early learning centres, aged care facilities, places of worship and other relevant groups who may be temporarily impacted by project works.

SMS notifications

SMS notifications will be used to provide time-critical, project-related information as well as significant project milestones. SMS notifications are intended to supplement, not replace, email alerts or notifications. Stakeholders will be offered the opportunity to register to receive these updates via public materials produced for the project.

Printed materials

Fact sheets

Fact sheets will be used as required to explain key aspects of the project to the community and stakeholders. Copies of the fact sheets will be posted on the website so that an archive of reference material can be accessed by the community throughout the project. Fact sheets will also be mailed to designated areas in the project at various phases of the project.

'Sorry we missed you' cards

'Sorry we missed you' cards will be left at properties if we have door-knocked residents and businesses and no one was home. Cards will include the reason for the door-knock – e.g. access, out of hours work, impact to property and contact information.

Works notifications letters

Notifications of construction activities will be developed and distributed to residents and businesses, mailboxes within (but not limited to) a 150-metre radius of intended works. Notifications will be distributed five to seven days prior to works commencing and include key information regarding scope, location and hours of work, duration of activity, type of equipment to be used, likely impacts including noise, vibration, traffic, access and dust, noise attenuation used to minimise noise, and project contact information. Works notifications will also be published on the NELP website and in weekly EDMs to the project's subscriptions list.

Other

Site tours and visits

Site visits may be used, where appropriate, to inform stakeholders about the progress of the project and any key milestones or activities taking place.

Postal address

NELP will maintain a postal address throughout the duration of the project for residents and stakeholders to submit feedback.

Translation service

NELP will publish details of a translation service for languages other than English on all printed materials and on the 'Contact' page of the NELP website. Interpreter services are also available on (03) 9679 9896.

Accessibility service

For people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, accessibility services are available through National Relay Service on 1800 555 630.

Counselling support service

A free and independent community counselling service can be accessed at any time throughout the project by residents, businesses and other community members. NELP encourages community members needing support in relation to the North East Link project to call 1300 830 687 and quote 'North East Link' to talk with qualified clinical and counselling psychologists from New View Psychology who are available to provide support on a strictly confidential basis.

8 Engagement phases

8.1 Phase One: Planning (complete)

Background

NELP has been engaging with communities and stakeholders since it was formed in late 2016 to investigate and recommend a project corridor and develop a business case for the project.

Public participation has been included in each stage of the project with conversations starting during early strategic planning – much earlier than for most major projects of this kind in Victoria.

In 2017, four different project corridor options were presented to the community and stakeholders to consider for a future North East Link.

On 2 February 2018, the Minister for Planning declared North East Link to be 'public works' under Section 3(1) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, which was published in the Victorian Government Gazette on 6 February 2018 (No. S 38 Tuesday 6 February 2018). This declaration triggered requirement for the preparation of an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the confirmed project corridor to inform the Minister's assessment of the project and subsequent determinations of other decision makers.

The scoping requirements for the EES published by the Minister for Planning described the specific environmental matters to be investigated and documented in the project's EES. The EES allows stakeholders and the community to understand the potential environmental impacts of North East Link and how they are proposed to be managed.

NELP carried out an extensive communication and engagement program to support the development of the reference design of North East Link and to inform the EES.

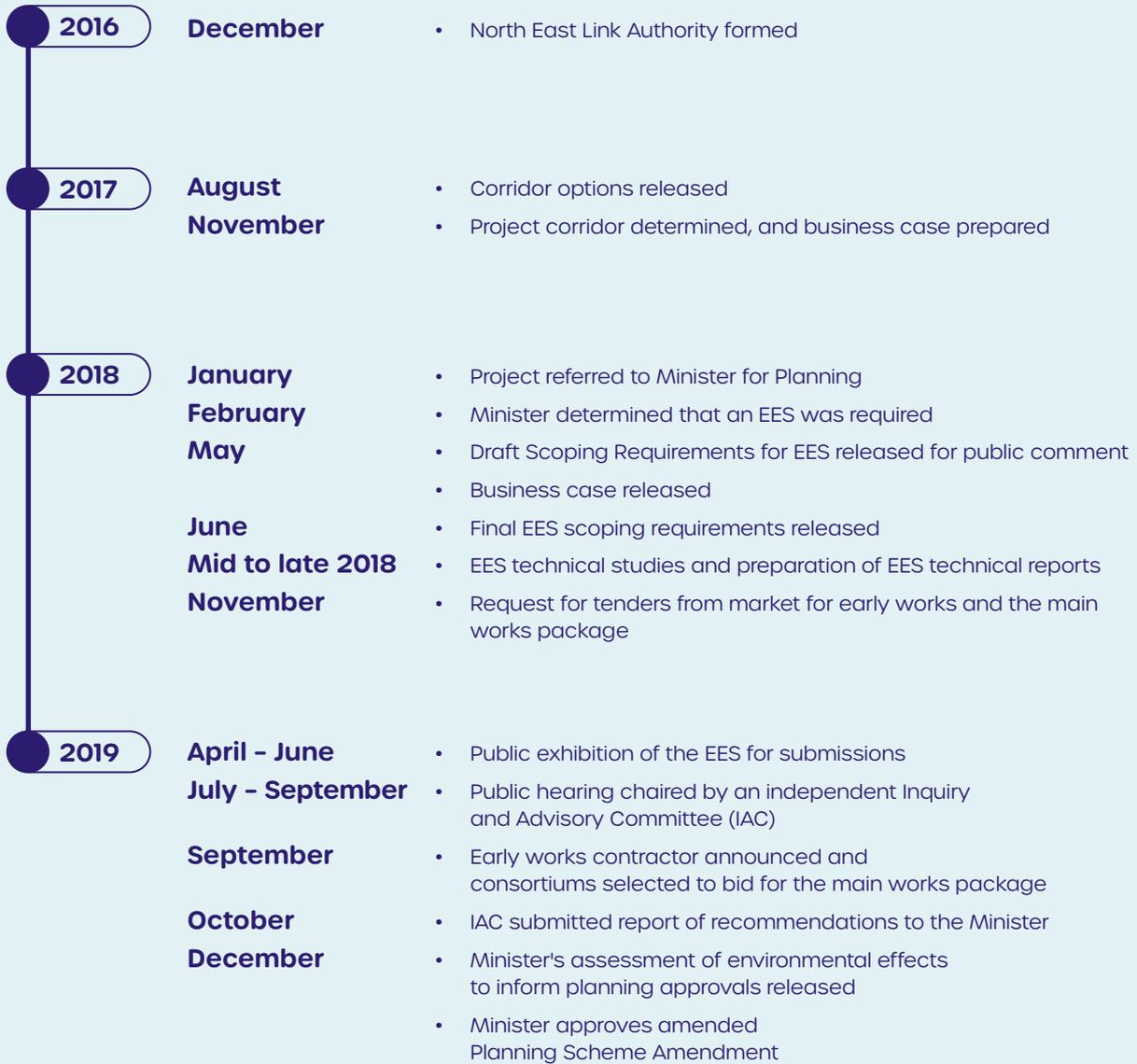
The program included a range of activities such as community and stakeholder workshops, targeted meetings, online communications and site visits. The purpose of these activities was twofold:

- to provide opportunities for communities and stakeholders to learn and understand the likely environmental impacts of North East Link and how they are proposed to be managed; and
- for NELP to seek information about communities and stakeholders to inform the development of a reference design, and EES technical studies.

Feedback covered a range of topics including corridor selection, project design, traffic and transport, amenity, business, construction and environment. This feedback informed development of the North East Link reference design and preparation of the EES which was released for public exhibition on Wednesday 10 April 2019.

The planning phase of the North East Link Project is now complete. The Minister for Planning released his assessment of the EES on 5 December 2019 and approved an amended Planning Scheme Amendment on 23 December 2019.

Planning timeline



A summary of the engagement approach and communications tools used during the planning phase of North East Link is featured in the table below:

Phase One: Overarching approach to Planning process	
Engagement objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of North East Link and the project corridors for consideration • Support stakeholders and the community to view the Environment Effects Summary (EES) and make submissions to an independent inquiry and Advisory committee • Identify key issues, ideas and concerns from the community that need to be considered in the EES • Provide a forum for the community and stakeholders to understand potential environmental impacts of the project and encourage input
Engagement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and stakeholders are involved in EES process via several in-person and online engagement tools • Genuine engagement and interest in the project and corridor options from community • Collection of input, data and sentiment to inform EES and project corridor selection
Project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public exhibition of EES, public submissions, and public hearing chaired by independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee • Minister's assessment of environmental effects and recommendations • Decision making to consider Minister's EES assessment to issue approvals for the project to proceed
Communication focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect feedback and input from communities to select a preferred project corridor • Identify and collate key issues for specialists to consider in preparing the EES • Support stakeholders and communities to make submissions to independent Inquiry and Advisory Committee
Communications tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed newsletter Interactive online map New website Fact sheets Social media Advertising Posters Technical reports and summaries Videos Artist impressions Project images
Engagement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online surveys and discussion forums Workshops Information displays Pop-up stalls at local markets and community events Face-to-face home visits Door knocks Street meetings Two Community Liaison Groups Two Community Technical Discussion Groups Translation service Q&A online tool
Measures of success	<p>The following results were captured from 2017 to 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2 million+ people reached through social media • 250,000+ homes and businesses receiving updates in their letterboxes • 359,000+ visits to online maps • 8695+ visitors to 32 information displays • 2290+ visitors to the Watsonia Community Information Hub • 2175+ conversations with landowners, tenants and businesses • 250+ meetings and briefings with stakeholders • 45+ interactive workshops • 14,900+ pieces of feedback • 870+ EES submissions



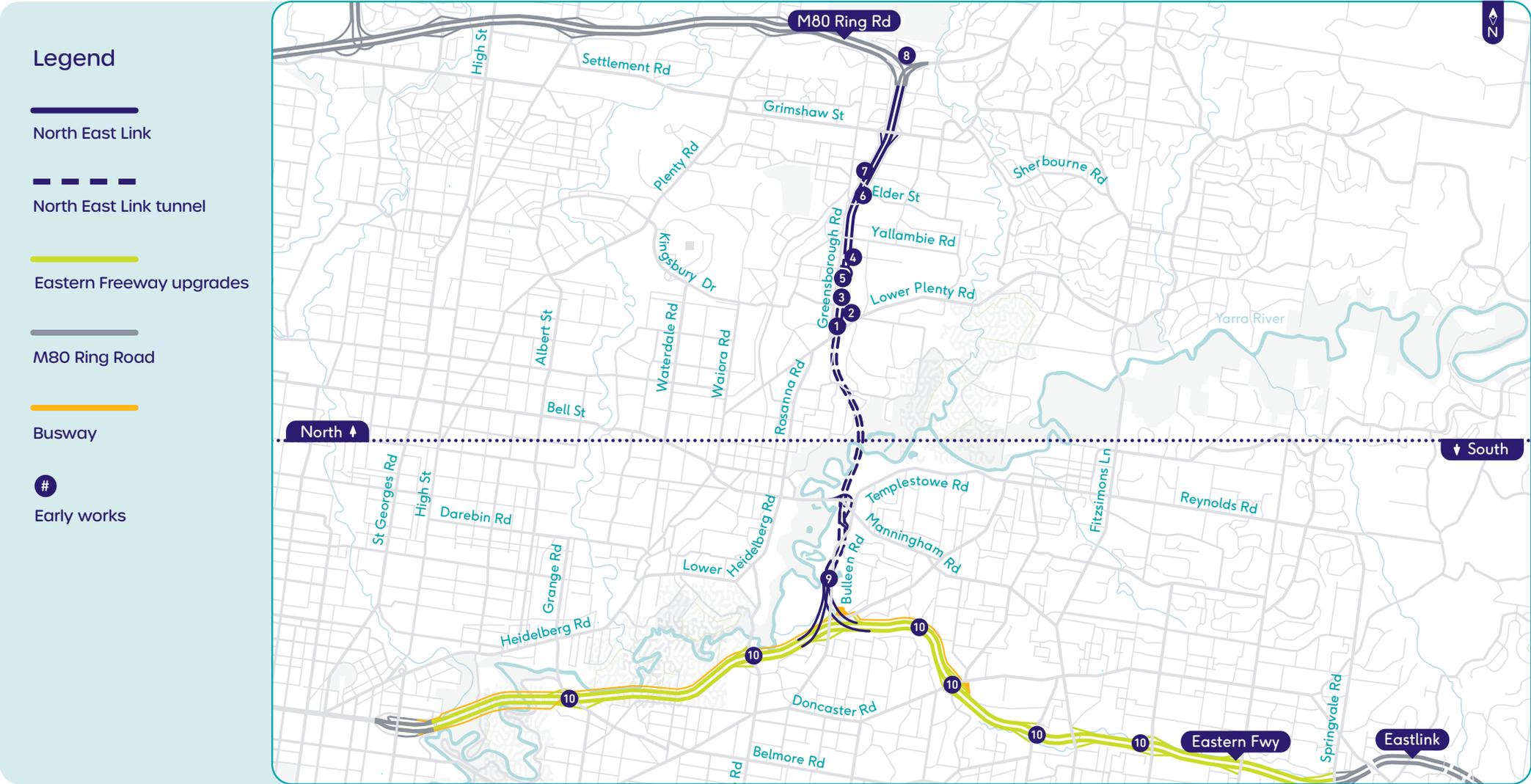
8.2 Phase Two: Early works construction (current)

Background

On 30 August 2019, CPB Contractors was appointed to lead early works construction of North East Link. Early works construction will see around 100 above and below ground utility services relocated so major construction on the North East Link can start in 2021.

Early works will take place across the north and south of the project area starting from the Greensborough Bypass through to Lower Plenty Road in the north, through to Bulleen Road in the south and along the Eastern Freeway from Chandler Highway to Middleborough Road.

Early works overarching map



The following construction activities are included in early works.

North	
1	<p>Utility relocation works near Borlase Reserve, Yallambie</p> <p>Above and below ground power, water, gas, sewer and telecommunications lines will be moved. A site compound will be set up in Borlase Reserve while the utilities are being moved. It will contain offices, sheds, parking for construction workers and equipment.</p>
2	<p>Water pressure reducing station, Yallambie</p> <p>The water pressure reducing station on the corner of Borlase and Drysdale streets will be moved to a new site next to the Melbourne Water easement at Coleen Street, Yallambie. The new water pressure reducing station will connect to existing water mains, have a new site layout with an acoustic shed to protect residents from noise, secure fencing and include improved safety features and access points. The external design of the station will follow the North East Link Urban Design Strategy.</p>
3	<p>Banyule Creek temporary diversion, Yallambie</p> <p>Banyule Creek north of Lower Plenty Road will be temporarily diverted to keep it flowing while North East Link gets built. Approximately 350 metres of the creek will be temporarily diverted between Blamey Road and Lower Plenty Road. When North East Link is complete, we intend to restore this section of Banyule Creek back to a natural water course in line with the project's Urban Design Strategy.</p>
4	<p>Power substation near Blamey Road, Yallambie</p> <p>A power substation is proposed to be built south of Blamey Road on the Simpson Barracks side of Greensborough Road. The substation will house electrical infrastructure needed to supply power to the tunnel boring machines during construction, and the twin road tunnels when North East Link opens to traffic. The external design of the substation will follow the North East Link Urban Design Strategy.</p>
5	<p>Utility relocation works, Greensborough Road</p> <p>New gas, power and telecommunications lines will replace existing services along the length of Greensborough Road. Between Lower Plenty Road and Watsonia Road, underground services will be shifted in stages to the western side of Greensborough Road. To ensure the safety of road users and work crews, works will happen overnight with the road open to traffic during the day. Further north, above and below ground services between Nepean Street and Santon Street will also be moved.</p>
6	<p>High-voltage transmission towers, Watsonia Station car park</p> <p>Two high-voltage transmission towers in Watsonia Station car park will be moved around 80 metres to the eastern side of Greensborough Road. To help fast track construction and minimise disruptions, the existing towers will stay in place while the new towers are built. There will be minimal disruption to power supply during these works and train services on the Hurstbridge line are unlikely to be affected.</p>
7	<p>Mobile telecommunications tower and cable laying works, Watsonia</p> <p>A mobile telecommunications tower in the Watsonia Station car park will be moved and new supply cable laid in Watsonia. The tower will move a short distance from its current location and remain in the Watsonia Station car park near the railway trench. Cable laying works will take place on Nell Street West, Ibbottson Street, Watsonia Road and through the Watsonia Station car park.</p>
8	<p>Mobile telecommunications tower and utility relocation works, Greensborough Highway and M80 Ring Road</p> <p>A mobile telecommunications tower will be moved and several underground utilities will be realigned along Greensborough Highway and M80 Ring Road. The tower will move a short distance from its current location north of the M80 Ring Road intersection. Underground utilities will be moved or protected where they cross the roadway, including a water main in the Maroondah Aqueduct, power lines north of Sellars Street and telecommunications lines near Macorna Street, Yando Street and Boyd Street.</p>

South

9

Yarra East Main Sewer

A vital piece of Melbourne's sewer network, the Yarra East Main Sewer (YEMS) will be relocated to prepare for major construction of North East Link in 2021. The new 1.8 kilometre section of the YEMS will be moved east of Bulleen Road and connect back to the existing YEMS at the Eastern Freeway.

10

Eastern Freeway

To allow for freeway upgrade works, some power poles and cabling along the Eastern freeway behind existing noise walls will be replaced. To complete these works, there may be some temporary impacts to shared user paths.

Chandler Highway

Power and gas services will be moved at the Chandler Highway on and off ramps.

Burke Road

Near Burke Road, water, power and communications services will be moved. During these works, construction activity will occur in Musca reserve and along the Eastern Freeway on and off ramps.

Estelle Street

Between the Yarraleen Trail and Koonung Creek reserve, a large water main will need be moved. Builders will dig under the Eastern freeway to build the new water main, connecting back into the Melbourne Water network, under the Yarraleen Trail.

Doncaster Road

Power and communication utilities will be moved between the Kingsnorth Street substation and Koonung Creek Reserve.

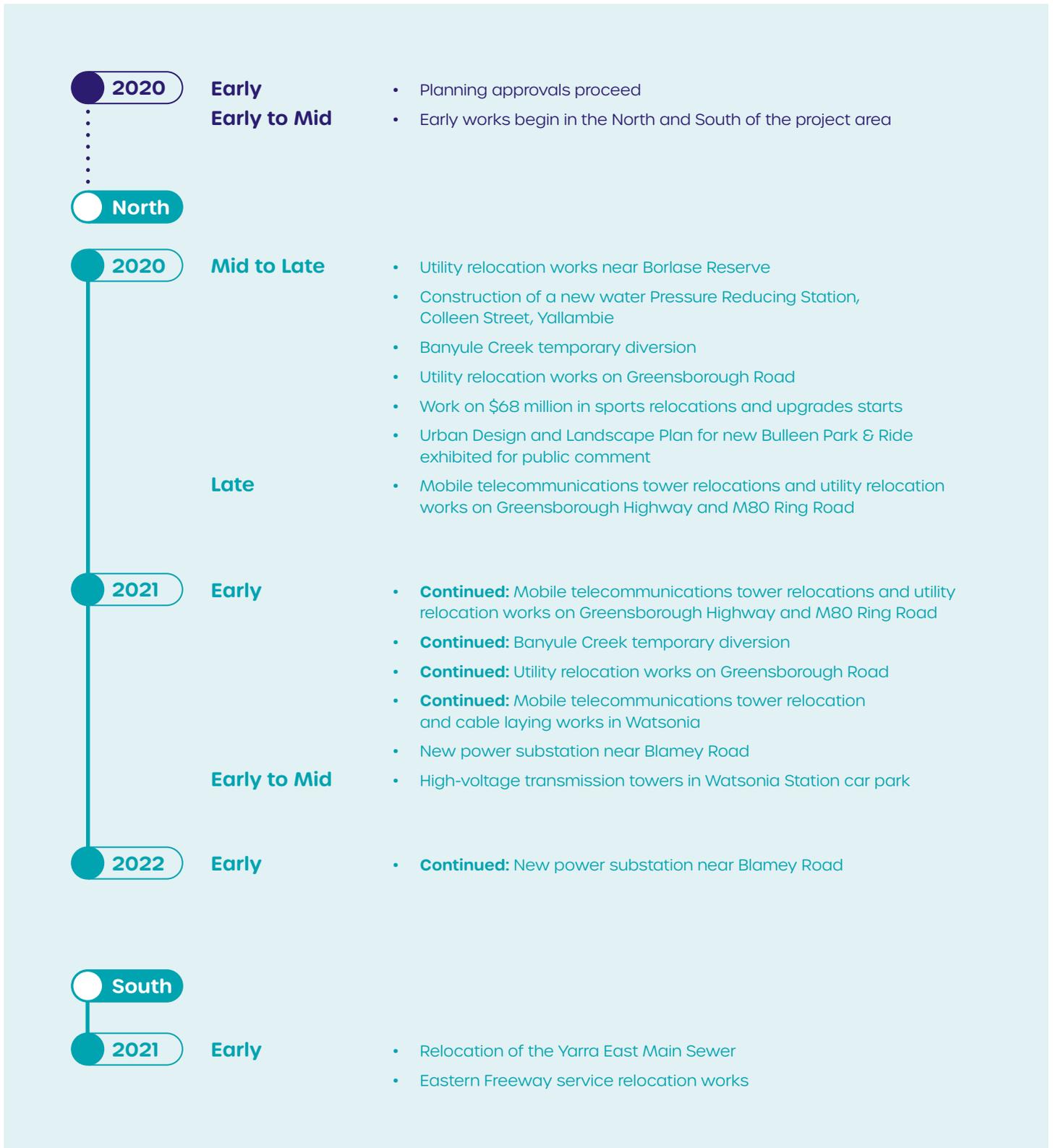
Eram Road

Power cables will be moved and reconnected under the Eastern freeway to the Substation at Eram Road, Box Hill. To connect the new power cables to the substation, there will be some temporary impacts to Koonung Creek Trail on the north side of the Eastern freeway.

CPB Contractors together with North East Link will lead on-the-ground engagement and communication with residents and stakeholders impacted by early works. During construction, CPB Contractors will be on the ground speaking with affected communities and businesses. Regular construction updates will be distributed on a monthly and as needed basis to notify people affected of any upcoming works.

Where disruptive, night time works are deemed unavoidable a minimum seven days' notice will be provided and impacted residents and business will be offered respite options and where appropriate, short term relocation in accordance with the EPRs. In addition, we continue to have one on one conversations with highly impacted residents. A Voluntary Purchase Scheme (VPS) for North East Link was recommended by the Minister for Planning as part of approvals for the project, particularly for property owners located in Borlase Street, Yallambie due to impacts from the early works program and major construction. We now have a VPS in place to respond to these construction impacts, and continue to engage with eligible Borlase Street residents on their relocation options.

Indicative early works timeline



Note: Timeframes are indicative only. Please refer to northeastlink.vic.gov.au/works/early-works-program for live timeframes.

NELP is committed to informing and supporting the community through early works. Engagement activities and approaches are outlined in the table below.

Phase Two: Overarching approach to support early works, sports relocation works, procurement and property acquisition engagement	
Engagement objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support landowners and tenants through land acquisition process and eligible residents through VPS. • Support affected sports and recreation clubs through the relocation works. • Establish clear processes for notifying stakeholders and the community about potential impacts from works, including a transparent complaints management process. • Engage with and provide advance notice to local businesses, sports and recreation clubs, residents, road and public transport users about early works, including the public exhibition of the early works activities.
Engagement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple communications channels and opportunities provided for stakeholders and the community to ask questions about the project, raise issues and provide feedback. • Community and stakeholders are aware of the project benefits, timing and impacts. • Highly impacted residents and businesses are supported to make decisions to relocate short or longer term, or sign up to the VPS. • Sporting clubs are informed of project impacts and feel supported to take their clubs to alternative locations.
Project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and on-the-ground engagement • Site investigations • Early works construction activities • Sports relocation works • Short and long-term relocation with residents in highly impacted areas • Voluntary Purchasing Scheme for eligible residents and businesses being acquired through North East Link
Communication focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce early works contractor team to the local community. • Explain the project, early works timelines and benefits, and upcoming disruptions. • Understand community values and concerns. • Continue to build on existing relationships with local communities and stakeholders. • Where possible, seek community and stakeholder input into project design scope and construction impacts. • Work proactively with Community Liaison Groups (CLGs) to share project information within their community networks. • Provide the community with regular updates and simple technical terminology through a range of communications channels. • Explain preferred project design and how community input has been considered. • Work one-on-one with residents and businesses in highly impacted areas to relocate.
Mandatory communications tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works notifications Electronic direct mail (EDM) Email updates Fact Sheets Website updates Social media posts Call centre - 1800 105 105 Media coverage Signage Local advertising Videos/animations Project photography Hoarding displays
Mandatory engagement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pop ups (local events or in the project area) Community drop-in sessions Door knocks Letterbox drops Face to face meetings Home visits Online engagement tools via Engage Victoria website Stakeholder Liaison Groups Surveys Stakeholder workshops Local trader meetings Council officer meetings
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring of compliance with enquiries and complaints processes for both contractors and NELP team. • Contractor compliance with stakeholder engagement audits required to achieve the relevant credits in the IS Rating Tool (if applicable to the contractors' strategy to achieve the minimum IS Rating) and environmental audits. • Increased community understanding and awareness of the project as measured through surveys. • Sustained participation in engagement processes and interaction with project during public engagement activities. • Sustained participation and desire for involvement demonstrated by registrations for email updates, follows on Facebook and visits to project website.

8.3 Phase Three: Major construction

Background

In September 2019, the Victorian Government short-listed construction consortiums to bid for the \$7-9 billion major works (primary package) contract for North East Link, as part of a public private partnership (PPP).

Along with building the twin tunnels, the selected consortium 'Project Co' will design the primary package. This major construction will start in 2021.

The successful consortium for primary PPP package of the project will be announced in the first half of 2021 and be required to outline their approach to keep the community and stakeholders informed about the progress of the project during its construction and operation, and to identify opportunities to work together to minimise construction impacts.

In addition to the primary PPP component, the Victorian Government will also appoint head contractors for four secondary packages of the project:

- Primary package:

Public Private Partnership (PPP) - 'Project Co'

Detailed design and construction of northern to southern tunnel portal.

- Secondary packages:

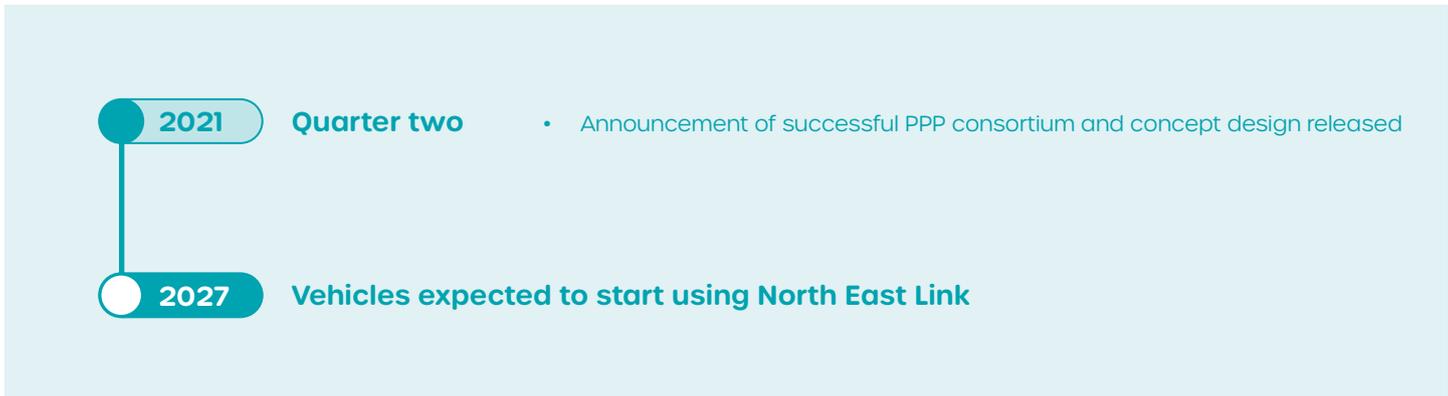
Head Contractor • Package A • Phase 1 • North

Head Contractor • Package B • Phase 2 • South 1

Head Contractor • Package C • Phase 3 • South 2

Head Contractor • Package D • Phase 4 • South 3

Construction timelines



Proposed works packages map



The future engagement approach and communications objectives of phase three of the North East Link have been summarised in the table below. The contractor will need to develop plans that are consistent with these objectives.

Phase Three: Overarching approach to support major construction	
Engagement objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the detailed design work undertaken by the appointed construction contractors, including providing opportunities for stakeholders and community input and feedback. • Engage with and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about major works construction activities, including the public exhibition of Development Plans, and transport (bus) timetable changes as appropriate.
Engagement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple communications channels and opportunities provided for stakeholders and the community to ask questions about the project and raise issues. • Community and stakeholders are aware of the project benefits, timing and impacts. • Stakeholders are not caught off guard by significant disruptions and inconveniences that major construction entails.
Project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early works transition - wrap of works with managing contractor CPB and utility providers • Tunnelling and project design • Northern Package • Southern Package • Sports relocation works
Communication focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the final project design and how community input has been incorporated. • Outline the impacts expected during construction. • Work with local communities and stakeholders to identify and mitigate local impacts. • Work with affected residents to ensure impacts are minimised where possible. • Deliver regular project updates and provide local community and stakeholders with advance notices about potential impacts.
Mandatory communications tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct mail Email Publications Website Works notifications Social media 1800 number Media Signage (VMS/hoarding) Advertising - radio, print, TV Videos/animation
Mandatory engagement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community drop-in sessions Meetings Surveys Stakeholder workshops Trader engagement Online engagement tools Stakeholder Liaison Groups Council officer meetings Meetings with affected sports and recreation clubs Community Liaison Groups
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring of compliance with enquiries and complaints processes for both contractors and NELP team. • Contractor compliance with stakeholder engagement audits required to achieve the relevant credits in the IS Rating Tool (if applicable to the contractors' strategy to achieve the minimum IS Rating) and environmental audits. • Increased community understanding and awareness of the project as measured through surveys. • Sustained participation in engagement processes and interaction with project during public engagement activities. • Sustained participation and desire for involvement demonstrated by registrations for email updates, follows on Facebook and website traffic.

8.4 Phase Four: Completion and ongoing management

Background

A State-owned company will be set-up to collect tolls for the long-awaited North East Link with toll revenue going towards the cost of building and maintaining North East Link upon completion.

North East Link tolls will be collected by State Tolling Corporation (STC) which will be responsible for fixing and collecting toll revenues for the project.

The North East Link will be the first road in Victoria whose tolling rights are held by the State Government.

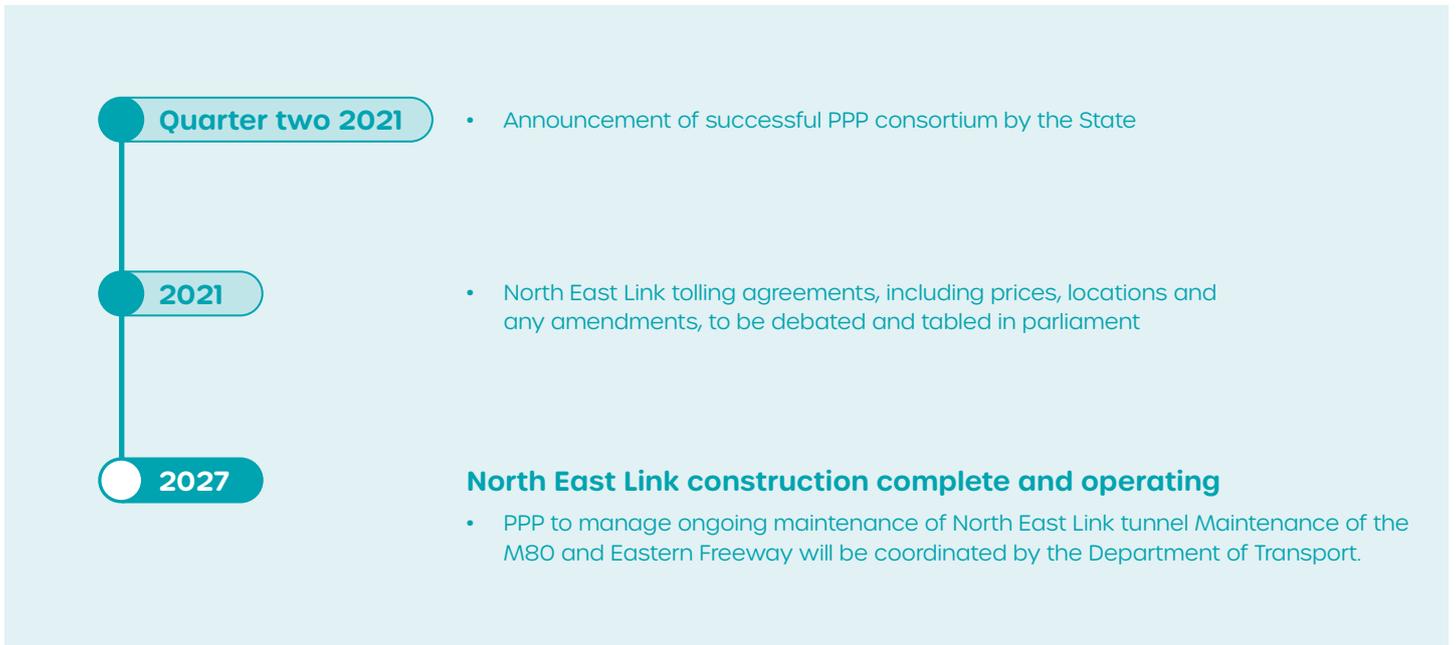
An overhauled Eastern freeway, with express lanes and a dedicated busway will remain toll free as will other key local roads like Greensborough Highway and the M80 Ring Road.

The north south section of the North East Link will be tolled.

The State-collected toll revenue will pay for long-term maintenance of North East Link including ensuring the safety and upkeep of the tunnels, road surface and roadside areas.

The long-term operations and maintenance of Primary Package of the North East Link will be coordinated through the Public Private Partnership (PPP). The rest of North East Link will be operated and maintained by the state.

Timeline



The future engagement approach and communications objectives of phase four of the North East Link have been summarised in the table below. The contractor will need to develop plans that are consistent with these objectives.

Phase Four: Overarching approach to support completion and handover	
Engagement objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the transition from major works delivery to operation of the tunnels and road network. • Engage with and provide advance notice, including direct contact where required, to local businesses, residents, road and public transport users about operation of the new tunnels and road networks.
Engagement outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and stakeholders are aware of the project's completion and understand how North East Link will operate. • Community and stakeholders can take part in celebrating North East Link's project achievements.
Project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening of North East Link
Communication focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm the project benefits and completion. • Thank the community for patience during construction. • Acknowledge the project achievements and contribution to the community.
Mandatory communications tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Direct mail • Email • Publications • Website • Social media • 1800 number • Media • Events • Signage
Mandatory engagement tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Community Liaison Group meeting, including a lessons learnt workshop
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community understanding and awareness of the operational aspects of the project as measured through surveys. • Sustained participation in engagement processes and interaction with project during public engagement activities.

9 Stakeholders

9.1 Stakeholder identification and analysis

The North East Link Project is of interest to a broad range of stakeholders from within the project area and the broader Melbourne and Victorian community. Identifying interested stakeholders and community groups began during the preparation of the business case and continued through an extensive Environment Effects Statement (ESS) engagement process. The project boundary extends from the north of the M80 Ring Road Greensborough bypass through to the south at Bulleen Road and along the Eastern Freeway from Chandler Highway to Middleborough Road from east to west.

The defined stakeholder groups represent broad categories of potentially impacted and interested groups within the project boundary. Detailed knowledge and analysis of how these groups are likely to be impacted by various aspects of the project will help build awareness of their relationship and sentiment towards the project and informs effective ways for NELP to communicate and engage with them.

Stakeholders are identified and managed through the project's management tool, Consultation Manager and all interactions are recorded. Enquiries and complaints are also managed through this tool which is explained further in Section 10.

Depending on delivery stage and other circumstances, stakeholder groups may change and evolve, and different approaches may be required to support engagement with impacted and interested groups.



9.2 Stakeholder groups

Stakeholder groups	Impacts	Interests	Engagement methods
Associations and Peak Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members may be affected by construction activities Shape broader public discussion about project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project impacts and benefits related to member bodies Growing influence and economic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct email Briefings Face-to-face meetings Project newsletters and EDMs Project website
Business and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential disruption from construction activities Ability to influence project decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project impacts and benefits on business and industry Changes to transport network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Liaison Groups Information sessions Face-to-face meetings Project newsletters and EDMs Project website
Community and Interest Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential disruption from construction activities Influence community perceptions, attitudes and behaviours toward project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project impacts and benefits related to specific areas of interest Opportunities to improve social inclusion and cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Liaison Groups Information sessions Pop-up sessions Watsonia Hub and Bulleen office Project website Home visits Project newsletters and EDMs
Directly affected Residents and Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruption from construction activities Changed access and parking conditions Temporary occupation/permanent land acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction management and mitigation measures Opportunities for local community infrastructure improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Face-to-face meetings Dedicated case management Phone calls Door knock Direct email communication Street meetings Information sessions
Public transport users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruption and changed travel to bus and train services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts to travel routes and times Project timeline and future disruption impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertising Road signage Direct letter Referral channels by bus and train providers/operators Social media Posters/fact sheets
Road users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruption from construction activities Detours and impacted travel times Changed access and parking conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts to travel routes and times Project timeline and future disruption impacts Alternative methods of travel and detour routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road signage Radio and TV advertising Social media Website update Project newsletters and EDMs
Education Providers – including primary and secondary schools and early learning centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruption from construction activities Changed access and parking conditions Temporary occupation/permanent land acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction management and mitigation measures Opportunities for education programs Opportunities for permanent facility improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings Pop-up sessions Site visits with students Project newsletters and EDMs

Stakeholder groups	Impacts	Impacts	Impacts
Government Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct influence over project decisions • Responsible for planning approvals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key project milestones • Statutory requirements are met • Overall project delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • Briefings • Meetings • Project website
Local Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local planning issues resulting from construction activities • Responsible for local permits and approvals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project benefits and impacts in municipality • Long-term benefits and legacy of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • Monthly meetings • Project website • Social media • Advertising
Local Traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption from construction activities • Changed access and parking conditions • Prolonged interruption threatens business viability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction management and mitigation measures • Opportunities for business support • Opportunities for precinct renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings • Door knock • Direct letter/email • Information sessions • Business group meetings • Project website • Social media • Project newsletters/EDMs
Sports and Recreation Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to users and facilities • Temporary occupation/permanent land acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable replacement facilities • Opportunities for permanent facility improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • One-on-one meetings • Project website • Project newsletter/EDM
Utility Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assets may need to be relocated or protected • Potential impacts on asset renewal plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding service disruption to clients • Opportunities for asset improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email • Meetings • Project website • Social media
Vulnerable and Culturally And Logistically Diverse Groups (CALD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential disruption from construction activities • Lack of awareness and confusion about project impacts and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of information in accessible formats • Engagement approach tailored to specific requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email/EDM • Briefings • NELP information published on referral channels where CALD audiences access news
Traditional Owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape public discussion on the project • Impact to environment and land within the project boundary • Areas of cultural significance that could be impacted through the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPRs • Construction management and mitigation measures • Opportunities for collaboration and influence • Avoiding culturally sensitive and significant sites • Opportunities for precinct renewal • Opportunities to engage the indigenous community throughout the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings • One-on-one meetings • Community Liaison Groups • Direct email
Religious and worship groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption from construction activities • Changed access and parking conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction management and mitigation measures • Suitable replacement facilities and measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door knocks • Project website • Information sessions • Project newsletters/EDMs

9.3 Community Liaison Groups

Two community liaison groups (CLG) representing the North and South of the project area have been established to provide a forum for relevant community groups to engage directly with NELP during the planning, design and construction phases of the project.

These groups will continue to function as construction commences to connect the community and relevant work phase contractor and help the CLG share project information within their community networks.

These groups are referenced in Environmental Performance Requirement SC4.

Contracting teams working across NELP's early and main works phases are required to attend community liaison group meetings to provide information about design and construction, and provide timely response to questions, issues or concerns raised by the groups. They are also required to consider and incorporate feedback, where possible, from these groups into construction staging plans to mitigate construction impacts as much as possible.

9.4 Business Liaison Groups

The North East Link Project has established two business liaison groups (BLG's) to represent the wide range of businesses in and around the project area. These groups provide a forum to hear about the project, exchange ideas and identify opportunities to work together.

The business liaison groups seek to understand concerns and needs of businesses and build up their resilience and preparedness for the construction. Their local perspective, particularly in relation to minimising and mitigating the impacts to businesses are vital through all stages of the construction. These groups address Environmental Performance Requirement B8.

Northern Business Liaison Group (NBLG)

The NBLG will consist of members from the business community in, and around the northern section of the project area, particularly across the Watsonia district. NBLG will play an important role in navigating the impacts of early works and the removal of services on businesses in the area.

Bulleen Industrial Zone (BIZ) Group

Representing businesses in the Bulleen Industrial Zone (BIZ), this group have been actively involved through the planning and approvals phase of the project and working with North East Link as the project moves into the acquisition and relocation process. This group will also ensure impacted businesses and their workers have the support measures they need throughout construction.

9.5 Approach to engaging with schools

More than 40 primary and secondary schools, early learning centres (ELCs), TAFEs and universities were engaged during the planning phase of the project. NELP attended meetings and provided briefings to school staff, councils and groups to give parents, teachers and the wider school community information about the project.

In response to issues raised by some schools, fact sheets have been developed to answer common questions about general construction impacts such as air quality, noise and vibration, and management approaches.

ELCs, primary and secondary schools near the project were also invited to participate in the Environment Effects Statement (EES) social impact assessment in 2017. Each Community Liaison Group includes a student representative studying in the project area.

All schools within to the project area were recorded in NELP's stakeholder management tool, Consultation Manager and will continue to be engaged with as the project progresses.

NELP will provide schools with project information relevant to their area, including nearby works and contribute content to school newsletters and attend school events, such as fetes, fairs and festivals to provide a forum for parents and the community to learn more about the project.

Opportunities will also be provided for schools to engage students throughout the project through site visits, show and tell sessions with project specialists and excursions across the project and to the Watsonia Hub.

9.6 Approach to engaging with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups

Victoria's Multicultural Policy sets out the Victorian Government's vision to enable every Victorian to participate fully in society, remain connected to their culture and ensure we all have equal rights, protections and opportunities.

Legislation such as the *Multicultural Victoria Act 2011*, *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001* provides a driver for ensuring inclusive communication and engagement that is accessible to all Victorians regardless of their culture or preferred language.

Projects overseen by MTIA are required to include tailored approaches that ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to receive information and participate in engagement activities regardless of where they were born or what language they speak.

NELP is required to plan and implement communication and engagement activities to reach CALD communities who are impacted (or potentially impacted) by major transport infrastructure works in Victoria through the MTIA CALD Communication and Engagement toolkit.

The toolkit comprises a CALD engagement strategy template, a series of reference sheets providing practical guidance on CALD media in Victoria, CALD audience segmentation by municipality, key sources of information about CALD audiences and how to identify and utilise CALD suppliers. The toolkit also includes case studies showcasing approaches to CALD engagement from other MTIA project.

A CALD Engagement Strategy has been developed for the North East Link Project based on the MTIA toolkit.

CALD engagement to date

NELP engaged Cultural and Linguistically Diverse Groups in the planning phase of the project in 2017 to ensure communities with targeted needs and hard to reach communities had the opportunity to be involved in the selection of the project corridor and the Environment Effects Statement process.

Engagement with CALD communities was facilitated via cultural leaders in the project area and via support agencies including Expression Australia (formerly known as VicDeaf) and Blind Citizens Australia. NELP project major information displays through Expression Australia's channels, including online and social platforms and its subscriber database, and provided Auslan interpreters at agreed displays. Community engagement activities were promoted through Blind Citizens Australia's online mailing list and teleconferences on the project were offered to interested community members.

Throughout the planning phase, materials about the project and how to get involved in the EES process were translated into the top five languages other than English in the project area: Chinese, Greek, Italian, Arabic and Farsi. Materials were also translated into other languages requested by cultural leaders including Burmese, Hindi and Macedonian. This approach will continue throughout the project.

CALD engagement approach moving forward

NELP will continue to engage with CALD communities and cultural leaders throughout early works and major construction phases of the project and consider the following channels for communications and engagement:

- Translated or multilingual printed collateral such as brochures and posters placed in community spaces
- Seminars, workshops or meetings with key community leaders
- Pop-up events or information stalls in community spaces
- Sponsoring or participating in community events such as community meetings, festivals and celebrations
- Providing multilingual information in direct mail to residents
- Media relations – seeking stories in CALD newspapers and on radio
- Advertising – paid promotion in relevant CALD publications
- Taking translated information along when conducting in-person engagement via door knocking
- Social media marketing
- Online resources provide materials in languages other than English.

Where appropriate, NELP will provide Auslan interpreters at information sessions to ensure CALD communities are informed of key project information, milestones and disruptions.

NELP will continue to publish details of the translation service for languages other than English on all printed materials and on the 'Contact' page of the NELP website. Interpreter services are also available on (03) 9679 9896. The project will also continue to ensure accessibility services are provided for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment through the National Relay Service on 1800 555 630.

10 Managing disruptions

As with all construction projects, there will be some impacts to the community including increased noise, dust or vibration. These impacts may be caused by use of heavy machinery, ongoing site activities or the removal and transport of excavated material.

NELP together with construction teams are committed to keeping the community informed and reducing the impact of early works and major construction as much as possible.

As part of the Environment Effects Statement (EES) process, a number of requirements were put in place to help manage the impacts of construction on the community and the environment. These measures are called Environmental Performance Requirements (EPR) and define the outcomes that contractors

must achieve during the design, construction and ongoing operation of the project.

EPRs are one way the project and its contractors will manage the impacts of construction. Reports detailing performance and compliance with EPRs will be published every six months on the NELP website. These reports will be independently verified by an Independent Environment Auditor.

10.1 Disruptive works

Disruptive works may include activities that generate noise, vibration, dust or light impacts during normal construction hours or outside of normal construction hours.

Normal construction hours of work are considered to be from 7am to 6pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 7am to 1pm. Due to the complex nature of the project, some construction activities will need to be carried out outside of the above hours.

Works out of hours may occur due to:

- The delivery of oversized plant or structures that police or other authorities determine require special arrangements to transport along public roads
- Emergency work to avoid the loss of life or damage to property, or to prevent environmental harm
- Maintenance and repair of public infrastructure where disruption to essential services and/or considerations of worker safety do not allow work within standard hours
- Tunnelling works including mined excavation elements and the activities that are required to support tunnelling works (i.e. spoil treatment facilities)
- Road and rail occupations or works that would cause a major traffic hazard
- Other works where a contractor demonstrates and justifies a need to operate outside normal working hours and exceed the noise guideline targets such as work that once started cannot practically be stopped.

Out of hours works (also called unavoidable works) are described in Environmental Performance Requirement NV4 and will be verified by the Independent Environmental Auditor for each instance they are undertaken.

NELP will work with contractor teams to identify opportunities to reduce the impact of construction on the community and be sensitive to local roads, shopping areas, schools, places of worship and businesses.

Construction compounds will be set up near work areas to provide nearby offices and parking options to keep workers from parking on local streets and in local shopping areas. Each significant construction compound across the project must be required to be delivered in accordance with a Construction Compound Plan approved by the Minister for Planning. The Construction Compound Plan will describe all proposed activities, hours of operation, potential environmental and community impacts (including mitigation and management controls) associated with their construction and operation.

10.2 Notifying the community of works

Written and online notifications will be provided to residents, businesses, schools, community and sporting groups, cyclists and public transport users ten days prior to activities that may cause disruption. Events that may trigger a notification include new construction activities, traffic disruptions, temporary detours, night works, noisy works, property access restrictions and temporary changes or disruptions to public transport routes.

Works notifications will include:

1. a full description of the relevant works;
2. the times and durations of the relevant disruptions;
3. the expected impact of the works on their properties or access;
4. alternative access arrangements; and
5. North East Link Project contact details, including the North East Link Project Information Line, **1800 105 105**, social media accounts, translations service telephone number and website;

Works notifications will be distributed via a number of methods including:

- Mail – hard copy works notifications letters will be mailed to impacted residents and stakeholders.
- Email – an electronic works notification will be sent to impacted residents and stakeholders who have subscribed to NELP's database.

- Website – a copy of an electronic works notification will be posted on the NELP website.
- EDM – an email newsletter will be sent to the NELP subscriber database collating all works notifications of the week.
- Information hubs – hard copy works notifications will be available at the Watsonia Hub, 17 Watsonia Road, Watsonia and Bulleen Office, 7A Kim Close, Bulleen.

A record of all works notifications distributed to the community and/or stakeholders will be recorded in the stakeholder management database, Consultation Manager.

10.3 Managing noise, vibration, dust and light impacts during construction

The project will adhere to EPR NV4 Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan which requires implementation of a Construction, Noise and Vibration Management Plan to minimise the impacts of noise and vibration as a result of construction works. As required in EPR NV4 a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan will be implemented which will include noise and vibration management levels and mitigation measures.

Noise modelling will be completed in accordance with approval requirements to determine potential impacts to residents and nearby stakeholders. When works begin, noise control equipment may be used to measure and monitor sound from machinery and tools to ensure EPR compliance.

In instances where noise exceeds target levels such as noise blankets could be put in place to mitigate.

Dust resulting from the removal of soil and transit of construction materials will be managed using a number of mitigations including, but not limited to:

- water suppression through the use water carts and hoses
- covering of dirt loads on trucks when transporting excavated material

- rumble grills on roads to remove dirt from tyres and reduce the transfer of dirt on local roads; and
- other dust suppressants.

Where works are required to be carried out at night, construction lighting is used so work can be performed safely. Pre-construction planning will be undertaken to ensure that the potential for light spill into nearby properties, particularly residential properties, is minimised (as required by EPR LV3).

10.4 Managing traffic conditions

Due to the large-scale nature of work, traffic conditions will be significantly impacted throughout early works and major construction.

A Traffic Management Liaison Group (TMLG) has been formed to coordinate and reduce traffic impacts for each construction activity throughout the project in order to meet the requirements of EPR T3. The TMLG is chaired by NELP and consists of transport agencies including the Department of Transport, Public Transport Victoria, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs Transport, Precincts and Resources, relevant local councils, emergency services agencies, other MTIA projects as required and the project's contractor teams.

The TMLG will recommend alternatives and mitigation measures to contracting teams to investigate and implement so works

can be scheduled at times when they will have the least impact, lane closures and road closures are avoided and detours minimised.

In the event of highly disruptive works, NELP together with contracting teams will notify impacted residents, stakeholders and road users of the planned works at least seven days before they occur and implement on-the-ground signage and traffic management throughout the disruption and offer short-term or longer-term relocation options where appropriate.

10.5 Incident and emergency communications

In the event of an incident or emergency related to the project, a range of tools and communications channels will be used to inform the community and stakeholders as appropriate.

Every effort will be made to provide this information as quickly (within hours) and accurately as possible in coordination with emergency services, State Government agencies, local councils and other key stakeholders as appropriate.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the following notifications methods could be employed: SMS alert, phone call, email notification or EDM, direct door knock, website and social media update, radio message or other.

11 Enquiries and complaints

In accordance with AS/NZS 10002-2014 Guidelines for Complaint Management in organisations, Consultation Manager, an online stakeholder management system will be used as the register for all complaints and enquiries received by residents and stakeholders. Consultation Manager will be used by NELP personnel who interact with residents and stakeholders, early works contractor CPB Contractors and major construction works contractor when appointed.

We take a three-tiered approach to complaint handling, as follows:

1. **Frontline resolution:** frontline staff receive the complaint, assess it, and resolve it immediately, if possible.
2. **Investigation,** if required: if frontline staff cannot resolve the complaint, they will refer it to an officer for investigation.
3. **Internal review,** if required: if the complainant is not satisfied with the process or outcome of the frontline resolution and/or investigation, they can request an internal review.

Each enquiry of complaint entry might typically include the following information:

- **Event type:** Enquiry or Complaint
- **Event date:** the date/time the enquiry/complaint was received
- **Origination:** where the enquiry/complaint was received
- **Stakeholder comments:** details of the enquiry/complaint
- **Response:** details of any actions undertaken or proposed

Information collected for the purpose of resolving enquiries and complaints is subject to the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic).

Records, comments and other information stored in the stakeholder management system will not be publicly available without the written consent of the individuals concerned. NELP and contractor teams will take reasonable steps to make sure individuals' personal information is accurate, complete and up to date.

The enquiries and complaints handling process is in line with the Major Transport Infrastructure Authority (MTIA) complaints management framework for all major transport projects, and will be monitored and review on an ongoing basis for effectiveness and amended as appropriate.

Methods for making enquiries and complaints are available on the NELP website and can be made via:

- Direct mail to North East Link Project, GPO Box 2392, Melbourne VIC 3001
- A direct message on social media via NELP's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages
- In person at Watsonia Hub, 17 Watsonia Road, Watsonia, Monday to Friday between 10am and 5pm; and Bulleen Office, 7A Kim Close, Bulleen, Monday to Friday between 9am and 4.30pm
- By contacting our call centre on **1800 105 105** or emailing **community@northeastlink.vic.gov.au**
- By posting a question via the Engage Victoria website on the dedicated North East Link Project page: **engage.vic.gov.au/north-east-link**
- For people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, accessibility services are available through National Relay Service on **1800 555 630**.
- For Languages Other Than English (LOTE), interpreter services are available on **(03) 9679 9896**.

Where enquiries and complaints are received by NELP from the referral of other government agencies, NELP will work with the referral agency to provide an appropriate response within a timely manner.

12 Evaluation

The Communications and Engagement team together with project teams across NELP and contracting teams will review performance on a quarterly basis through a combination of methods:

- regular discussions with local stakeholders
- review of local community feedback to improve communications and engagement approached
- analysis of digital channels e.g. visits to the NELP website, enquiries to call centre, visits to Watsonia Hub and Bulleen Office, engagement of social media channels including likes, comments, shares and views
- annual information sharing meeting with other MTIA projects.

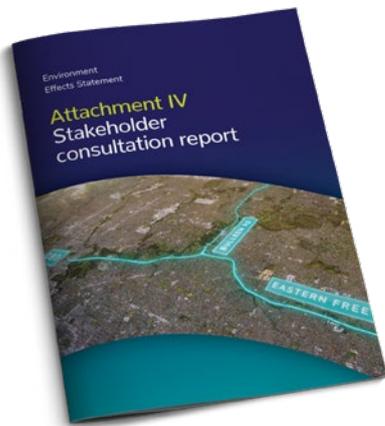
North East Link will also be evaluated and audited by the Independent Environment Auditor (IEA) through all phases of the project to ensure compliance with Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) and mitigation approaches as required by the Environmental Management Framework. This will include six monthly summary reports released by the IEA and published on the NELP website.

Where opportunities to improve are identified or new tools and technologies are introduced in the external market, NELP will work proactively to pursue and utilise to deliver best practice communications and engagement throughout the project.



13 Appendix

13.1 Phase One



Planning, Environmental Effects Statement, Stakeholder Consultation Report

 Click on images to view document

13.2



Complaints Handling Policy

Contact us

community@northeastlink.vic.gov.au
1800 105 105

NELP GPO Box 2392, Melbourne VIC 3001
Hub 17 Watsonia Rd, Watsonia VIC 3087

Follow us on social media @nelpvic



Translation service
For languages other than English,
please call 03 9209 0147

Please contact us if you would like this
information in an accessible format.

If you need assistance because of a hearing or
speech impairment, please visit relayservice.gov.au