

EDITHVALE AND BONBEACH

ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT

Summary document

MARCH 2018





Contents

Introduction	3
Level Crossing Removal Program	5
The projects	é
Edithvale level crossing removal project	ć
Bonbeach level crossing removal project	7
Benefits of the projects	8
Sustainability and climate change	9
Planning for the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removals	10
The EES process	11
Environmental performance requirements	11
Potential impacts of the projects	12
Managing impacts	14
Finalising the EES process	14
How to get involved	15
Where to see the documentation	15
How to make a submission	15

Level Crossing Removal Authority

The Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) is responsible for the delivery of 50 level crossing removals for the Victorian Government.

Specifically, LXRA is responsible for:

- developing the design of the level crossing removal projects
- coordinating technical investigations
- preparing the EES
- engaging and informing stakeholders and the wider community
- obtaining the key planning and environmental approvals
- coordinating procurement activities to appoint a private sector construction partner
- delivering the projects as a member of the construction Alliance
- coordinating the commissioning of the new infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Government is removing 50 of Victoria's most dangerous and congested level crossings, including the crossings at Edithvale Road, Edithvale and Station Street/Bondi Road, Bonbeach on the Frankston rail line.

The Frankston rail line serves some of Melbourne's most vital economic centres, as well as vast and growing residential catchments. The corridor currently serves a population of around 250,000 people, which is forecast to grow to around 500,000 people by 2036.

It also provides access to the significant industrial precinct and transport gateway at the Port of Hastings, and a key metropolitan activity centre at Frankston. The Frankston Hospital and Monash University campus in Frankston are significant regional employers.

In February 2017, the Victorian Government announced that the level crossings at Edithvale and Bonbeach would be removed by lowering the rail into a trench at each location. New stations would also be built at Edithvale and Bonbeach as part of each project.

On 5 May 2017, the Minister for Planning requested that LXRA prepare an Environment Effects Statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) to assess the potential environmental effects of the projects. In addition, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and Energy determined that the level crossing removal projects at Edithvale and Bonbeach require approval under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act), due to the potential cumulative impact on the internationally important Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, listed threatened species and migratory species.

The EES considers matters of national environmental significance for assessment under the EPBC Act.

Investigations conducted for the EES found that the wetlands would not be directly impacted as a result of the level crossing works. Any other potential impacts are minor and can be managed effectively through the environmental processes.



The projects would be delivered through an Alliance model in which a construction partner works alongside LXRA and Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) to prepare detailed designs and construct the project, with construction planned to commence in 2019. The level crossings would be removed by 2022.

Once the construction is complete, LXRA would return the finished rail infrastructure to VicTrack, the Victorian Government body which owns Victoria's transport land, assets and infrastructure. Rail operations would be conducted by MTM which would operate the rail line.







Level Crossing Removal Program

The Victorian Government Business Case for the Level Crossing Removal Program (LXRP) sets out the wide-ranging benefits of removing 50 level crossings across Melbourne (Victorian Government, 2017).

The Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossings are two of the nominated 50 level crossings to be removed in the LXRP. The program also includes the Metropolitan Network Modernisation Program which comprises new train stations, improved public transport access, and improved pedestrian and cycling links.

Prior to the commencement of the LXRP, level crossings have been removed one at a time or in pairs, and over many years. While this approach goes some way toward addressing localised issues, the scale of the problem is so big that it calls for a strategic approach and corresponding scale of investment.

Melbourne is Australia's fastest growing city, heading towards a population of six million by 2031 and more than 7.8 million by 2051. As the city grows, reliable and highly efficient transport networks are essential to moving more people and goods around the city, attracting new businesses, residents, jobs, and maintaining Melbourne's liveability.

Victorian Government policies and plans recognise that without an immediate and major enhancement in the capacity and efficiency of the city's transport system, Melbourne's liveability, accessibility and productivity cannot be sustained. To this end, the Victorian Government is investing in road and rail projects designed to ensure the transport system keeps pace with the city's growth into the future.

Section 5.6 of the Business Case sets out the LXRP in the broader context, including its relationship to the *Transport Integration Act 2010* and Victorian Government policy, guidelines and plans.

There are 178 level crossings on Melbourne's metropolitan (electrified) rail network – more than any other Australian city. Each of these crossings represents a major conflict point between rail, road and pedestrian traffic.

All of them contribute to congestion, safety and amenity problems on the city's transport system and many inhibit improvements to the capacity of both the road and rail networks. Level crossings also limit opportunities for urban renewal and development.

It is clear that without some intervention, a significant number of roads across Melbourne, many of which are important commuter and freight routes, would effectively be closed for considerable periods of time if there is an increase in the frequency of train services – causing even longer delays, higher costs, greater frustration and increased safety risks.

The LXRP is a critical enabler of other major rail projects, including the Cranbourne-Pakenham line upgrade and the Melbourne Metro Rail Tunnel Project. These major projects will transform Melbourne's transport network and are expected to have a significant impact on Melbourne's city structure, by encouraging households and businesses to locate along high capacity rail corridors, due to the significant accessibility improvements these projects provide.

The Victorian Government, for the first time, has a long-term strategic plan for removing level crossings. This will systematically address the safety and congestion problems associated with this outdated feature of Melbourne's transport system and create better connected and thriving communities.

The LXRP involves the removal of 50 level crossings, including at Edithvale and Bonbeach, in a coordinated program. As at March 2018,15 level crossings will have been removed and a further 14 sites will be underway. All 50 will be removed by the end of 2022.

THE PROJECTS

Edithvale level crossing removal project

Location

The level crossing at Edithvale Road is located south of the existing Edithvale train station between Nepean Highway and Station Street. It is approximately 32 kilometres from Flinders Street Station.

Edithvale Road runs in an east-west direction between the Nepean Highway and Wells Road, and is a declared arterial road linking Edithvale and surrounding suburbs to the Nepean Highway, the Mornington Peninsula Freeway (M11) and to Melbourne's eastern suburbs via Springvale Road, Eastlink and Westall Road.

The Edithvale project area is located predominantly within the existing rail reserve owned by VicTrack. The rail reserve was established in the early 1880s and has been disturbed by more than a century of rail-related activities.

The Edithvale project area extends from Lincoln Parade, Aspendale to Chelsea Road, Chelsea. It includes the rail corridor and all of Station Street and Nepean Highway to the east and west, and small sections of adjacent road reserves.

Existing pedestrian and cyclist crossings in proximity to the level crossing are located at Lochiel Avenue, Edithvale Road, Denman Avenue, Fraser Avenue and Berry Avenue.

No private land would be required for the project.

Project description

The Edithvale project involves removing the level crossing by lowering the Frankston rail line into a trench under Edithvale Road, while maintaining Edithvale Road at the current road level. The trench would be constructed between Lochiel Avenue and Berry Avenue.

The trench would be up to 1,300 metres in length, 14 metres wide at the narrowest point, widening up to 24 metres at the new Edithvale Station.

The rail track would be approximately eight metres below ground level at its lowest point at Edithvale Station, and therefore the maximum depth of excavation would be 14 metres to allow for underground infrastructure (below the rail track) to collect and divert rain water from the trench.

Barriers, fencing and screening would be erected along the trench at road level to prevent access by vehicles or people. Decking above the rail trench would be required to provide for the new station building, car parking and a substation required to ensure sufficient power is available for passenger services on the Frankston rail line.

New pedestrian bridges would be constructed to retain pedestrian access across the rail line.

Project components are shown conceptually in Figure 1.

A new station at the same location as the existing station would be constructed with disability compliant access to the below-ground train platforms.

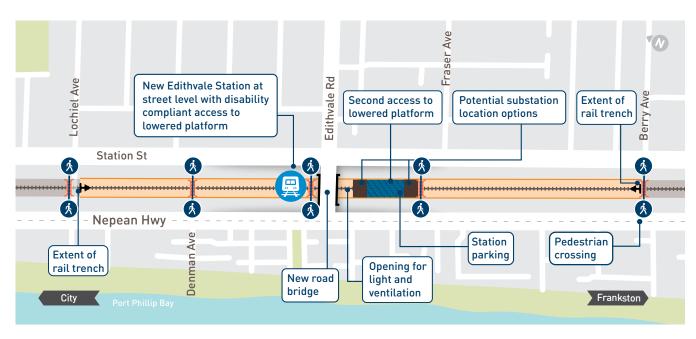


Figure 1 Concept design for Edithvale – Illustrative purposes only

Bonbeach level crossing removal project

Location

The level crossing at Station Street/ Bondi Road is located south of the Bonbeach train station between Nepean Highway and Station Street. It is approximately 35 kilometres from Flinders Street Station.

The Bonbeach project area is located predominantly within the existing rail reserve owned by VicTrack. The rail reserve was established in the early 1880s and has been disturbed by more than a century of rail-related activities.

The Bonbeach project area extends from Chelsea Road, Chelsea to Patterson River, Bonbeach. It includes the rail corridor and all of Station Street and Nepean Highway, located to the east and west, and small sections of adjacent road reserves.

Existing pedestrian and cyclist crossings across the rail corridor are located at Golden Avenue, Wellwood Road, Bondi Road and The Glade.

No private land would be required for the project.

Project description

The Bonbeach project involves removing the level crossing by lowering the Frankston rail line into a trench under Bondi Road while maintaining the current road level.

The trench would be constructed between Golden Avenue and The Glade. It would be up to 1,200 metres in length and 14 metres wide at its narrowest point, widening up to 24 metres at the new Bonbeach Station platforms.

The rail track would be approximately eight metres below ground level at its lowest point at Bonbeach Station, and therefore the maximum depth of excavation would be 14 metres to allow for underground infrastructure (below the rail track) to collect and divert rain water from the trench.

Barriers, fencing and screening would be erected along the trench at road level to prevent access by vehicles or people. Decking above the rail trench would provide for the new station building and car parking.

New pedestrian bridges would be constructed to retain pedestrian access across the rail line.

A new station at the same location as the existing station would be constructed with disability compliant access to the below-ground train platforms. Project components are shown conceptually in Figure 2.



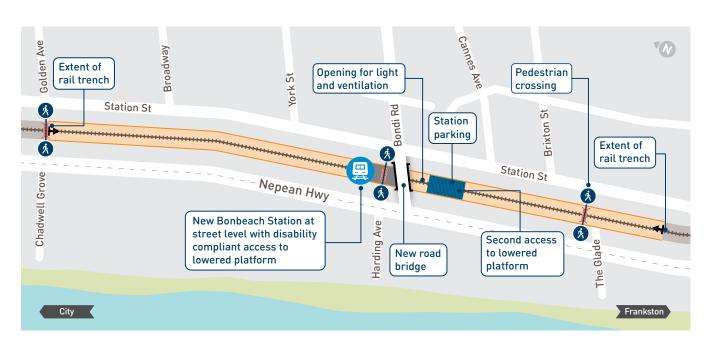


Figure 2 Concept design for Bonbeach - Illustrative purposes only

Benefits of the projects

The Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects are part of the wider Victorian Government LXRP.

The objectives of the LXRP are consistent with the objectives of the *Transport Integration Act 2010* (TI Act) and aim to:

- deliver significant safety improvements for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians
- improve travel around the local areas for train users, pedestrians, cyclists and drivers
- get people home safer and faster
- make our roads more reliable, enabling people to better predict their travel times
- stimulate economic growth by creating jobs during construction
- revitalise local communities, including modernisation of station precincts
- enable more trains to run more often and on time.

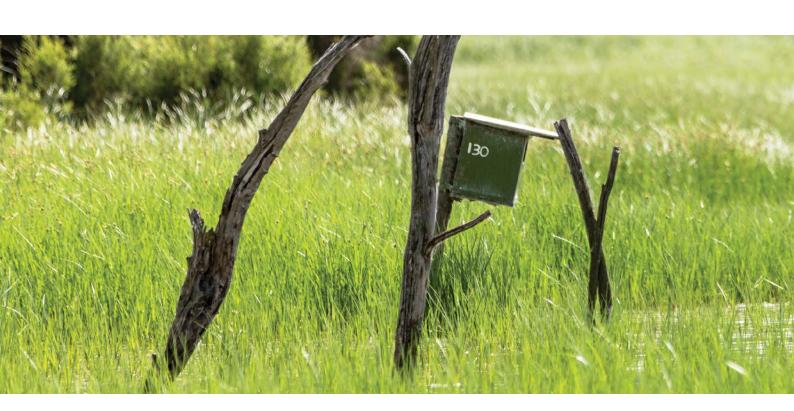
The program also includes the Metropolitan Network Modernisation Program improvements (including new train stations, improved public transport access, and new pedestrian and cycling links) and amenity improvements such as landscaping and streetscape improvements.

Within this broader context, the specific objectives of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects are to:

- improve transport safety in the Edithvale and Bonbeach areas by eliminating the risk of collision between trains and vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians
- reduce traffic congestion associated with the level crossings for the 14,000 vehicles that use the Edithvale level crossing and the 4,500 vehicles that use the Bonbeach level crossing each weekday
- generate hundreds of jobs within the local areas for the duration of the construction and stimulate the local economy
- facilitate additional train services on the Frankston rail line.

The projects also include significant upgrades to the existing Edithvale and Bonbeach stations, which are reaching the end of their intended design life, as well as improving amenities and public areas around the stations.





Sustainability and climate change

The Infrastructure Sustainability Council of Australia has developed the Infrastructure Sustainability (IS) rating scheme which provides a framework for evaluating sustainability principles in major infrastructure projects.

The framework includes:

- climate change adaptation
- climate change mitigation
- water efficiency
- waste and resource recovery
- energy efficiency
- materials efficiency
- environmental management and protection.

The IS Rating Tool focuses on sustainability of the design, construction and operation of major projects, and LXRA has instructed that all projects must achieve an 'Excellent' IS rating score. This demonstrates the projects consideration of climate change adaptation, improved sustainability management systems and more sustainable procurement systems.

Similar to the IS Rating Tool, Green Star is a points-based sustainability rating system that assesses the sustainable design, construction and long term environmental benefits during the operation of a building.

Points are awarded for meeting the requirements of defined criteria in a number of categories. Every level crossing removal project is required to achieve a minimum 'four star' rating for both design and as-built ratings. Achieving this rating largely translates into reduced operating costs and greater comfort for end users.

LXRA has been able to assess the predicted impacts of climate change to the Port Phillip area, by incorporating climate change risk into relevant EES technical studies conducted for the projects. This ensures that any predicted changes would not be exacerbated by the Bonbeach and Edithvale projects.



Similar to the IS Rating Tool, Green Star is a points-based sustainability rating system that assesses the sustainable design, construction and long term environmental benefits during the operation of a building.







Technical studies undertaken for the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects EES

- Groundwater
- Ecology: Wetlands and Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems
- Acid Sulfate Soils and Contamination
- Ecology: Project Areas
- Surface Water
- Land Use and Planning
- Traffic
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality
- Landscape and Visual
- Business
- Social
- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage
- Historic Heritage.

Planning for the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removals

The Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects are being assessed under the *Environmental Effects Act 1978* (EE Act), which provides the assessment framework for proposed projects in Victoria that could have a significant effect on the environment.

Requirement for an EES

On 5 May 2017, the Minister for Planning determined that an EES was required for the projects. The EES will inform the Minister's assessment and the approvals required for the projects.

The Minister's reasons for making this decision included that the project works have 'the potential for a range of significant environmental effects'. In particular, it was required that the projects would examine potential effects on:

- The regional groundwater regime resulting in potential changes to hydrological conditions at the Ramsar listed Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands
- The ecological character and habitat values of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands, and the dependent flora and fauna. In particular, the critical components of habitat for listed waterbirds, due to alterations in the groundwater regime
- The protected beneficial uses of groundwater, due to alterations in the groundwater regime, along with risks to human health, recreation and ecosystems due to changes in water quality.

The Minister's decision determined that 'other potential effects on the social or environmental setting are unlikely to be significant and should be readily addressed and mitigated through existing statutory processes' including under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The matters to be investigated and documented in the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects EES are set out in the 'Scoping Requirements' issued by the Minister in September 2017.

The Scoping Requirements establish the draft evaluation objectives for the EES and reflect the decision of the Minister for Planning. The objectives specifically focus on groundwater, biodiversity and contaminated/acid sulfate soils and identify potential significant environmental effects of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal project works.



The EES process

An EES is not an approval process. An EES assessment demonstrates the ability of the projects to meet statutory requirements.

It provides decision-makers (including ministers and other statutory authorities) with the information they need to make decisions about whether statutory approvals for the project should be granted and, if so, what conditions should apply.

The EES:

- describes the proposed Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects
- describes the existing environment that may be affected by the projects
- identifies the potential effects of the projects on the environment
- recommends ways to avoid, minimise, offset or manage any adverse effects
- proposes an environmental management framework for managing and monitoring potential environmental effects during implementation of the projects.

The EES process is designed to be rigorous and transparent, with opportunities provided for input from stakeholders and the wider community. It includes 14 environmental impact

assessments undertaken by technical specialists to ensure the EES addresses the Scoping Requirements set by the Minister for Planning.

The EES process is accredited to assess impacts on Matters of National Environmental Significance under the EPBC Act through the Bilateral (Assessment) Agreement between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria. The EES therefore also considers Matters of National Environmental Significance.



Environmental Performance Requirements

One of the key outcomes of the EES process is to recommend a set of Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs).

The EPRs define the environmental outcomes that must be achieved during design, construction and operation of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects, regardless of the detailed design solutions adopted. They may also represent the measures developed in the EES to avoid, reduce or offset potential environmental impacts.

These measures are not necessarily the only or 'best' means of managing impacts. They are provided as examples to demonstrate that practicable measures are available to achieve the EPRs.

Under the performance-based approach being adopted for the projects, it would be up to the Alliance to determine how best to achieve the EPRs. The implementation of an environmental management framework will provide oversight of the Alliance's achievement of the EPRs.

The 14 technical specialists developed an initial set of EPRs as part of their impact assessments. These assessments evaluated the environmental effects of the projects and the proposed construction methodologies. Through the risk assessment process, the initial set of EPRs were refined to a final set of EPRs that reflect the findings of the impact assessment and the designs.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF THE PROJECTS

The projects would remove two dangerous and congested level crossings. This would contribute to significant improvements in the capacity, efficiency and reliability of the Frankston rail line, and create safer and more vibrant precincts for the two suburbs.

Like all infrastructure projects, their construction and operation would change the local setting and potentially affect the local environment, particularly during construction. The construction activity would be disruptive, particularly to those who live or work adjacent to the project site.

The disruption, however, would be temporary during which time LXRA would work closely with those affected to ensure a high level of communication is maintained throughout the construction period. The delivery of the projects would ultimately deliver a high quality urban outcome that creates a much safer environment for residents of, and visitors to, both Edithvale and Bonbeach.

The investigations undertaken for the EES primarily focused on the three potentially significant impacts identified by the Minister for Planning in determining the requirement for the EES. Namely, changes to the groundwater regime, protection of the nearby wetlands, and protection of the beneficial uses of groundwater. An additional 11 investigations were undertaken to assess potential impacts of each project on all aspects of the environment.

The Seaford component of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands is located over five kilometres from the projects and is separated by Patterson River and Patterson Lakes.

The Patterson River and Patterson Lakes provide a hydrogeological barrier, such that any changes to the regional groundwater regime due to the projects would not affect the Seaford Wetland. The initial groundwater model prepared for the EES predicted that the trench proposed at Edithvale would result in groundwater mounding on the inland side. This could potentially increase the frequency of water logging that already occurs on occasion in the Edithvale area. The same impact was not identified at Bonbeach.

In response to the risks identified in the groundwater modelling, including water logging, an engineering solution was developed to enable groundwater to flow around the trench structure at Edithvale and reduce the potential mounding to within natural variability.

Groundwater drawdown between the trenches and the coast may affect a small area of coastal vegetation and pre-existing, naturally occurring acid sulfate soils, but through implementing the EPRs, beneficial uses of groundwater would not be impacted.



Detailed designs of the projects would be developed in accordance with the EPRs set out in the EES, which would ensure that the potential effects are effectively managed and mitigated.

Critically, it is considered almost impossible for the projects to affect the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands as groundwater changes are not predicted to occur closer than 1,000 metres to the Edithvale component of the Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.

Potential impacts to regional groundwater

The proposed trench at Edithvale has the potential to exacerbate existing water logging as a result of groundwater intersecting with the surface. The project would be designed to avoid this impact and ensure no significant impacts to the environment occur.

Groundwater flows in a different direction at Bonbeach compared to Edithvale and is not predicted to cause waterlogging at this project.

Edithvale Wetland

Given the distances between the Edithvale Wetland and the project sites (1.3 kilometres from the existing Edithvale Road level crossing and two kilometres from Bonbeach), the works would not directly impact the wetlands.

Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems (GDEs)

GDEs exist in a naturally variable environment in which water is accessed via the surface or groundwater. Both sources naturally fluctuate based on long-term climatic conditions and the prevailing weather and as such GDEs must be adaptable and resilient to these variable conditions. Given the small change in groundwater predicted through the model it is likely changes to vegetation would be minor or negligible.

Native vegetation

Native vegetation is present within the rail corridor and would be removed to enable construction of the proposed rail trenches.

Clearing would be minimised in finalising project designs and construction methodologies, clearing only what is necessary, and offsetting the impacted vegetation in accordance with Victorian Government policy.

Acid sulfate soils and contamination

The projects would prevent adverse environmental or health effects from disturbing, storing or influencing the movement of contaminated or acid-forming material, and be designed to protect beneficial uses. The overall risk is minor.

Construction impacts

Construction would result in localised amenity impacts related to noise and transport network disruption, but can be managed effectively using well established practices. The potential impacts to the community during the construction of the two projects are typical of any construction project.

Noise during operations

Once the rail line is lowered into a trench at Edithvale and Bonbeach, there would be a reduction in the average train noise levels.

Visual amenity

The projects would change the visual appearance of the transport corridor through Edithvale and Bonbeach by replacing the existing at-grade rail infrastructure with a modern station building and precinct, car parking on deck, footbridges, safety barriers along the trench and a substation at Edithvale. Although vegetation would be lost, new landscaping would be established.

The urban design of the projects would be guided by a comprehensive set of Urban Design Guidelines.



MANAGING IMPACTS

The Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects would be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with an Environmental Management Framework (Framework).

The Framework provides a transparent and integrated governance framework to manage the potential environmental effects of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects.

It responds to Section 3.5 of the Scoping Requirements issued for the EES, as well as the need to ensure a high level of rigour within the environmental management of both projects.

The document will:

- establish a framework to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and minimise environmental risks
- set out the environmental outcomes to be achieved during design and construction and encourage innovation to achieve them
- ensure accountabilities are identified for managing and monitoring environmental effects and hazards associated with the design and construction phases of the projects.

The Framework outlines clear accountabilities for the delivery and monitoring of the implementation of the projects and includes a set of EPRs. The EPRs determine the environmental outcomes that the design and construction of the Edithvale and Bonbeach projects must achieve.

The Framework requires the contractor constructing the projects to implement an Environmental Management System (EMS) certified to AS/NZS ISO 14001: 2016 Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance and to comply with relevant legislation, policy and guidelines.

The purpose of the requirement for an EMS is to ensure that works are planned and performed so that the adverse effects on the environment are either avoided, minimised or managed, and are carried out in accordance with the EPRs. The Framework requires the contractor to specifically apply its EMS and modify it, if required, for the delivery of works for the projects.

The Framework provides a structured approach for monitoring the implementation of the Construction Environment Management Plan and other plans required to comply with the EPRs, the Incorporated Documents and any statutory approvals.

Incorporated Documents

The key planning approvals for the projects are planning scheme amendments to insert project-specific 'Incorporated Documents' into the Kingston Planning Scheme.

The Incorporated Documents would require the preparation of an Environmental Management Framework (EMF) for the projects to be approved by the Minister for Planning, and allow for it to be amended from time to time with the approval of the Minister.

The Framework would be approved prior to the commencement of buildings and works (other than preparatory works). The design and construction of the projects would be required to be carried out in accordance with the approved Framework.



Finalising the EES process

At the end of the public exhibition period, an independent inquiry will consider the effects of the Edithvale and Bonbeach level crossing removal projects, having regard to the EES, the proposed planning scheme amendments and public submissions and provide a report to the Minister for Planning.

Following receipt of the inquiry's report, the Minister for Planning will consider the report and issue a written assessment of the projects. This document, called the 'Minister's Assessment', will inform statutory decision-makers responsible for issuing environmental approvals for the projects.

Three main approvals are required:

- Commonwealth approval under the EPBC Act.
- Planning Scheme Amendment under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
- Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Edithvale and Bonbeach EES, including the draft planning scheme amendments, will be on public exhibition for 30 business days from 19 March to 2 May 2018.

During this time, the exhibition period, members of the public are welcome to make written submissions about the EES documentation.

Where to see the documentation

The documents will be available online at levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/EES

The EES and draft planning scheme amendments will also be on exhibition during normal opening hours at the following locations:

- State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne.
- City of Kingston Municipal Office, 1230 Nepean Highway, Cheltenham.
- Chelsea Library, 1 Chelsea Road, Chelsea.

The documents will also be exhibited at the following locations during certain drop in session times, which can be found on the above website:

- 6 Lochiel Avenue, Edithvale.
- Bonbeach Surf Life Saving Club, Beach Reserve, Lord Weaver Grove, Bonbeach.

How to make a submission

Submissions on the Edithvale and Bonbeach EES and draft planning scheme amendments must be made in writing and received by **5pm on Wednesday 2 May 2018.**

Online submissions are preferred

Submissions can be lodged via the Victorian Government's engagement website: **engage.vic.gov.au**

For hard copy submissions to be considered, they must be accompanied by a cover sheet available only by calling the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP) on 136 186. Each written submission must have a separate cover sheet and they cannot be copied.

Written submissions can be posted to:

Edithvale and Bonbeach EES Submissions c/o Planning Panels Victoria GPO Box 2392 Melbourne VIC 3001

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Where a submission is made by two or more persons, it must state the name and address of the person who will represent these persons in any formal public hearing and be the main point of contact. Anonymous submissions are not considered.





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