

Community

EES study update | September 2018



EES STUDY AREAS INCLUDED IN THIS FACTSHEET:

Social and community; Landscape and visual; Business;
Aboriginal cultural heritage; and Historic heritage

North East Link will get trucks and through-traffic out of our suburbs and onto freeways where they belong. It will also deliver 25 kilometres of new walking and cycling paths and Doncaster Busway – Melbourne’s first dedicated high-speed busway.

Green bridges and walking and cycling links next to Greensborough Road. Artist impression only. Subject to change.

Planning approvals for North East Link will be informed by an Environment Effects Statement (EES) – our state’s most stringent and transparent transparent impact assessment process.

The EES covers 18 different study areas and provides a comprehensive framework for assessing potential social, heritage, economic and business impacts as well as Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Feedback from communities is helping to inform this work, particularly to ensure our planning is considering areas of community concern.

This fact sheet provides answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about how impacts on communities are being considered.

The EES reports, including detailed findings from our technical studies will be on display for public comment early next year.



What we’ve heard so far

From speaking with communities, we’ve heard you’re most interested to know more about how the following areas are being considered in planning North East Link.

- Local connectivity – How you move around local areas and between places like schools, shops and parks by car, public transport, bicycle and on foot.
- Local character - Changes to the look and feel of local areas.
- Community spaces and places - Changes to open spaces like parks, sports clubs and fields and impacts on community places like schools.
- Business - Impacts on businesses, particularly how businesses that could be acquired are being looked after.
- Culture and history - Impacts on places with cultural or historic value, including places that are culturally significant for Traditional Owners and how cultural and historic heritage is being considered in the project design.



More than 5 km of North East Link will be built in tunnel to minimise impacts to public open space, community facilities and residential areas. Surface works are being designed to use existing road space or road reserve where possible.

Ways we are working to minimise impacts on communities



Meeting and speaking one-on-one with local residents, schools, sporting clubs and community groups to gain a deeper understanding of community values and concerns



Working with councils, club owners and other stakeholders to develop a **plan for Bulleen Park**



Working with Banyule council, communities and other stakeholders to develop a **precinct plan for Watsonia station and shops**



Providing resources to support the **Bulleen industrial zone**.



Working closely with the Wurundjeri to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and values.



Developing an Urban Design Strategy that responds to local character

Local connectivity

A key objective of North East Link is to make local neighbourhoods safer and easier to get around.

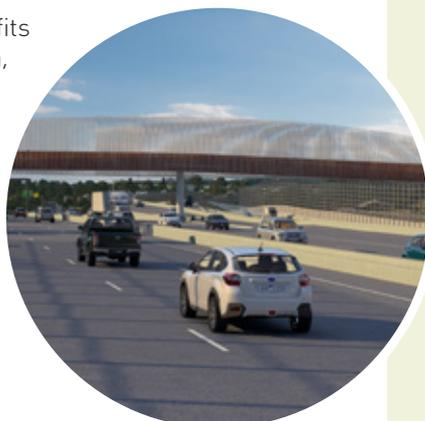
This includes reducing congestion, getting trucks off residential roads, improving public transport services and improving walking and cycling connections.

As well as looking at how to maintain or improve connectivity through project design, impact assessment specialists have been holding small-group workshops with residents across the project area to gain a deeper understanding of how North East Link could change how people move through their communities and access shops, schools, parks and key services.

Our social impact specialists are considering and assessing changes to connectivity during construction and once North East Link is built.

This includes understanding community frustrations with existing connectivity, concerns about changes to existing connections and opportunities for improvement.

As the nature and extent of social impacts and benefits is likely to extend beyond the immediate project area, the study includes the six council areas intersected by the project (Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Nillumbik, Whitehorse and Yarra). It also considers regional impacts such as improved connections and efficiencies for commuters and freight, and outcomes for businesses and workers.



In response to community feedback received about connectivity so far we've:

- ✓ Heard how important it is to get connections at Watsonia Station and shops right as part of North East Link now, and to help lay the groundwork for future plans for the precinct. We're working with Banyule Council, local stakeholders and residents to explore different design opportunities to get the best outcomes for the area. If you'd like to get involved visit [jointheconversation.northeastlink.vic.gov.au](https://www.northeastlink.vic.gov.au) to register for updates.
- ✓ Significantly increased the amount of green space along Greensborough Road.
- ✓ Expanded the project design to include an extra footpath on the western side of Bulleen Road. This means there are now paths on both sides of the road.
- ✓ Added two new crossings on Bulleen Road to make getting to and from schools, sports fields and community clubs safer and easier.
- ✓ Added a new signalised crossing on Greensborough Road.
- ✓ Added an upgrade of the Belford Road walking and cycling path along the Eastern Freeway.
- ✓ Added a short cut to the Main Yarra Trail along the Eastern Freeway at Burke Road.
- ✓ Used surveys and studies to assess future demand for parking at Watsonia Station and Doncaster Park and Ride. We're also talking with Transport For Victoria, councils and other stakeholders to see what upgrades to parking at these locations could be possible as part of North East Link.

Local character

From speaking with communities we've heard you value the green look and feel of Melbourne's north-east and eastern suburbs and want this to be considered in the project design.

Landscape and visual impact

As part of the EES our specialists are completing a Landscape and visual impact study.

This involves identifying representative viewpoints from public spaces and private properties to assess likely changes to short and long-range views once North East Link is built.

Key landscape values and features identified in studies so far include:

- The dense vegetation and green canopies of the Yarra River and Koonung Creek corridors, parks and reserves, Bolin Bolin Billabong, Simpson Barracks and Heide Museum of Art

- Major road corridors with wide verges, embankments and green vegetation including the M80 Ring Road, Greensborough Bypass and the Eastern Freeway
- Suburban areas with established vegetation.

Urban design

The project Urban Design Strategy will provide design guidance to minimise negative visual impacts and maximise positive outcomes in key character areas wherever possible.

The strategy will include high-level principles and objectives to guide overall project design as well as requirements for specific locations and elements such as bridges, noise walls, landscaping and wetlands.



It will also include guidance on how to minimise visual impacts during construction such as planting trees early or installing temporary landscape or screening treatments.

Although we won't be developing the final project design, we'll provide the Urban Design Strategy to contractors invited to submit a design for North East Link and a bid to build it.

The Urban Design Strategy as well as the Landscape and visual impact study will be on display with the EES early next year.

Feedback from local communities and more than 60 federal, state and local government policies, strategies and guidelines are being used to develop the Urban Design Strategy for the North East Link project.



There are opportunities to give more feedback on local character now to help inform the Urban Design Strategy



Community facilities such as schools, sporting facilities, fields, parks, open spaces and key services such as health care providers, cultural centres, shops, businesses and clubs are all considered in our EES studies.

Community spaces and places

Our social impact specialists are carefully identifying the role local spaces and places play in bringing communities together and assessing positive or negative impacts North East Link could have on communities.

This includes direct effects such as impacts on people's day to day lifestyle and their enjoyment of the natural and built environment, as well as other effects such as changes in access, connectivity or community cohesion.

The study covers impacts during construction and once North East Link is built on residential areas, community facilities such as schools, sporting facilities, fields, parks, open spaces and key services such as health care providers, cultural centres, businesses and clubs.

Along with completing desktop research, our specialists have reached out to more than 50 community groups, facilities, services and businesses for interviews and online surveys and held workshops with residents to gain a deeper understanding of community values and concerns.

For temporary impacts, such as top down tunnel construction or establishing construction compounds, the EES will describe the process that will be used and examples to maximise long-term positive outcomes for communities through redeveloping or reinstating these areas.

Where community spaces or facilities are likely be permanently required at Bulleen Park, in addition to studies for the EES, we're working closely with councils, affected clubs and other stakeholders to develop a plan for the area. This includes looking at reconfiguring Bulleen Park and considering options available to impacted clubs and facilities.

Business

The EES will assess potential effects on individual businesses and business precincts during construction and once North East Link is built. This includes effects such as access, freight transport and logistics supply chains. Business premises that could potentially be required to construct North East Link as well as other businesses in the project area are included in the study.

Our specialists are using information sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, such as employment and journey to work data, combined with information provided directly from local businesses. To date our specialists have met with more than 60 local businesses.

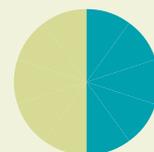
Our landowner team are also working closely with local businesses to understand their needs and keep them informed as the project progresses, particularly at Bulleen industrial park.

From speaking with business owners in the industrial park we know that many do business with each other.

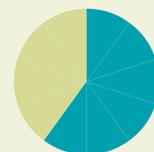
We're working closely with local councils and private landowners to understand needs of businesses and to review commercial land availability in the area. We are also providing resources to support businesses in the Bulleen industrial zone.



70% of businesses surveyed so far say they have commercial relationships with nearby businesses



50% believe they would be adversely affected if nearby businesses were acquired.



60% have told us that relocation, if required, would be a viable option.



We've made Bolin Bolin Billabong a 'no-go zone' for surface works because of its cultural and environmental significance.



Culture and history

Cultural heritage

Our planners, together with archaeologists and cultural heritage specialists are working closely with the Wurundjeri to identify Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and values.

This includes heritage places already documented on state and federal government registers as well as potential new sites.

Significant sites already identified within the project area include Bolin Bolin Billabong, Dights Falls, Yarra River Protectorate Station, scarred trees, and stone artefact scatters that contain material remains of Aboriginal people's activities.

Cultural heritage specialists are working with the Wurundjeri and Aboriginal Victoria to prepare a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).

The CHMP will be submitted to the Wurundjeri and Aboriginal Victoria for their approval to ensure Aboriginal cultural heritage is carefully managed.

In addition to the CHMP a cultural values study is being undertaken to help identify and describe cultural values not usually captured as part of the standard statutory planning process.

Our urban designers are also meeting with the Wurundjeri to explore opportunities to embed Indigenous knowledge or values into the project design. The Wurundjeri are also a member of the Technical Reference Group established by the Department of Land Water Environment and Planning (DELWP) to provide advice through the development of the EES.

Historic heritage

A Historical heritage report is being prepared to identify potential effects on significant places and objects including buildings, trees, archaeological sites and precincts. Findings from the assessment are being used to identify Environmental Performance Requirements to avoid, manage or mitigate negative effects.

The report is being informed by desktop studies, field research and consultation with Heritage Victoria, Councils and local historical societies.

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Translation service

 for languages other than English, please call 9679 9896.

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

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