

Environment
Effects Statement

Chapter 14

Business



Chapter 14

Business

This chapter provides an assessment of business impacts associated with the construction and operation of North East Link. This chapter is based on the impact assessment presented in Technical report F – Business.

North East Link is expected to generate significant benefits for businesses. They include improved accessibility, reduced travel times and enhanced transport network safety. Nevertheless, a number of business properties would need to be acquired for North East Link and there is potential for indirect impacts on other businesses.

The EES scoping requirements set out the following evaluation objective relating to business:

- **Social, business, land use and infrastructure** – To manage effects of the project on land use and the social fabric of the community with regard to wellbeing, community cohesion, business functionality and access to goods, services and facilities.

A business impact assessment was conducted to assess the potential impacts of North East Link on businesses. This included an assessment of the impacts on businesses from permanent land acquisition or temporary occupation.

This evaluation objective is also addressed by the assessment of land use, social impact and accessibility, which are presented in:

- Chapter 9 – Traffic and transport and Technical report A – Traffic and transport
- Chapter 13 – Land use planning and Technical report E – Land use planning
- Chapter 17 – Social and Technical report I – Social.

Key themes and concerns of businesses

Over 150 businesses across the project were sent surveys (returning 74 responses) which provided important insights into the actual and perceived potential impacts of North East Link.

The major issues of concern identified included:

- Uncertainty
- Issues with maintaining customer base
- Investment opportunities
- Issues with loss of benefits from clustering
- Issues with maintaining access
- Amenity issues created by construction.

14.1 Method

Informed by the risk assessment described in Chapter 4 – EES assessment framework the business impact assessment involved the following key tasks:

- Definition of a study area for business. This was defined as land generally within a 200 metre buffer of the reference project, and also a broader area that includes nearby activity centres and economic areas. 200 metres from the project alignment was chosen as the business study area boundary as it was seen to capture most of the businesses that would be affected by likely project impacts, such as land acquisition, access as well as amenity impacts. The study area is shown in Figure 14-1.
- Desktop review of relevant State and local government legislation and policy and other documentation to establish the context and requirements for the business impact assessment. This involved a review of relevant publicly available information including Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data from the 2016 Census as well as Council-held data.
- Site visits to confirm business identification, complete information gaps and understand likely employee, customer and delivery vehicle access routes to business areas.
- Interviews with and surveys of businesses in Bulleen, Heidelberg, Watsonia Village and along Greensborough Road to understand their operations. The business survey questionnaire is included in Appendix B of Technical report F – Business.
- Consultation with the Watsonia Traders Association, Heidelberg Centre Management, Balwyn North Traders Association, Kew Traders Association, Eltham Traders Association, Warringal Centre Management, and the Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse and Yarra city councils.
- Assessment of the potential business impacts during construction and operation of the project, including:
 - Impacts on businesses due to uncertainties of the project before the finalisation of its design and timing
 - Impacts on businesses due to land acquisition and temporary occupation and associated loss of employment as well as indirect impacts on businesses not subject to acquisition or occupation
 - Impacts on businesses due to changes in the road network, access and traffic conditions during construction and operation.
- Development of Environmental Performance Requirements (EPRs) to address risks to businesses. The residual risk ratings and the assessment of impacts presented in this chapter assume implementation of the EPRs. Refer to Chapter 27 – Environmental Management Framework.

What are the risk categories?

Risk levels were categorised as very low, low, medium, high or very high. When an impact is a known consequence of the project, the rating is indicated as 'planned'.

The results of the initial risk assessment were used to prioritise the focus of the impact assessments.

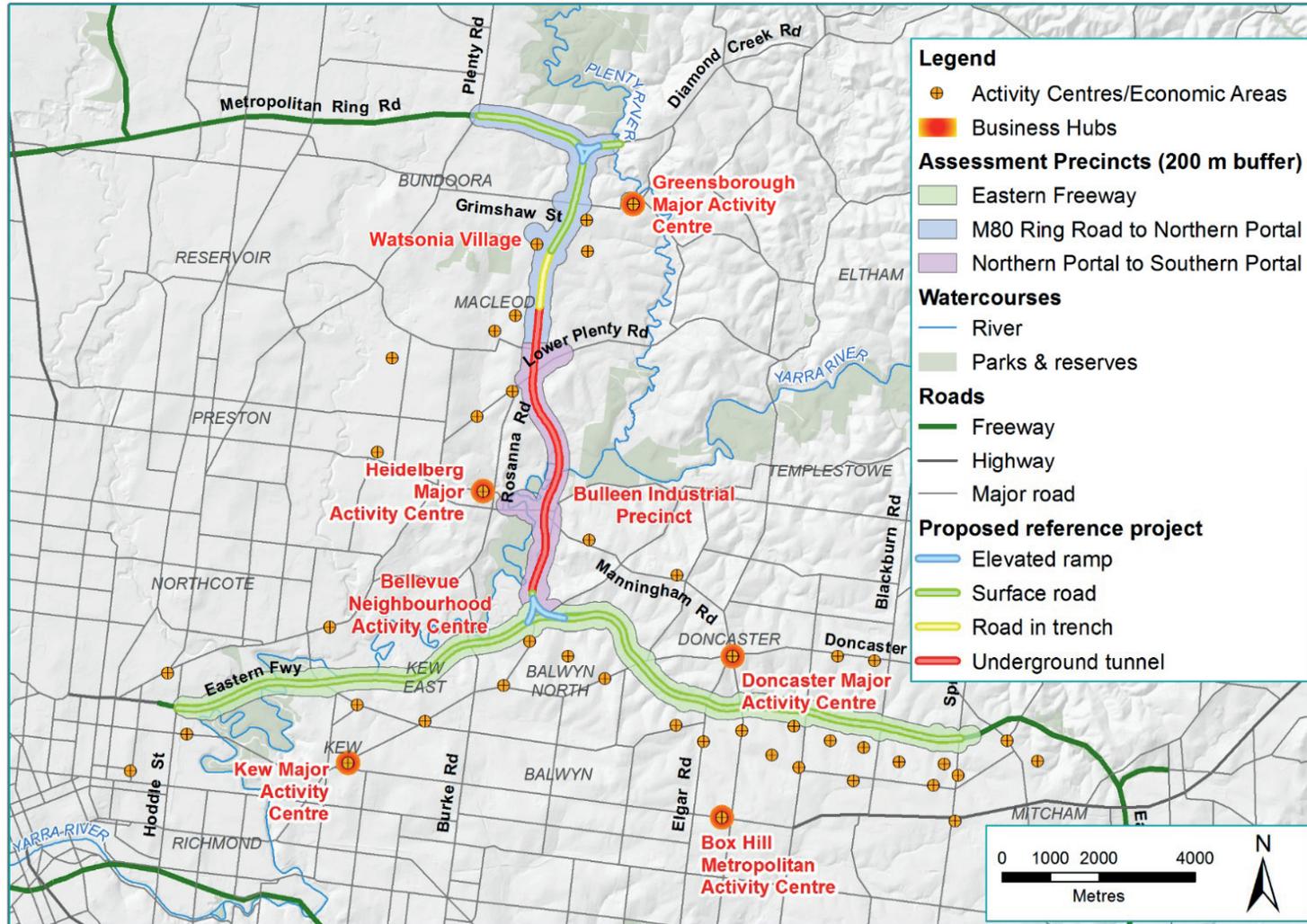


Figure 14-1 Business study area

14.2 Existing conditions

This section summarises the existing conditions of the study area in relation to business impacts.

The existing conditions information includes a description of the business environment for the region North East Link would be located within as well as more specific information for the study area. The information for the study area supports the assessment at two levels:

- Businesses within 200 metres of the North East Link alignment.
- Businesses within a broader area of the project.

14.2.1 Regional business context

North East Link would pass through six local government areas:

- City of Banyule
- City of Boroondara
- City of Manningham
- Shire of Nillumbik
- City of Whitehorse
- City of Yarra

It is noted that the City of Whittlesea is located directly north of the reference project, on the northern side of the M80 Ring Road (otherwise known as the Metropolitan Ring Road). Whilst no project components are located within Whittlesea, given the proximity of the project and the relationship to the broader area, this area has been included in the assessment.

This combined area contains over 900,000 residents, 390,000 local jobs and nearly 100,000 businesses (ABS, 2017). The population and employment details are summarised in Section 6.1 of Technical report F – Business.

The key features of this broad area from a business perspective are:

- The region is characterised by small businesses servicing the local and adjacent metropolitan areas
- The businesses in the region are primarily service based, and the largest industries by number of businesses are the professional, scientific and technical services (15.5 per cent), and construction services (15.3 per cent) followed by rental, hiring and real estate services (12.2 per cent)
- With the exception of the City of Yarra, all the municipalities have fewer jobs than workers (jobs deficit) because much of the region is residential

- In all municipalities, a minority of workers (21 to 30 per cent) work in the same municipality they reside in. The graph in Figure 14-2 shows the percentage of residents that work and live within the same municipality. Manningham, the location of the Bulleen Industrial Precinct, has approximately one job for every two employed residents.

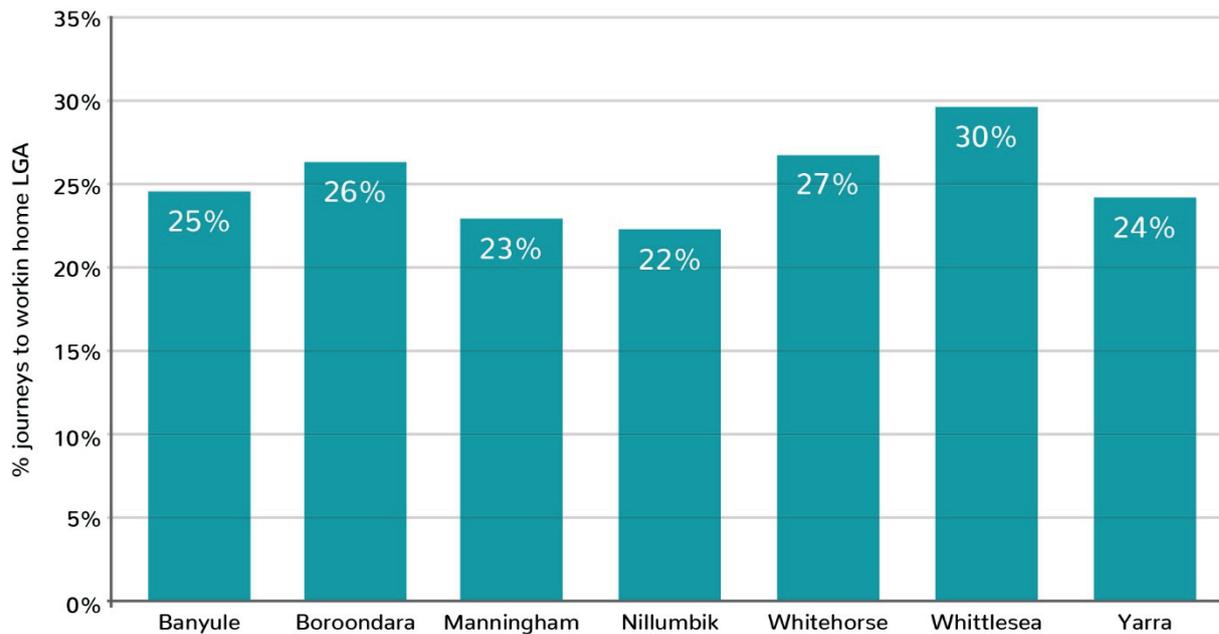


Figure 14-2 Journey to work, proportion of residents travelling to work within home municipality, ABS 2016 Census

To establish more detailed existing conditions for the business impact assessment, attention was directed to the area up to approximately 200 metres from the project alignment. Within this area, some 200 businesses have been identified in commercial areas at July 2018. This includes businesses that operate from the premises. It does not include site owners that lease their sites to other businesses or businesses that use premises within the area as an off-site storage facility.

Businesses adjacent to the North East Link alignment are dominated by consumer services and are largely focused on local markets. For each North East Link precinct, the division of businesses was:

- 81 businesses along the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct
- 118 businesses along the northern portal to southern portal precinct
- 61 businesses in the Eastern Freeway precinct.

Of the approximately 260 businesses identified, the major business types across the three assessment precincts are:

- **Retail trade** – approximately 90 businesses are retail trade businesses and include home building supply businesses (show screens, electrical goods, timber, air-conditioning units and plumbing supplies), car dealerships, corporate clothing supplies, art supplies, as well as bakery, cafés and takeaway food.
- **Other services** – approximately 55 businesses are classified as other services and include automotive services, professional services, massage and beauty salons and dry cleaning/laundromat service businesses.
- **Construction** – approximately 20 businesses are construction-related and include builders, equipment hire, demolition companies, heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) businesses, and plumbing and electrical services.
- **HealthCare and Social Assistance** businesses account for approximately 20 businesses. This category covers aged care facilities, medical centres and smaller medical, dental allied services practices.
- **Arts and recreation services** – approximately 20 businesses are related to the arts or recreation and include sporting clubs, cultural and arts businesses and private health clubs.
- **Education and training** – approximately 15 businesses are related to education and training.

14.2.2 M80 Ring Road to northern portal

The M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct includes approximately 80 businesses with the majority being related to retail (trade, cafes and takeaway), health care and social assistance.

Watsonia Village

In this area, business activity is concentrated in Watsonia Village, with a few businesses along Greensborough Road and at the Greensborough Road and Grimshaw Street intersection. This neighbourhood activity centre contains a diverse mix of business types, including a timber and hardware retailer, boutique and second-hand fashion retailers and a range of other service providers. The most prominent business type is retail. Estimated direct employment in Watsonia Village is approximately 865 according to Banyule City Council data. Access to the majority of Watsonia's businesses is from Watsonia Road, which is adjacent to Greensborough Road. Other businesses in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct are serviced by Greensborough Road but rely on access from Yallambie Road and Grimshaw Street.

Broader area around M80 Ring Road to northern portal

Business activity in the broader area of the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct includes:

- Greensborough Major Activity Centre is a principal activity centre and contains Greensborough Plaza Shopping Centre and approximately 400 rateable properties that provide jobs for around 3,000 workers. Of these, 38 per cent are employed in the retail industry and 14 per cent are employed in the accommodation and food services sector (Banyule City Council, 2015).
- The Greensborough industrial area is located within a kilometre of Greensborough Plaza. The area includes a mixture of small and medium format tenancies, mainly along Para Road and to a lesser extent along Simms Road.
- Grimshaw Street businesses are located between Gleeson Drive and Witney Way, approximately 1.5 kilometres west of the Grimshaw Street and Greensborough Road intersection. The Grimshaw Street business group comprises predominantly automotive retail businesses as well as a number of recreational businesses and some other retail stores.
- Diamond Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre is a small strip of mainly convenience shops located between Nepean Street and Orana Drive approximately 800 metres east of Greensborough Road.
- Macleod Village Neighbourhood Activity Centre is a strip shopping centre located along Aberdeen Road approximately 1 kilometre west of Greensborough Road with approximately 40 retailers including specialty and convenience shops.
- There is also a network of minor activity centres in this area providing additional convenience for local residents and the broader community. Further detail on these centres are provided in Technical report F – Business.

14.2.3 Northern portal to southern portal

The northern portal to southern portal precinct includes approximately 120 businesses primarily located within the Bulleen Industrial Precinct and the clubs and sporting facilities near the Eastern Freeway.

Bulleen Industrial Precinct

The Bulleen Industrial Precinct includes the businesses along Bridge Street, Templestowe Road and Manningham Road to the east of the intersection with Bulleen Road. Based on business surveys and estimates, the Bulleen Industrial Precinct comprises approximately 110 businesses estimated to provide direct employment for 960 to 1,000 people who mainly live in surrounding suburbs in the Manningham and Banyule municipalities. There is limited public transport servicing the Bulleen Industrial Precinct, with Heidelberg railway station located approximately 1.8 kilometres away. Almost all workers and customers access businesses in the precinct by private vehicle.

The Bulleen Industrial Precinct has evolved over the decades and consequently has resulted in a formation of clustered automotive and construction businesses. Clusters are considered to support productivity and enable companies to better compete regionally.

In addition to the automotive cluster, other business types in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct include garden nursery retail businesses, a museum, eateries, dry cleaning services, fitness centres and industrial material retailers. A large pre-mixed concrete business involves a significant logistics operation (and benefits from close proximity to a truck servicing business), while eateries have an established business customer base within the precinct.

The Bulleen Industrial Precinct has been established at the intersection since the 1950s. Many businesses have been established there a long time and there has been a low rate of change in tenancies in the area compared with the benchmark rate of change in business in data provided by Business Victoria. One business providing laundry services to surrounding businesses has been operating for more than 70 years. At least 15 other businesses have been established in the precinct for over 30 years, which has led to the development of the business cluster and the evolution of the precinct's characteristics.

Recreation and community businesses near the southern portal

Closer to the Eastern Freeway, there are extensive open space areas and privately and publicly owned playing fields. This includes a concentration of commercial sports and recreation facilities such as a swim centre, soccer league facility, tennis courts and basketball courts. There are also clubs, including pokies and a function venue, liquor retail, employee training and secondary level educational facilities. A tennis centre and golf course are located adjacent to these in the Eastern Freeway precinct. The majority of the businesses operate Monday to Friday, although a few open on weekends including the soccer league facility which generates a lot of customers on weekends.

Broader area around the northern to southern portal

Business activity in the broader area of the northern to southern portal precinct stretches to Plenty Road and the intersection of Manningham Road and Thompsons Road to the east, Lower Heidelberg Road and Eastern Freeway to the south and Albert Street to the west. This includes Northland Shopping Centre, Warringal Shopping Centre, the Austin Hospital and Bulleen Plaza. Key areas assessed in this broader area include:

- La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC) is an emerging cluster with an expanding education, health and research role. Key businesses include La Trobe University, the Austin Biomedical Alliance Precinct and retail activities around Northland Shopping Centre and the Heidelberg Major Activity Centre.

- Heidelberg West Industrial Estate is bound by Sheehan Road to the west, Dougharty Road to the south, Bamfield Road to the east and Orr Street, Northern Road and Crissane Road to the north. The estate is home to approximately 600 businesses and supports a large workforce, primarily from the local area. According to the Banyule Business *Heidelberg West Industrial Estate Business Monitor Results 2016*, a diverse range of business types operate in this area with manufacturing accounting for the largest share at 39.5 per cent.
- Heidelberg Major Activity Centre contains the Heidelberg railway station, Warringal Shopping Centre, Heidelberg Police Station, Heidelberg Magistrates' Court, large-scale supermarkets and a number of other businesses that operate primarily in the health care and social assistance, retail trade and professional, scientific and technical services industries.
- Bulleen Plaza Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located on Manningham Road between Thompsons Road and Bulleen Road and includes over 60 shops incorporating a range of goods and services from cafes, eateries, specialty retail stores, a gym and medical centre. The plaza is accessible from Manningham Road by car and is also serviced by a number of bus routes.

There is also a network of minor activity centres providing additional convenience for local residents and the broader community. These include McNamara Street, Macleod, Martins Lane, and Viewbank, as well as Lower Plenty Road, Station Road, Greville Road, and St James Road – all in Rosanna, and Thompsons Heights Shopping Centre, Bulleen. Further detail on these centres is provided in Section 6.3.2 of Technical report F – Business.

14.2.4 Eastern Freeway

The Eastern Freeway precinct includes the area from Hoddle Street in the west to Springvale Road in the east. Approximately 60 businesses have been identified in this precinct, and of these, five businesses have been identified near the proposed intersection with North East Link including the Boroondara Tennis Centre (four associated businesses) and the Freeway Public Golf Course (one associated business). Another golf course is located near Belford Road with its clubhouse adjacent to the Eastern Freeway. These generally operate with extended hours depending on the time of year and daylight hours.

Broader area around the Eastern Freeway

The broader area captures the length of the Eastern Freeway and the surrounding business activity centres. Businesses in the broader area are located within the municipalities of Banyule, Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse and Yarra. Most of the businesses are located in activity centres but businesses in the broader area also include home based businesses, out of centre development and businesses in industrial areas. Key areas assessed in this broader area include:

- Kew Junction is a major activity centre located approximately 1.7 kilometres south from the Eastern Freeway and Chandler Highway crossing and includes retail, commercial and community activity. The traders' association identifies its attractions as a range of destination shops, gourmet food providers, high quality professional services and benefiting from a central location. Trams 109 and 48 travel on High Street and provide frequent services to Melbourne's central business district (CBD).
- The Village Balwyn North Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located at the intersection between Bulleen Road and Doncaster Road approximately 1.5 kilometres south of the Eastern Freeway. The compact village provides convenience for local residents with shops including a gourmet deli, florist, fashion stores, butcher, cafés, chemist, newsagent, banks and real estate agents. Boroondara City Council research indicates that 51 per cent of customers also live in Balwyn North.
- Bellevue Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located on Bulleen Road approximately 300 metres south of the Eastern Freeway and Bulleen Road intersection. Approximately 30 businesses are located in the activity centre including cafés, takeaway food outlets, hair and beauty salons, a liquor store as well as a business providing allied health and fitness services.
- Greythorn Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located on Doncaster Road in Balwyn North approximately 650 metres south of the Eastern Freeway. It includes almost 80 businesses and shops incorporating a range of goods and services including eateries, specialty retail stores, gyms, medical and dental services and two supermarkets. It is focused on serving a local catchment, with Boroondara City Council research showing that 71 per cent of customers live in Balwyn North.
- Box Hill is a Metropolitan Activity Centre located around Whitehorse Road and Station Street in Box Hill approximately 2 kilometres south of the Eastern Freeway. Metropolitan Activity Centres are higher-order centres intended to provide a diverse range of jobs, activities and housing for regional catchments that are well served by public transport. Box Hill plays a major service delivery role, including government (an Australian Taxation Office in Whitehorse Road), health (Box Hill Hospital, Epworth Eastern), justice and education services (Box Hill Institute) as well as retail and commercial opportunities.
- Between the Eastern Freeway and Box Hill are the two Neighbourhood Activity Centres of Woodhouse Grove/Elgar Road and Woodhouse Grove/Station Street. The Woodhouse Grove/Elgar Road activity centre offers fuel sales, takeaway food, pet supplies, pet boarding and a vet, while the Woodhouse Grove/Station Street activity centre offers takeaway food, a bakery and a small grocery as well as medical services. The two centres are approximately 950 metres apart and 800 metres and 400 metres south of the Eastern Freeway, respectively.
- The Kerrimuir Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located at the intersection between Springfield Road and Middleborough Road in Box Hill North approximately 1 kilometre south of the Eastern Freeway. A busy centre with a range of convenience retailers, Kerrimuir includes a small supermarket, bakery, butcher and other specialty and convenience shops.

- The Blackburn North Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located on Springfield Road in Blackburn, approximately 1.5 kilometres south of the Eastern Freeway along Surrey Road. Configured as a covered shopping centre, Blackburn North has approximately 45 tenancies including Woolworths, IGA, two fishmongers, a café, takeaway food, a bakery and a medical centre.
- The Nunawading Megamile is located in Whitehorse on Springvale Road and Whitehorse Road in Nunawading. It plays a regional role as a bulky goods retailing destination particularly along Whitehorse Road. Some small businesses with office premises generally at upper levels have started to locate along Whitehorse Road as a secondary activity. Within the Megamile, the area around the Nunawading railway station is known as Nunawading and functions as a minor or neighbourhood centre with convenience shops and some office use.
- Lindsay Avenue Shops is designated as a Neighbourhood Activity Centre and is located on Lindsay Avenue at the corner of Springvale Road between the Eastern Freeway and the Nunawading Megamile.
- The Joseph Street Industrial Area is located in Blackburn North off Middleborough Road, close to the Eastern Freeway.
- Doncaster Hill Major Activity Centre is located in the City of Manningham, north of the Eastern Freeway. The activity centre is anchored by the Westfield Doncaster Shopping Centre which includes a range of shops, department stores, supermarkets, takeaway food outlets, restaurants and cinemas.
- Jackson Court is a Neighbourhood Activity Centre located on Doncaster Road in Doncaster approximately 1.7 kilometres from the Eastern Freeway. The centre includes several food outlets, cafes and other convenience type retail as well as some offices.



- Devon Plaza Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located in Doncaster East along Doncaster Road west of the Blackburn Road intersection approximately 1.4 kilometres north of the Eastern Freeway. The centre includes some retail and commercial businesses mainly serving a local catchment.
- Macedon Square Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located in Lower Templestowe between Doncaster Hill and Bulleen Road at the intersection between High Street and Manningham Road approximately 1.9 kilometres north of the Eastern Freeway. With approximately 20 businesses, the Macedon Square shopping centre contains two supermarkets, a range of retail offers as well as offices and professional services.
- Tunstall Neighbourhood Activity Centre is located on Doncaster Road, west of the junction of Doncaster Road and Old Warandyte Road in Doncaster East. The majority of businesses are located south of Doncaster Road around Tunstall Road, which also divides the centre into Tunstall East (anchored by a Coles supermarket) and Tunstall West (single storey shops including butcher, greengrocer, bakeries, deli, florist, cafes, hairdressers, clothing, newsagent, pharmacy and gift shop).
- There are also a number of minor activity centres in the Boroondara, Manningham, Whitehorse and Yarra municipalities that provide additional convenience for local residents and the broader community. Further detail on these centres is provided in Section 6.4.1 of Technical report F – Business.

14.2.5 Home based businesses

Outside of the designated business and commercial areas in the vicinity of North East Link, home based businesses are fairly common. Using Australian Business Registration (ABR) data as an indicator of an active home based business, home based businesses have been identified in each precinct as follows:

- Within the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct, there appears to be a home based business in up to approximately 17 per cent of dwellings.
- Within the northern portal to southern portal precinct, there appears to be a home based business in up to approximately 20 per cent of dwellings.
- Within the Eastern Freeway precinct, there appears to be a home based business in up to approximately 24 per cent of the dwellings.

Planning scheme provisions (Clause 52.11) restrict the extent of activity that can occur as home based businesses to ensure that businesses do not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the neighbourhood. No more than two non-resident persons may work in a home based business at any one time, parking has to be carefully managed, there are limits to the floor area used for the business including storage, and auto mechanical work (for gain) is not permitted.

Construction services is by far the largest category. These home based businesses rely on a well-functioning road network to attend the building site or building that is their current place of work. A small proportion of their time is spent in a home office and only a small number of customers travel to the home office.

14.3 Construction impact assessment

This section summarises the potential construction impacts of North East Link that relate to business.

Potential construction impacts of North East Link that relate to businesses can be grouped into four key categories:

- Impact to business operations and viability
- Reduced local availability of employment and services
- Impacts to business amenity, including views or attractiveness of businesses
- Increased travel times for customers, deliveries and employees

The risk of impacts associated with these key categories are discussed in the next sections.

14.3.1 Impacts to business operations and viability

The construction of North East Link would create risks to the operations and viability of businesses from the project’s planning stage to its completion. Ongoing refinement of the design and construction timing of North East Link creates uncertainty for business operators and impacts their operational decisions. Some business premises would be permanently acquired or temporarily occupied for the construction of North East Link. This would impact them as well as the businesses left behind.

In Chapter 8 – Project description, Table 8-8 provides an overview of property numbers categorised by land use (residential, commercial or other). In reference to business numbers in this Chapter, it should be noted that a commercial property is not one and the same as a business, as there may be multiple businesses on a single property, or there may be a single business occupying multiple properties.

The risk pathways associated with the impact of North East Link on business operations and viability are described in Table 14-1 and discussed below.

Table 14-1 Risk table: Construction – business operations and viability

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU01	Uncertainty for businesses about the future business environment may reduce business viability and therefore the availability of local jobs and services.	Medium
Risk BU02	Relocation of utilities cause interruption to availability of utilities and disrupt business operations.	Low

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU04	Permanent acquisition of INZ1 land in Bulleen displaces businesses and impacts on the viability of the remaining businesses in the area that have linkages with displaced businesses.	Low
Risk BU06	Partial acquisition of land cause disruption or reduced viability of businesses or commercial facilities.	Low
Risk BU07	Full acquisition of land results in displacement which reduces the business viability.	Medium
Risk BU08	Temporary occupation of sites for construction reduces the viability of businesses and commercial facilities.	Low

M80 Ring Road to northern portal

To assist with evaluating the impacts to business viability in the M80 Ring Road to northern precinct, a survey was conducted with 21 businesses in the Watsonia Village and along Greensborough Road as well as with the Watsonia Traders Association.

The level of uncertainty in the lead-up to construction starting is expected to reduce business investment and expansion plans in the short to medium term (risk BU01). Four businesses surveyed said they intended to physically expand or upgrade their business facilities over the next five years. Some businesses have put these plans on hold due to potential land acquisition and uncertainty about future operations. This indicates that North East Link may already be having an adverse impact on business operations and viability in the precinct.

The relocation of utilities during construction may also impact on business operations if supply is interrupted. These utilities include telecommunication towers near Plenty Road, electricity transmission lines near Watsonia, and water mains along Greensborough Road (risk BU02). It is important for businesses to ensure uninterrupted supply of utilities, particularly water and power supply. Therefore it is a performance measurement that utility assets are protected and impacts are minimised.

What is the impact on home based businesses?

Home based businesses are small businesses mainly employing the home-occupants. One home based business would be displaced as a result of acquisition but the business would relocate to the occupants' new home.

However, there are also home based businesses that would be impacted by construction activity (noise, vibration) which could affect the ability of home-occupants to work from their home office.

A small number of home based businesses have been identified in the assessment precincts as part of the consultation activity. Management and mitigation of impacts on identified home based businesses would be covered under the relevant business EPRs as discussed in Section 14.3.3.

While a significant number of businesses are located in the M80 Ring Road to northern precinct, the number impacted by land acquisition would be relatively low. Seven businesses would be displaced due to land acquisition; one in Watsonia Village and six along Greensborough Road (risk BU07). Businesses affected include a petrol station, a fast food restaurant, a café, a paver and bricks retailer, a building supplies and hardware store and a home based business. It should be noted that some of these business properties are currently subject to a VicRoads Public Acquisition Overlay, indicating their tenure is already vulnerable without the project.

Northern portal to southern portal

To assist with evaluating the impacts to business viability in the northern portal to southern portal precinct, 60 businesses and two land owners were consulted and completed the business survey.

The level of uncertainty for businesses during the planning stages of North East Link is expected to reduce business investment and expansion plans in the short to medium term (risk BU01). The survey identified that 17 of the surveyed businesses intended to physically expand or upgrade their business facilities over the next five years. The announcement of North East Link may have created challenges for these business sales. Subject to the designation of the project area under the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009 (Vic)* and project authority consent, businesses would also not be able to be sold once the acquisition of land for North East Link has commenced. This indicates that North East Link is already adversely impacting on business and employment growth in the northern portal to southern portal precinct.

The relocation of utilities may also impact business operations. These utilities include a telecommunication base station on Greenaway Street, Bulleen, the Yarra East main (a Melbourne Water sewer) and three Melbourne Water water mains (risk BU02). It is important for businesses to ensure uninterrupted supply of utilities, particularly water and power supply. Therefore it is a performance measurement that utility assets are protected and impacts are minimised.

Within the northern to southern portal precinct, the project would require full land acquisition of 85 businesses, partial acquisition of two businesses, and temporary occupation of three businesses (90 businesses in total). Relocation under certain conditions was indicated to be a viable option for most businesses that completed the survey (risk BU07).

What is the process for land acquisition?

Any land acquisition required for North East Link would be conducted in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 (Vic)* and the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009 (Vic)*.

These Acts empower NELP to compulsorily acquire interests in land within the designated project area and to compensate anyone with an interest in that land.

The amount of compensation payable to a business would be assessed on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the compensation principles prescribed by the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act*.

In relation to business tenants, the principles are largely the same, although the expenses that may be claimed are related to the early termination of occupation rights under a lease.

Land acquisition for the proposed Manningham Road interchange would have the most significant impact in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct (risk BU04) where over 80 businesses would be displaced due to land acquisition.

Businesses surveyed in the precinct said relocation would only be viable if a new location that met their requirements was identified within the local area to limit the impact to customers and to maintain the competitive advantages of convenient access to the road network and their customer base. The absence of available premises in the local area was highlighted by almost all business operators surveyed. This indicates their initial willingness to relocate and continue their businesses, but also highlights the limited number of sites available in the local area and the likelihood of strong demand for sites if a large number of businesses are displaced at approximately the same time. Businesses within this precinct that have not been identified for potential land acquisition would also be impacted by the displacement of other businesses due to the loss of linkages with those that were displaced.

Permanent or partial land acquisition and temporary occupation of land in the area near the Eastern Freeway interchange would also displace or impact the operators of a number of businesses in the arts and recreation category. Sporting grounds have been identified for use as construction compounds required for construction purposes, and so alternative facilities would be required for sporting activities to continue during construction. The swim centre business would also be displaced.

Partial acquisition would not displace any businesses, although it is noted that a hospitality venue located in Bulleen would lose part of their carpark. However, the car park would be reconfigured and the total number of car parks would be retained post-construction. During construction, the aim would be to maintain the same number of car parking spaces as currently provided.

Eastern Freeway

Three businesses in the Eastern Freeway precinct were consulted to assist with evaluating the impacts to business viability during the project's construction. This is a relatively low number due to the limited direct business impacts in this precinct.

The consultations identified that uncertainties about the final project design and the timing of construction works are already impacting businesses. Two business operators said they intended to physically expand or upgrade their business facilities over the next five years, but one has put these plans on hold due to potential land acquisition and uncertainty about future operations. This indicates that North East Link is having a pre-construction adverse impact on business and employment growth in the precinct.

No utilities have been identified for relocation in the Eastern Freeway precinct so this potential risk does not apply here (risk BU02).

Construction of the proposed North East Link and Eastern Freeway interchange would likely impact five businesses; four would be displaced and one through necessary realignment of activities on the premises (risk BU07). The four businesses displaced are located within the Boroondara Tennis Centre on the corner of Bulleen Road and the Eastern Freeway. This is a significant impact as the entire tennis centre is proposed for permanent acquisition. One business, the Freeway Public Golf Course and associated Pro Shop is proposed to be affected by partial permanent acquisition (risk BU06). North East Link Project (NELP) has started discussions with the Boroondara and Manningham city councils and with affected sporting clubs and facility managers, which have included the development of options for relocation of recreational facilities. For further detail on community facility planning, see Chapter 17 – Social.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Impacts to business operations and viability associated with preparatory works and permanent and temporary land acquisition for North East Link would be managed through the implementation of EPRs and identified mitigation measures. Consultations with appropriate stakeholders would occur to minimise disruption to businesses to the extent practicable.

To minimise disruption to businesses before North East Link construction commences, NELP would be required to inform and regularly update affected businesses, and to work with local councils to identify alternative location options for displaced businesses (EPR B1). Consultation and engagement with businesses would continue through the Business Liaison Groups throughout the construction of North East Link (EPR B6).

To manage impacts to utilities, works for North East Link would need to protect, or where required to relocate utility assets to the reasonable satisfaction of the service provider and/or asset owners (EPR B5). It is important for businesses to ensure uninterrupted supply of utilities, particularly water and power supply. Therefore it is a performance measurement that utility assets are protected and impacts are minimised.

Upon confirmation of permanent land acquisition requirements, disruption to businesses would need to be minimised. NELP would need to work with affected businesses and land owners to endeavour to reach agreement on the terms for possession of the land in accordance with relevant legislation (EPR B2). NELP would work with councils to identify alternative location options for displaced businesses (EPR B1). This includes ongoing engagement with relevant councils about alternative sites that could be suitable for industrial land uses in future. NELP is also working with the sporting, recreation and other facilities close to the Bulleen Road and Eastern Freeway intersection as per EPR SC4 to provide assistance with their future planning. The successful relocation of displaced businesses would potentially reduce the disruption of business-to-business linkages, depending on the distance that businesses would need to relocate and whether there are alternative suppliers and customers closer to the remaining businesses.

Temporary occupation of sites for the construction of North East Link would not necessitate the displacement of any businesses, although some would be required to operate within a reduced area. This is not expected to affect the viability of these businesses. For further detail on construction impacts on amenity due to noise, dust and vibration see Section 14.3.3.

Overall, the displacement of businesses due to land acquisition for North East Link would cause an adverse impact to business viability for displaced businesses as well as some remaining businesses. NELP would provide sufficient warning of acquisition, including negotiation of possession date, to allow planning for relocation by affected businesses and land owners.

14.3.2 Reduced local availability of employment and services

Potential permanent and temporary land acquisition could reduce the local availability of employment and services. This is due to the uncertainty and insecurity of employment which could increase the staff turnover rate, and reduce business capacity to hire new staff. The displacement of businesses may also increase travel time for employees and reduce the availability of jobs and services in the local area.

The risk pathways associated with the impact of North East Link on local employment are described in Table 14-2 and discussed below.

Table 14-2 Risk table: Construction – local availability of employment

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU03	Permanent acquisition of INZ1 land in Bulleen displaces businesses and reduces the number of jobs available for workers in this area.	Planned (major consequence)
Risk BU05	Full acquisition of land results in displacement of businesses along the alignment and therefore reduces availability of local jobs and services	Low

M80 Ring Road to northern portal

As described in Section 14.3.1 above, potential permanent land acquisitions for North East Link would impact seven businesses in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct. This would displace approximately 80 jobs, accounting for approximately six per cent of local employment in the Watsonia statistical area (SA2). This could increase staff turnover in the businesses before construction of North East Link started and staff retention may also be more challenging as employees seek long-term job certainty. During construction, staff retention may become a more significant issue if land acquisition occurs or if there were significant barriers to employees accessing their workplace (risk BU05).

As only one property is identified as potentially displaced within the Watsonia Village, land acquisition is not expected to impact on employment, supply chains and customer sharing in this location. Furthermore, if businesses are able to relocate in the local area, potential impacts to employment would be further reduced.

Northern portal to southern portal

Approximately 90 businesses in the northern portal to southern portal precinct are proposed to be displaced due to land acquisition, with two businesses to be impacted by partial acquisition and three businesses to be impacted by temporary occupation. This is estimated to affect some 830 jobs and approximately 31 per cent of the current local employment in the Bulleen statistical area (SA2). While staff would not be directly impacted before business relocation is attempted, some businesses surveyed expressed concern that perceived uncertainty about the future among employees could increase staff turnover. Furthermore, staff retention for remaining businesses may become a more significant issue if there are significant barriers to employee access during the construction of North East Link or if the work environment is impacted.

The significant acquisition requirements in the northern portal to southern portal precinct would also impact on the business cluster character, which could have implications for employment, supply chains and customer sharing (risk BU03). Customers may choose to travel to another business precinct where business clustering offers similar levels of convenience. Some 70 per cent of businesses in the northern portal to southern portal precinct have existing commercial relationships with nearby businesses. Remaining businesses would possibly have to source new suppliers in alternative locations if businesses they have existing commercial relationships with are forced to relocate due to land acquisition.

Eastern Freeway

Impacts to the local availability of employment and services are less significant in the Eastern Freeway precinct. However, the displacement of the tennis centre and businesses operating from its premises due to land acquisition would have an impact to local employment and result in the loss of an important recreation facility. The outcome for the Freeway Public Golf Course and Pro Shop is yet to be determined but employment could be maintained through the reconfiguration of the golf course. Only two of the businesses surveyed along the Eastern Freeway provided employment figures. These have not been listed to respect business confidentiality.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Impacts to the local availability of employment and services would be managed through the implementation of EPRs and identified mitigation measures in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders to minimise disruption to businesses to the extent practicable.

To minimise disruption to employment before North East Link construction works started, affected businesses would need to be informed and regularly updated of the project status during its planning stages to enable them to manage and minimise disruption to their employees. This would also include working with local councils to identify alternative location options for displaced businesses (EPR B1). Consultation and engagement with businesses would continue through the Business Liaison Groups throughout the construction of North East Link (EPR B6).

North East Link would also be required to minimise disruption to businesses from land acquisition and temporary occupation to the extent practicable. Once permanent acquisition requirements would be confirmed, NELP would be required to work with affected businesses and land owners to endeavour to reach agreement on the terms for possession of the land in accordance with relevant legislation (EPR B2).

To further mitigate impacts to local employment, NELP has a commitment to facilitate opportunities for economic development and provide a skilled local workforce by employing and training local people. It is anticipated the construction workforce for North East Link would vary in size over the course of its construction. However, it is expected to peak at around 2,800 people across the alignment per shift. For further detail on the construction workforce see Section 8.2.2 of Technical report F – Business. Overall, the displacement of businesses would cause a significant adverse impact to the availability of local employment and services in the Bulleen area. NELP would provide sufficient warning of acquisition, including negotiation of possession date, to allow planning for relocation by affected businesses and land owners, and somewhat reduce impacts to the local availability of employment.

14.3.3 Impacts to business amenity

Businesses that remain during construction works have the potential to be impacted by increased noise, dust and vibration which can impact the amenity of some. This predominantly applies to businesses that rely on a high level of amenity such as retail, accommodation, museums, galleries and other businesses that provide onsite customer services. There is a risk that businesses which rely on views and amenity as part of their customer service would lose customers during the construction of North East Link. These impacts would not be relevant for businesses in industries such as automotive and manufacturing.

The risk pathways associated with the impacts of North East Link on business amenity are described in Table 14-3 and discussed below.

Table 14-3 Risk table: Construction – business amenity

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU09	Areas required for construction, materials storage, and stockpiling causes adverse impacts to views and amenity experienced from businesses where view and amenity is part of the customer experience including (but not limited to) businesses with outdoor serving areas, and child care centres	Medium
Risk BU10	Areas required for construction, materials storage, and stockpiling in the vicinity of schools reduces the attractiveness of the school experience and may impact on the ability to attract and retain students	Medium

M80 Ring Road to northern portal

Construction activities are likely to impact the amenity of some businesses in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct. These include businesses in Watsonia Village and along Greensborough Road. Retail businesses and businesses that provide onsite services directly to customers such as health services are generally expected to be impacted by noise and vibration during the project's construction (risks BU09, BU10). Increased numbers of heavy vehicles and other vehicles on the road network may also diminish the attractiveness of the precinct for customers due to changed traffic conditions and increased traffic volumes, particularly at Watsonia Village.

Northern portal to southern portal

Consultation with and surveys of potentially impacted businesses in the northern portal to southern portal precinct identified that 36 per cent expect noise, dust and vibration impacts during the project's construction. These businesses provide onsite educational services and technical services that require a highly stable operating environment.

For particularly sensitive businesses, these impacts can lead to reduced revenue due to a decline in customers. This is evident in the case of museums which would be unable to significantly reduce the cost of providing the museum experience as staffing and exhibit costs are mainly fixed. Private childcare centres operate in a competitive environment and could also potentially lose customers if the facility is situated beside a construction zone where children would be affected by amenity impacts such as noise, dust and vibration (risk BU09).

For schools there is also a risk the location of materials storage and stockpiling in their vicinity would reduce the attractiveness of the school experience and impact on the school's ability to attract and retain students (risk BU10). This risk was mentioned by one school surveyed which suggested that prospective parents did not enrol their child due to uncertainties associated with North East Link.

In terms of business impact on this and other schools in the area, the impact on the financial viability of the schools is likely to be low. The schools along Bulleen Road are highly regarded, have strong traditions that influence student school selection with waiting lists for students to enrol (risk BU10). The social aspect of these impacts is discussed in Technical report I – Social.

Eastern Freeway

The proposed Eastern Freeway interchange is bordered by education facilities, clubs and hospitality venues as well as sporting and leisure facilities and their associated businesses. Increased truck movements are likely to have an impact on the attractiveness of the area to patrons of the venues and to participants in leisure activities. This attractiveness is likely to be reduced by the temporary occupation of some sporting fields and facilities in the area, resulting in demand necessarily being accommodated over a smaller number of facilities (and increased congestion as a result). Reduced attractiveness would possibly reduce patronage and business revenue.

Two of the five businesses surveyed in the Eastern Freeway precinct said their businesses would be impacted by a reduction in amenity. They said that dust would significantly impact their operations as customers attend their businesses for outdoor sports and recreation (risk BU09). Furthermore, noise associated with construction works and increased heavy vehicles would limit their activities.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Impacts to business amenity associated with the construction of North East Link would be managed through the implementation of EPRs and identified mitigation measures in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.

To minimise disruption to businesses during construction of the project, North East Link would be required to minimise any reduction in amenity or function of any business or commercial facility to the extent practicable. Where works are required, businesses must be provided with adequate notification of potential impacts (EPR B4).

Technical report C – Surface noise and vibration, and Technical report B – Air quality provide technical assessments of the potential amenity impacts associated with North East Link. Technical report B – Air quality concludes that construction impacts (dust) are able to be adequately managed with construction management plans and relevant EPRs (EPR EMF2, AQ1 and CL1). Technical report C – Surface noise and vibration concludes that construction activities would be undertaken in accordance with the EPA Victoria Noise Control Guidelines (EPA 1254) during ‘normal working hours’, and that noise associated with increased traffic would not lead to a significant acoustical impact. Where works are proposed outside of standard construction hours, a site-specific Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP) would apply (EPR NV4). Measures in the CNVMP would be as per the requirements of the Roads and Maritime Services Construction Noise and Vibration Guideline (CNVG). Based on this, the noise effects can be appropriately managed during construction. For further detail see Chapter 10 – Air quality and Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration.

Consultation and engagement with businesses would continue through the Business Liaison Groups throughout the construction of North East Link (EPR B6). This would include the timely provision of relevant information and responding to issues.

14.3.4 Increased travel time

For businesses remaining during construction, construction works have the potential at times to increase travel times for customers, within and across the North East Link alignment. This would impact the attractiveness of the businesses and reduce potential revenue. Travel times could increase for employees, deliveries, and business operations.

The risk pathways associated with the impact on travel times for customers during the project’s construction are described in Table 14-4 and discussed below.

Table 14-4 Risk table: Construction – increased travel time for customers

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU11	Increased travel time from changed traffic patterns during construction reduce the attractiveness of businesses including (but not limited to) retail and service businesses and schools.	Medium
Risk BU12	Road detours or other changed road and car parking conditions during construction cause reduced ease of access for deliveries, staff and customers thereby disrupting business operations.	Medium

M80 Ring Road to northern portal

Each of the businesses in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct occupies a niche in the supply of goods and services in the local area. The displacement of these businesses is likely to affect the convenience for typical customers to source their product or service. There are other businesses in the area that may offer similar products or services with less inconvenience (risks BU11, BU12).

Over half of the 14 businesses surveyed in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct expressed concern about travel delays from traffic congestion and diversion during North East Link’s construction. These concerns were also voiced by the Watsonia Traders Association on behalf of their business membership.

Northern portal to southern portal

For businesses not displaced due to land acquisition within the Northern portal to southern portal precinct, it is estimated there would be changes to access and more heavy vehicles and other construction vehicles along the alignment. Refer to Technical report A – Traffic and transport for further detail.

Over half of surveyed businesses in this precinct stated that if construction activities were to change or restrict access, increase travel times, congestion, road closures and diversions, business operations would be impacted (risk BU11). This may impact deliveries to businesses with delays from changed traffic conditions that affect customer service (risk BU12).

Changes to access during the construction of North East Link may also disrupt the continuity of the current established customer base of businesses remaining in the precinct. Businesses with competitors in the local area expressed concern that customers may seek alternatives, and potential new customer patronage that would usually be derived from passing trade may be lost. Businesses that remain in the precinct during construction are likely to also be impacted by the loss of nearby businesses they share a common customer base with. The impact on clustering is discussed in more detail in Sections 14.2.3 and 14.3.1.

To mitigate this impact, businesses identified that maintaining clear access, or access in its current form, is a priority to allow relevant business dependencies and customers to move to and from the existing location easily. Furthermore, traffic management surrounding the precinct was deemed to be important to ensure congestion on local roads is managed.

Eastern Freeway

Within the Eastern Freeway precinct, businesses are mainly accessed by car and so the increased numbers of heavy vehicles and the significant works required at the Eastern Freeway and North East Link interchange may deter customers from visiting businesses here (risk BU11). This may also impact businesses relying on deliveries (risk BU12). However, Technical report A – Traffic and transport assesses only minimal impacts that are expected from trucks during construction.

A number of areas would be required for construction activities in the Eastern Freeway precinct. These locations are being discussed with the relevant local councils. Construction compounds require additional access points for construction vehicles and workers and would likely have indirect impacts on traffic when vehicles are entering and exiting the areas.

To mitigate potential impacts to access for businesses in the Eastern Freeway precinct, access would be maintained to all businesses during the construction phase.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Impacts to business access associated with construction works would be managed through the implementation of EPRs and identified mitigation measures in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.

To minimise disruption to businesses during North East Link's construction, suitable access to businesses would need to be maintained. Affected business and commercial facilities must be provided with adequate notification of potential impacts and temporary access arrangements. All permanent access to business and commercial facilities impacted by construction activities would need to be restored, or relocated as agreed with the relevant property owner. Emergency access would also need to be maintained at all times (EPR B4). To manage ongoing access for businesses during construction, implementation of a Transport Management Plan would be required to minimise disruption to affected local land uses, traffic, car parking, public transport, pedestrian and bicycle movements during all construction stages (EPR T2).

Consultation and engagement with businesses would continue through the Business Liaison Groups throughout the construction of North East Link to mitigate these impacts (EPR B6). This would include the timely provision of information, including where access may be impacted, and responses to issues raised.

14.4 Operation impact assessment

This section summarises the business-related impacts associated with North East Link during the operation phase.

These impacts can be grouped into four key categories:

- Impacts to business amenity due to increased traffic
- Increased operational costs to businesses
- Increased travel times for customers, deliveries and employees
- Poor reinstatement of occupied business properties.

The potential for impacts associated with these key categories are discussed in the next sections.

14.4.1 Impacts to business amenity

The redistribution of traffic during operation has the potential to impact on business operations that are sensitive to noise and amenity changes.

The risk pathways associated with the potential impacts of the project on business amenity are described in Table 14-5 and discussed below.

Table 14-5 Risk table: Operation – business amenity

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU13	Noise and amenity impacts resulting from redistribution of traffic due to operation of North East Link may reduce the viability of businesses and commercial facilities whose operation is sensitive to noise and amenity impacts	Low

All precincts

Amenity impacts would be felt most significantly by businesses along the North East Link alignment that have previously been identified as sensitive to amenity impacts. Section 14.3.3 discusses the potential amenity impacts during construction. These businesses would include art and recreation businesses such as the Heide Museum of Modern Art and the Freeway Public Golf Course as well as cafés with outdoor seating where a pleasant amenity is part of the customer attraction. As stated in Section 9.2.3 of Technical report A – Traffic and transport, the modelled traffic levels on Manningham Road near the Heide Museum of Modern Art would be approximately 16 per cent lower in 2036 with North East Link than without it. The risk of noise and amenity impacts at this location have thus been rated as low.

Golf courses along the Eastern Freeway are also businesses with operations that are sensitive to noise and amenity impacts. Noise impacts from increased traffic along the Eastern Freeway would be mitigated with new or replacement noise walls that comply with the noise standards set for North East Link. The potential residual risk on the viability of these businesses from amenity impacts is also thus rated as low.

A hotel with a pub, gaming venue and function centre is located on Thompsons Road close to the proposed new bus station and park and ride facility at the corner of Bulleen Road and Thompsons Road. Traffic to access the park and ride would be limited and is not expected to generate noise or amenity impacts to the hotel. There are also three cafés/takeaway food outlets on Bulleen Road, but they do not have outdoor seating and rely mainly on convenience and location to attract customers. Risk BU13 is thus not highly relevant to these businesses.

Environmental Performance Requirements

While some changes to noise and amenity during operation are anticipated, Technical report F – Business has identified there would not be significant impacts to sensitive businesses. This reduces this risk to low and as a result does not require mitigation measures to limit this impact.

Technical report B – Air quality and Technical report C – Surface noise and vibration provide an assessment of the actual and potential amenity impacts of North East Link due to noise, dust and vibration during operation. Technical report B – Air quality shows that even during operation, the relevant air quality objectives would be met. The exception is where the ambient air quality already exceeds air quality objectives. Technical report C – Surface noise and vibration, concludes that a major benefit of North East Link would be a substantial reduced volume of trucks on the local road network to link the Eastern Freeway with the M80 Ring Road. Furthermore, mitigation activities here would reduce noise levels from North East Link to within acceptable guidelines. For further detail on air quality see Chapter 10 – Air quality and Chapter 11 – Surface noise and vibration.

By diverting traffic into the tunnels, North East Link would also help improve amenity for businesses currently adjacent to main roads with high traffic volumes. This would benefit a number of businesses that rely on positive amenity including restaurants, cafes, a number of retailers, an aged care facility, a dental clinic and an accommodation business.

14.4.2 Increased operational costs

The risk pathway associated with the impact of North East Link on higher business operating costs is described in Table 14-6 and discussed below.

Table 14-6 Risk table: Operation – increased operational costs

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU14	Business operational costs increase due to suppliers passing on the cost of North East Link tolls to access the business	Low

All precincts

Tolls would apply to vehicles travelling on North East Link during operation. This may increase operating costs of businesses due to their suppliers passing on this extra cost. This risk received a low rating because the business surveys indicated that tolls are not a significant concern for most businesses. Tolls were only mentioned in five of the business surveys. Of these, one business considered tolls to represent a potential increased cost. The other businesses that mentioned tolls recognised that tolls represented an increase in cost but rated speed of delivery as more important.

Environmental Performance Requirements

While North East Link tolls would mean higher operating costs for some businesses, Technical report F – Business identifies that tolls would not significantly increase these costs. This reduces the risk to low and so mitigation measures would not be required.

14.4.3 Increased travel times

The changes to access and road type during operation have the potential to increase travel times for customers, employees, deliveries, and business operations where movement is required to and from business premises.

The risk pathways associated with the impact of North East Link on increased travel times are described in Table 14-7 and discussed below.

Table 14-7 Risk table: Operation – increased travel time

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU15	Potential travel cost increases caused by tolls or changes in travel time, changes the shape of the customer catchment of shopping precincts.	Low
Risk BU16	Road detours or other changed road and car parking conditions affecting businesses as a result of operation of North East Link causes reduced ease of access for deliveries, staff and customers.	Low
Risk BU18	Changed traffic patterns can reduce passing trade (where more traffic is in the tunnel).	Low

Centres within the broader area

As discussed in Section 14.2, a number of business activity centres located within the broader area of the project may be impacted during operation as a result of the redistribution of traffic. These include:

- Heidelberg Major Activity Centre – major access routes include Banksia Road, Rosanna Road and Manningham Road. Under the ‘with project’ scenario, traffic volumes on Banksia Road are forecast to remain at approximately the same level in 2036, but increase significantly under the ‘no project’ scenario. Current traffic volumes on Rosanna Road are forecast to decrease. It is noted the Heidelberg Traders Association did not express concerns with North East Link, nor did centre management at the Warringal Shopping Centre.
- Bulleen Plaza Neighbourhood Activity Centre – as this centre mainly services local residents, it is not expected to experience impacts due to the operation of North East Link.
- Minor activity centre at Lower Plenty Road, Rosanna – this area currently benefits from exposure to traffic, and traffic volumes are expected to decrease during the operation of North East Link. It is difficult to determine if this would have a net impact on these businesses as some businesses rely on the exposure to traffic, while others such as a child care centre would benefit from reduced traffic and improved amenity.
- Kew Junction – due to the 1.7-kilometre distance from the Eastern Freeway and Chandler Highway crossing, no significant operation impacts to businesses in this location are anticipated. This assumption has been supported by the Kew Junction Traders Association.
- The Village Balwyn North Neighbourhood Activity Centre – eastbound traffic volumes on Doncaster Road are projected to increase but the westbound traffic volume is projected to remain unchanged. No significant impacts on businesses are expected from these changes to traffic volumes.
- Bellevue Neighbourhood Activity Centre – traffic volumes on Bulleen Road between Doncaster Road and the Eastern Freeway are forecast to increase northbound and southbound. As Bellevue businesses are located on a service road off Bulleen Road and car parking is limited, the increase in traffic is unlikely to increase passing trade unless car parking is increased.

- Greythorn Neighbourhood Activity Centre – at this point of Doncaster Road, traffic volumes are forecast to increase. It is noted that under the ‘no project’ scenario there would be more significant increases to traffic than those predicted under the ‘with project’ scenario.
- Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre – traffic to and from Box Hill on Elgar Road and Station Street is forecast to increase in each direction from current levels to 2036 under the ‘no project’ scenario and further increase on Elgar Road in each direction under the ‘with project’ scenario (but no significant increase on Station Street).
- Kerrimuir Neighbourhood Activity Centre – traffic levels along Middleborough Road are forecast to increase under the ‘no project’ scenario and even more under the ‘with project’ scenario. This would benefit businesses at the intersection between Middleborough Road and Springfield Road that would benefit from greater traffic volumes, with more fuel sales and take away food.
- Joseph Street Industrial Area – businesses in this industrial area are likely to benefit during operation due to reduced travel times to customers in their catchment that are located north of the Eastern Freeway.
- Doncaster Hill Major Activity Centre – traffic volumes on Doncaster Road are forecast to increase approximately the same amount during operation compared with the ‘no project’ scenario. No negative impacts on businesses at Doncaster Hill are thus expected.

M80 Ring Road to northern portal

Businesses located in the M80 Ring Road to northern portal precinct are expected to significantly benefit during operation. Improved connectivity to key industrial and commercial precincts such as to Melbourne’s south-east and the Melbourne CBD may improve the efficiency of business supply chains with faster journey times.

Permanent changes to access to and from existing businesses are expected in the M80 Ring Road to northern precinct with the addition of service lanes along the road where businesses are located. The change in road type is expected to impact business visibility and potentially reduce patronage (risks BU16, BU18). Surveyed businesses here identified that employees and customers predominantly travel to their premises by car and so adequate signage and parking would be required to reduce any impacts on access.

The risk of loss of passing trade is low for businesses in Watsonia Village (risks BU16, BU18) because through traffic already uses Greensborough Road. Additionally, the upgrade to the area around Watsonia railway station may make the area more attractive, potentially improving patronage for businesses.

Many of the surveyed businesses within the M80 to northern portal precinct expect access to their businesses would improve for customers and employees. More than half of surveyed businesses identified reduced traffic congestion as a positive outcome of North East Link.

Northern portal to southern portal

Permanent changes in access to businesses in the northern portal to southern precinct are expected during operation, which would provide some benefits and also generate potential impacts. For smaller retailers remaining in Bulleen and Templestowe Road, there is a risk they would lose passing trade through loss of exposure to traffic diverted to the tunnels (risk BU18). With the cumulative effect of losing a significant part of their customer base in the Bulleen Industrial Precinct, there is a risk this would threaten the financial viability of these smaller businesses.

However, some businesses in the northern portal to southern portal precinct are expected to benefit during operation due to better access to Melbourne Airport and an interstate and international visitor base. These businesses include museums and retailers servicing tradespeople in a wider area. Improved connectivity with key industrial and commercial precincts, particularly the north and west, may improve the efficiency of business supply chains with faster journey times.

More broadly, North East Link would improve traffic flow and capacity in Melbourne's north-east, which would improve transport productivity for many freight and logistics businesses. Of surveyed businesses, 28 per cent of within the northern to southern precinct expect access would improve for customers and employers. Reduce traffic congestion was identified by 60 per cent of surveyed businesses as a positive outcome.

Eastern Freeway

Significant benefits are expected for the business employees and customers who travel from the north along North East Link. Improved connectivity with the north and west of Melbourne opens up key industrial and commercial precincts and may improve the efficiency of business supply chains, mainly with faster journey times.

Improvements to shared use path infrastructure along the Eastern Freeway are likely to make some businesses more accessible via these transport modes and increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Overall, North East Link would improve traffic flow and capacity in Melbourne's north-east, which would facilitate transport productivity improvements for many freight and logistics businesses. Diverting trucks from local and arterial roads in Melbourne's north-east onto North East Link would help improve amenity. Technical report F – Business concludes no significant impacts to businesses due to increased travel times. This reduces the risk to low and so mitigation measures to limit this impact are not required.

14.4.4 Poor reinstatement of occupied business properties

The risk pathway associated with the impact of North East Link on poor reinstatement of occupied business properties is described in Table 14-8 and discussed below.

Table 14-8 Risk table: Operation – poor reinstatement of occupied businesses

Risk ID	Risk pathway	Risk rating
Risk BU17	Business properties temporarily occupied during construction not reinstated to a condition that is suitable for the resumption of prior activities and operation	Low

All precincts

During operation, temporarily occupied sites would need to be reinstated to a condition suitable for the resumption of prior activities and operation. There is a risk that temporarily occupied properties would not be reinstated to a suitable condition (risk BU17). Part of the sporting grounds of two businesses that are educational facilities would be temporarily occupied for the construction of North East Link. The reinstatement of playing fields would require attention to drainage, soil structure and quality of surface and sufficient time to accommodate the laying and growing of turf.

Environmental Performance Requirements

Technical report F – Business concludes that the necessary skills to reinstate temporarily occupied site for the construction of North East Link are generally available in the Melbourne area. The likelihood that reinstatement would not be to a suitable condition is thus unlikely. Potential impacts to businesses during the construction of North East Link that have not been adequately reinstated would be managed by the requirement to minimise impacts to third-party property and to ensure that infrastructure and property is protected during North East Link’s construction and operation (EPR B3). This would be implemented in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.

14.5 Conclusion

This chapter presents the identified existing conditions, assessed impacts and associated risks to businesses in the North East Link area.

Key findings of the assessment are:

- For businesses identified for land acquisition, impacts include a high staff turnover prior to construction works starting, due to the uncertainty of business continuity. Following business acquisition, the displacement would cause business and employment loss if businesses were unable to relocate to other premises. Reduction in local employment is likely to be significant around Bulleen.
- During construction, businesses that were not displaced may also be impacted by changed access and amenity issues caused by vibration and noise. Once operational, impacts of land acquisition on these businesses are also expected due to the negative impact on business-to-business services.

Application of project EPRs (described in full in Chapter 27 – Environmental management framework) would reduce potential business impacts associated with North East Link. Business EPRs include the requirement to inform and regularly update affected businesses and to work with local councils to identify alternative location options for displaced businesses early in the process to mitigate impacts to businesses and maintain local employment. As there are limited relocation opportunities in some sections of the project, NELP is working with councils to identify alternative location options for displaced businesses (EPR B1). During the design and construction of North East Link, disruption to businesses from permanent acquisition or temporary occupation would be minimised and NELP would work with affected businesses and land owners to endeavour to reach agreement on the terms for possession of the land in accordance with relevant legislation (EPR B2). Impacts to third-party property would need to be minimised (EPR B3). Impacts to access, amenity and functionality of businesses during construction would also be minimised (EPR B4). The protection or relocation of utility assets would be required (EPR B5). Consultation and engagement with businesses would continue through the Business Liaison Groups during the construction of North East Link (EPR B6).

During operation, North East Link is expected to create significant improvements for businesses with reduced travel times and congestion, and improved connectivity. A number of businesses identified for land acquisition have also expressed an intention to relocate to other premises, which would reduce the loss of employment. Nevertheless it is uncertain how many businesses would successfully relocate.

In response to the EES evaluation objective described at the start of this chapter, impacts of North East Link on businesses have been assessed and EPRs identified to reduce or minimise these impacts.