



JUNE 2022

Bellarine Link

Stage 1: Surf Coast Highway – Barwon Heads Road

Community Engagement Summary Report



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Executive summary

Community engagement for the Geelong Ring Road Extension (Bellarine Link) Stage 1: Surf Coast Highway to Barwon Heads Road was hosted online on the Victorian Government engagement platform, Engage Victoria, from 29 November to 14 December 2021.

Engagement was undertaken to better understand sentiment for the proposed future Bellarine Link stage 1, how the community currently travels around the area, including their views on access, efficiency, and safety, as well as provide insight into views on active transport, environment, landscape and what is important to them in the local area.

The engagement was promoted through digital channels, social media, and flyers letterbox dropped to 5500 properties.

There were 225 contributions made to the community surveys and 63 contributions on the interactive map on the Engage Victoria project webpage. There were 7811 visits made to the project page on the Engage Victoria web page and almost 120,000 reached by Facebook and Instagram geotargeted advertisements.

Feedback from respondents highlighted that the potential future Bellarine Link stage 1 would provide a safer, faster and more direct route to their destination. An efficient transport network that provides proximity to Geelong and the Bellarine is strongly valued by the community.

Community sentiment towards the potential future Bellarine Link is extremely positive, with 91% of respondents supportive.

Engagement background

An important component of the development of the Bellarine Link Stage 1: Surf Coast Highway to Barwon Heads Road Business Case is to provide an analysis of community sentiment to inform social benefits and potential risks. Understanding the traffic movements and views of local road users as well as pedestrians and cyclists provides valuable data for consideration in the development of design options.

Engagement purpose

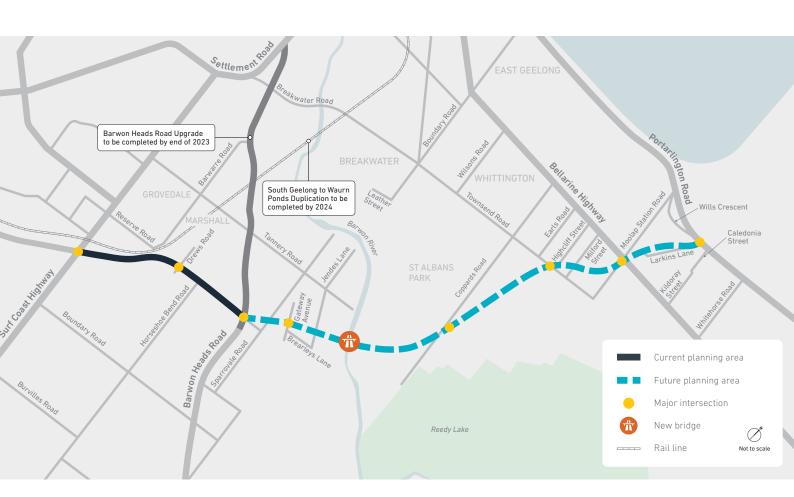
The engagement provided an opportunity to hear from the community on current issues and concerns about the potential future Bellarine Link stage 1, support the key problems identified in the Business Case and help inform project planning and decisionmaking regarding design options.

The objectives of the engagement were to:

- identify key stakeholders, their interest, needs, concerns and support required
- obtain information on how people use the road network, including their views on access, efficiency, safety and traffic flow in the local area
- obtain information on what's important in the local community as well as insights on active transport, environment, and landscape
- identify existing problems and potential benefits of a Bellarine Link stage 1
- understand community sentiment, social benefits, and risks.

Below

Figure 1: Proposed future Bellarine Link Stage 1: Surf Coast Highway to Barwon Heads Road



Engagement tactics

MRPV uses the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) engagement spectrum (Figure 2) and has been guided by the core values listed below to assist in the design of the community engagement program to inform the engagement for the Bellarine Link Business Case.

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.

Right

Figure 2: International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) engagement spectrum

- Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognising and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.



Engagement was hosted online on the Victorian Government engagement platform, Engage Victoria, from **29 November to 14 December 2021**. The engagement was undertaken via a community survey and interactive map tool outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Engagement tools

Community survey

The survey was available online on the Engage Victoria platform to understand how the community currently use the local road network, including their views on access, efficiency, safety, active transport and landscaping. The survey took up to 10 minutes to complete.

Hard copy surveys were provided to residents in the direct project area, available for download on the Engage Victoria webpage and posted to community members who requested them via mail. They were also available at a pop-up held on 10 December 2021.

Interactive map

The interactive map highlighted the area of the potential future Bellarine Link stage 1 and enabled the community to provide feedback by dropping pins to identify what was important to them in the local area and ideas/concerns related to the proposed road.

The engagement was promoted through a variety of channels outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Promotional communications

Letter	A letter and hard copy survey was delivered to approximately 5500 residents in proximity of the Bellarine Link stage 1 investigation area.		
DL flyer	 A DL flyer was delivered to residents and businesses in the following postcodes: 3217 (Mt Duneed, Armstrong Creek) 3227 (Connewarre) 3216 (Waurn Ponds) 		
MRPV Website	A news item was published on the N	MRPV website.	
Briefings	Darren Cheeseman MP, Christine Couzens MP, and The Hon. Lisa Neville MP, City of Greater Geelong and key stakeholders, including, the Wadawurrung, Bellarine Catchment Network, Armstrong Technical Reference Group, G21 Alliance and the Committee for Geelong were briefed via email to provide an update on the project and seek support in sharing the engagement opportunity.		
Social media		In was run on Facebook and Instagram ost on each platform was geotargeted to Creek and Grovedale areas. Instagram campaign results Feed Reach: 41,886 Impressions: 147,426 Reactions/Likes: 102 Comments: 17 Shares: 14 Link Clicks: 1,059	
		Story Reach: 41,886 Impressions: 147,426 Reactions/Likes: 102 Comments: 17 Shares: 14 Link Clicks: 1,059	

What we heard

There was a total of **7811** visits to the Engage Victoria project webpage and **288** contributions made by **226** unique contributors via the participation tools available on the site.

Feedback from respondents highlighted the need for the potential upgrade to improve safety, traffic flow and congestion for those travelling in the local area. Feedback from respondents highlighted that the Bellarine Link stage 1 is needed to provide a safer, faster and more direct route to their destination.

Community survey

The community survey received responses from **226** unique stakeholders. Approximately 82% of all online community survey respondents live or work in the local area.

The four most common postcodes of online community survey respondents came from Armstrong Creek, Mount Duneed, Charlemont, Freshwater Creek 3217 (39%), Belmont, Highton, Grovedale, Waurn Ponds, Geelong, Wandana Heights, Marshall 3216 (25.7%), Leopold, Moolap, Geelong 3224 (16%) Portarlington, Saint Leonards, Indented Head, Bellarine 3223 (6.6%).

The other 10 participating postcodes were: 3614, 3240, 3227, 3228, 3219, 3222, 3218, 3215, 3030 and 3123.

LIVE IN THE AREA

22% WORK IN THE AREA

TRAVEL THROUGH THE AREA

Community sentiment

Community sentiment towards the project is extremely positive, with 91% of respondents supportive of a Bellarine Link stage 1 and 9% not supportive. When asked why, respondents noted it would create a "faster, safer and more direct route" to their destination and will take pressure off the surrounding roads which are not equipped to deal with current vehicle volumes. Of those who were not supportive, most respondents said that it will not align with their destination, or they do not want to end up on Barwon Heads Road as it is too busy.

Many respondents believe it will save them travel time and provide infrastructure that will cater to the population growth in the region. Of the **9%** who are not supportive, the most common reasons provided are the lack of need for it or the impact to the environment.

Feedback also indicated respondents would like to see a reduction in travel time delays by alleviating congestion, particularly during peakhours and on weekends.

Respondents said they felt frustrated at the lack of infrastructure planning in the area given the amount of residential development that has occurred.

Several respondents noted the Bellarine Link stage 1 should be at least dual lane to accommodate future growth and be further extended to Portarlington Road.

"The Bellarine Link ring road extension will unlock enormous benefits and opportunities for the Bellarine once completed. Travel times of 45 minutes - 1 hour have the possibility to be significantly reduced to a much more enticing 30 mins - 45 minutes which will provide residents greater incentive to support not only the surf coast but the bellarine region."

Traffic and transport

The main concerns for respondents when travelling through the local area is congestion, traffic flow and safety. Other concerns noted by respondents included the insufficient pedestrian and cycling paths in the area. Several respondents also reported concerns regarding driver behaviour with frustrated and confused drivers making dangerous decisions putting others at risk.

75% of respondents enter or exit the Geelong Ring Road via Baanip Boulevard and 42% typically use Baanip Boulevard between 9am–3pm (Figure 3). Of these respondents, 60% are usually travelling northbound and 40% southbound.

Figure 3

The time of day drivers are typically using Baanip Boulevard

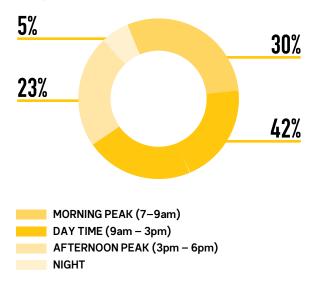
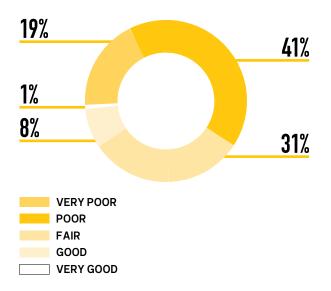


Figure 4Drivers rate traffic flow on Surf Coast Highway



To get from Baanip Boulevard to Barwon Heads Road 47% of respondents use Boundary Road and 33% use Reserve Road. 93% of respondents travel along the Surf Coast Highway and rate traffic flow poor or very poor (60%) Figure 4. Several respondents said they avoid the area and use other local roads such as, Reserve Road, Barwarre Road and Lower Mount Duneed Road to get to their destination.



"I currently drive through Geelong over the breakwater bridge 2 times per weekend every fortnight. The ring road extension to Portarlington Road would save time and also avoid stop start traffic. Currently driving from near wombat gully plant farm to the Waurn Ponds entry onto the ring road can take over 25–30 minutes in peak times."

88% of respondents said they would use the potential future Bellarine Link stage 1: Surf Coast Highway to Barwon Heads Road.



"Help the flow of traffic along Torquay Road, Barwon Heads Road and all the smaller roads in the district. Should make the roads all safer, allow ambulances better access to all areas."

"I believe this is the long-overdue next step for what should become a link between the Bellarine Peninsula and Melbourne, bypassing Geelong entirely, which will significantly ease congestion in Geelong. This should have been built before the high growth area in Armstrong Creek even started building."

"This is the missing link"



"So much traffic around the area and only increasing with Armstrong creek area. Infrastructure needs to improve to decrease travel times and improve road safety."

Survey respondent

Safety

4.1% of respondents reported they felt very safe when travelling along the Surf Coast, 34.7% felt safe, 37.5% felt neither safe or unsafe, 17.5% felt unsafe, while 6% said they felt very unsafe. (Figure 5).

Traffic congestion and travel delays which led to poor driver behaviours was noted multiple times in feedback from respondents as a reason for feeling unsafe.

Active transport

When asked about active transport 43% of respondents said that they walked or cycled in the local area (Figure 6). Of those 39% do so weekly, 32% occasionally and 27% daily (Figure 7). Of these respondents, 71% said they enjoy walking and cycling, while the 29% who don't, noted safety (86%), access (57%) and amenity (39%) as their biggest concerns.

Respondents described the current cycling and walking paths as inadequate and would like better connections in the area. Many said the surface was usually uneven and the area was unsafe particularly for cyclists with limited cycling paths. Others said they feel unsafe sharing the road with cars and trucks.

Pedestrian bridges, pedestrian and all abilities accessible crossings, better lighting, and dedicated walking and cycling paths are desired. Some respondents noted once these improvements are made, they would be more inclined to walk or cycle in the area.

Figure 5
Safety conditions on Surf Coast Highway

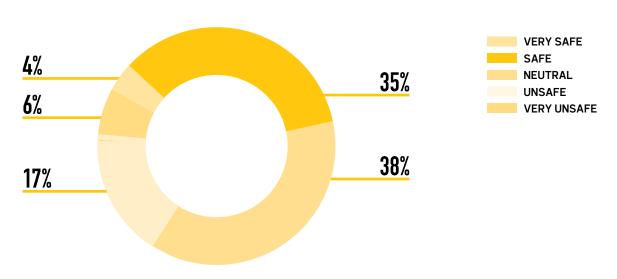
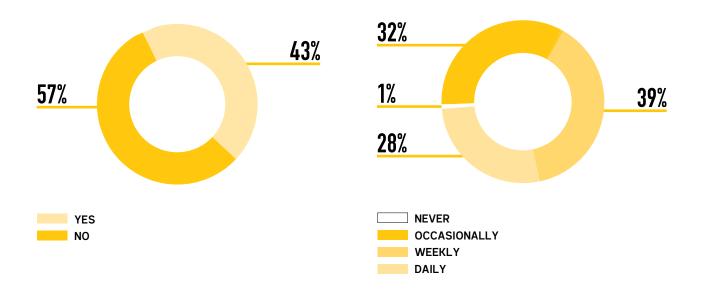


Figure 6
Walking and cycling in the area

Figure 7
How many times a week respondents walk and cycle in the area





"An active transport trail separated from road traffic should be provided along the entire length of the Bellarine Link, not only to connect to the Bellarine Rail Trail, but also to be part of a comprehensive network of interconnected cycling and walking trails such that the Bellarine becomes an internationally recognised tourist destination for recreational walkers and cyclists.:

— This trail network to include: — A Bay Coastal Trail from Geelong to Portarlington to Queenscliff."

Inadequate walking/cycling trails in the area. There aren't many footpaths in the Boundary Road area that I live in and there aren't any shoulders on the road which makes cycling dangerous. The condition of the roads is generally poor in the area

Landscaping and visual amenity

Respondents value proximity to Geelong and the Bellarine most about the local area (84%) and would like to see the replanting of shrubs and trees along the roadside (69%) and minimising of noise (58%) from a landscaping and noise perspective (Figure 8 and 9).

Respondents also valued the many public open spaces (43%), want there to be minimal vegetation removal (46%) and would like consideration given to integrating cultural heritage into any future works (37%).

Figure 8
Values of the local community

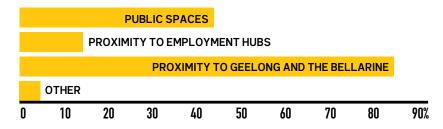
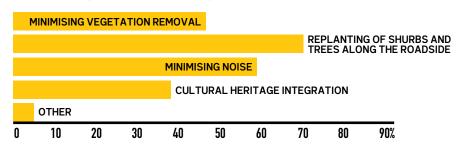


Figure 9
Landscaping and visual amenity considerations



Many respondents noted concerns regarding an increase in noise that would result from the new road. Several commented that noise barriers and trees and shrubs should be used where possible to reduce noise on neighboring residential areas.



"No increase to noise from road to existing residents. The road should be well planted with trees and shrubs and good ped paths provided along the road and across the road at various locations."

"Absolutely I am 100% all for the extension, however I would want noise barriers installed as I will be living about 200m from this road."

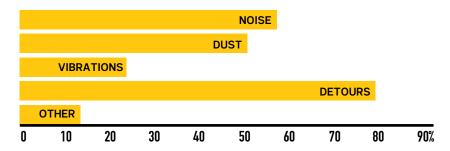
Construction impacts

When asked what should be considered from a construction perspective, respondents said detours (79%), noise (57%) and dust (50%) (Figure 10).

Many respondents commented that consideration should also be given to the influx of summer tourists and the impact this has on the road network and that traffic disruptions should be minimised during this time.

Consideration should also be given to when power and internet disruptions are planned given many people work from home, as well as avoiding multiple road closures in the same area at the same time. Many said they would like to be informed early and often of planned disruptions.

Figure 10 What should we consider when planning for potential construction impacts?



Baanip Boulevard connection

There is strong community desire for Baanip Boulevard to be upgraded to two lanes to provide a better connection to the new Bellarine Link (despite this being outside the Bellarine Link project scope). Many survey respondents and those who left comments on social media posts raised concerns that the dual lane Bellarine Link will then feed into a single lane on Baanip Boulevard creating an unsafe area, further congestion, and traffic delays.



"Baanip Boulevard is only 1 lane in each direction. I think allowance should be made to have future provision for duplication of the road."

'Baanip Boulevard between Ghazeepore Rd and Surf Coast Hwy needs to be duplicated as it's already getting busy and the bellarine link of the ring road will create more traffic flow along the road."

'Baanip bld was a mistake by having it single lane. It's a nightmare when travelling along doing 50kmph because someone up front holding miles of traffic up."



Interactive Map

The most common themes and issues captured from the 63 interactive map pins placed include:

- the community would like clarity around Reserve Road access arrangements. They strongly suggest Reserve Road should maintain access. This is to ensure easy access from across the rail line through to Barwon Heads Road, Charlemont and Armstrong Creek
- consider an overpass on Surf Coast Highway to aid traffic on Torquay Road
- Surf Coast Highway has too many traffic lights
- concerns regarding the impact to established trees and frog habitat
- a dedicated shared user path should be delivered with the new road link to connect to destinations outlined in the Marshall Precinct Structure Plan
- concerns around the connection to Baanip Boulevard which would result in 2 lanes merging into 1 lane.
 Community would like to see this road also upgraded to two lanes for consistency through to the Geelong Ring Road.

Pop-up

A community engagement pop up was held on Thursday 10 December 2021 at The Village Warralily Shopping Centre.

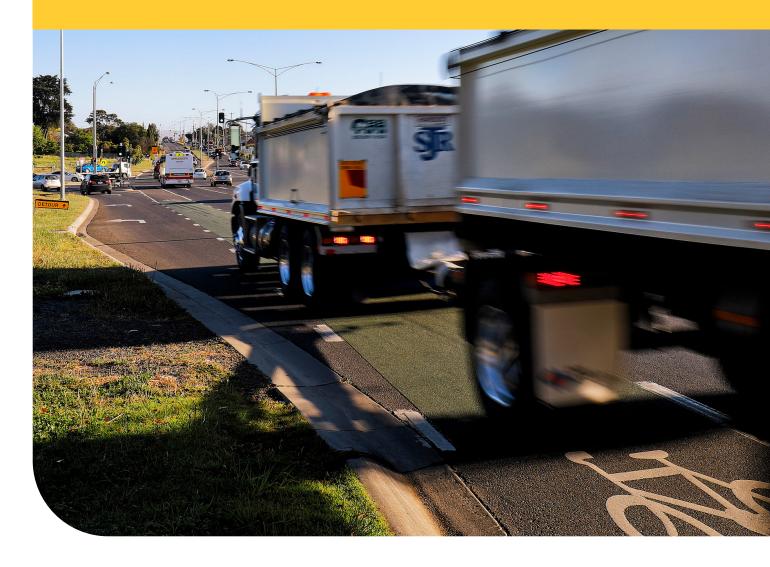
An email was sent to 2150 subscribers to inform them of the pop-up. The project team engaged with approx. 46 community members over a two-hour period.

Feedback was received from stakeholders concerning traffic, environmental and planning issues. Specifically, feedback from several stakeholders living near the future planning area (stage 2) as follows:

- community expressed a strong desire for an eastwest connection from Waurn Ponds to the Bellarine
- community expressed strong sentiments regarding lack of communication following VicRoads consultation regarding route options in 2017
- community is seeking certainty regarding land acquisition/land and planning, namely in the Moolap area which is in the investigation area for future stages of the Bellarine Link (Barwon Heads Rd to Portarlington Rd).

Conclusion

There is exceptionally strong support for the Bellarine Link stage 1 to address current issues including safety, poor traffic flow and congestion. A diverse range of feedback has been received to inform project planning and the development and refinement of design options.



Attachment 1



Community insights survey

To help inform our planning we'd like to hear how you travel around the area as well as your thoughts on access, efficiency, and safety. We're also considering a range of planning and environmental matters and want to understand what's important in the local area.

Your feedback will build on previous engagement conducted by VicRoads to understand community views on route options and the preferred road alignment.

By submitting this form, you consent to the collection of your personal information. For more information, please visit roadprojects.vic.gov.au/privacy

- 1. Do you enter or exit Geelong Ring Road via Baanip Boulevard?
- O Yes
- O No

- 2. How do you identify?
 - O Male
 - O Female
 - O Prefer to self describe
 - O Prefer not to say
- 3. Which of the following best describes you? (Select all that apply)
 - O I live in the area
 - $\ensuremath{\bigcirc}$ I work in the area
 - O I ride through the area
 - O I am a tourist to the area
 - O I commute through the area
 - O I travel through the area for other purposes (visit family, friends, use local parks etc)
- 4. If you live in the area, which postcode do you live in?
- 5. If you work in the area, which postcode do you work in?

- 6. How often do you use Baanip Boulevard to enter or exit Geelong Ring Road?
 - O Daily
- O Weekly
- Fortnightly
- O Monthly
- O Never
- 7. When you use Baanip Boulevard to enter or exit Geelong Ring Road, where are you usually travelling to? (Select all that apply)

Northbound

- O Melbourne CBD, northern or eastern metropolitan suburbs
- Western or Eastern Regional Victoria (e.g. Ballarat; Mornington Peninsula)
- Interstate
- \bigcirc Other (Please specify below)

Southbound

- O Bellarine Peninsula
- O Southern or Western Regional Victoria (e.g. Warnambool)
- O Interstate
- Other (Please specify below)

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B. What time of day do you usually use Baanip Boulevard?	14. Do you enjoy walking or cycling in the area?	What should be considered from a landscaping, look and feel and
O Morning peak (7am-9am)	O Yes	noise perspective? (i.e. minimising
O Day time (9am–3pm)	○ No	vegetation removal, replanting of shrubs and trees along roadside,
O Afternoon peak (3pm-6pm)	3	shrubs and trees along roadside, minimising noise, cultural heritage
Night (6pm-6am)	If no, why not?	integration)
	O Safety	
9. How do you currently get from Baanip Boulevard to Barwon Heads Road?	AccessAmenity	
O Reserve Road	Other (Please specify below)	
O Boundary Road		
Other (Please specify below)	15. Would you use the potential future Geelong Ring Road extension between Baanip Boulevard and	
10. Do you travel along the Surf Coast Highway?	Barwon Heads Road?	
	○ Yes	19. What should be considered with
O Yes	○ No	regards to protecting and minimising
O No	16. Are you supportive of the	impacts to the local environment
11. How would you rate traffic flow along the Surf Coast Highway?	proposed extension of Geelong Ring Road between Baanip	(including local flora and fauna etc)?
O Very Poor	Boulevard (Surf Coast Highway)	
O Poor	and Barwon Heads Road?	
○ Fair	O Supportive	-
○ Good	Not supportive	
O Very good	If yes, why are you supportive? If not, why are you not supportive?	
12. Do you feel safe when travelling along the Surf Coast Highway?	in not, why are you not supportive.	
O Very safe		20 Daylor have any firmthan assuments
○ Safe		20. Do you have any further comments with regard to this potential extension
○ Neutral		of the Geelong Ring Road?
○ Unsafe		
O Very unsafe		
13. Do you walk or cycle in the area?		
○ Yes		
○ No		
If yes, how many times a week would you walk and/or cycle in the local area?	17. What do you value about the local area (i.e., public spaces, proximity to employment hubs, proximity to Geelong and the Bellarine, etc.)	
O Daily	occiong and the bettarine, etc.,	
O Weekly		
Occassionally		
O Never		
If no, why not?		The survey is completely anonymous.
		We'll share a summary of the results with you on roadprojects.vic.gov.au Once complete, send your survey to contact@roadprojects.vic.gov.au or
		Major Road Projects Victoria GPO Box 4509 Melbourne Victoria 3001

Contact us

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Attachment 2



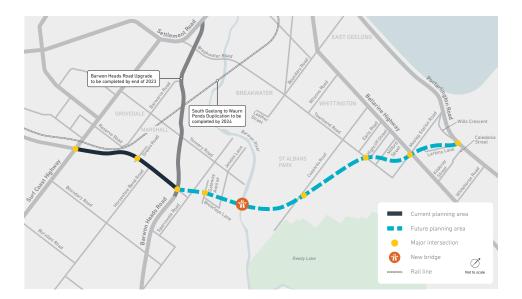
26/11/21

Dear Resident / Business Owner,

Geelong Ring Road Extension (Bellarine Link)

The Victorian Government is progressing planning for the potential future Geelong Ring Road Extension (Bellarine Link), between Baanip Boulevard and Barwon Heads Road.

Major Road Projects Victoria is currently undertaking planning and development work including traffic modelling, planning studies, environmental investigations and social studies. Timelines and milestones will be determined through this planning work and a Business Case is being developed.



Have your say

To help inform our planning we'd like to hear how you travel around the area as well as your thoughts on access, efficiency, and safety. We're also considering a range of planning and environmental matters and want to understand what's important in the local area.



To get involved, visit engage.vic.gov.au/geelong-ring-road-extension-bellarine-link until Tuesday 14 December 2021.

Here you can provide feedback by completing a survey or by dropping a pin on our interactive map. We have attached a hard copy survey for your convenience.

Your feedback will help inform our planning and shape the development of design options. It will build on previous engagement conducted by VicRoads on route options and the preferred road alignment.

Further information

For more information please contact us on 1800 105 105 or email contact@roadprojects.vic.gov.au

We'll continue to provide you with updates and information as planning progresses.

Kind Regards,

Major Road Projects Victoria Development Team





contact@roadprojects.vic.gov.au 1800 105 105 roadprojects.vic.gov.au

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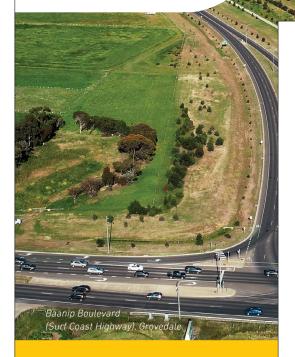
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VICTORIA'S

Attachment 3





GEELONG RING ROAD EXTENSION (BELLARINE LINK)

Have your say





Planning is progressing for the potential future Geelong Ring Road Extension (Bellarine Link). between Baanip Boulevard and Barwon Heads Road.

To help inform our planning we'd like to hear how you travel around the area as well as your thoughts on access, efficiency, and safety. We're also considering a range of planning and environmental matters and want to understand what's important in the local area.



To have your say, scan the QR code or visit engage.vic.gov.au/geelong -ring-road-extension-bellarine-link until Tuesday 14 December 2021.

For more information about the Geelong Ring Road Extension (Bellarine Link), visit roadprojects.vic.gov.au/projects/geelong -ring-road-extension-bellarine-link

roadprojects.vic.gov.au

contact@roadprojects.vic.gov.au 1800 105 105

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