

14 February 2025



Meeting Minutes

Northern Community Liaison Group

Date	31/01/2025	Time	10am - 12pm
Chair	Jeni Coutts	Meeting no.	1 of 2025
Location	Watsonia RSL	Minute taker	Josh Ribarich

Attendees

Attendees		Apologies	
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Jeni Coutts (JC)	Chair	Jonathan Risby (JRis)	Banyule City Council
Leah Waymark (LW)	Chair	Paul Raworth (PR)	M80RRA
Giselle James (GJ)	Community Representative	Brett Kavanagh (BK)	M80RRA
Michelle Molinaro (MMo)	Community Representative	Tracey Varley (TVa)	Nillumbik Shire Council
Stephen Paul (SP)	Community Representative	Wade Howell (WH)	Community Representative
Michelle Giovas (MG)	Community Representative	Nicole Anderson (NA)	Spark
Andrew Mills (AM)	Community Representative	Steve Denton (SDe)	M80RRA
Alan Hunter (AH)	Community Representative		
Mick Marcevski (MMa)	Department of Transport and Planning		
Kalyan Shrestha (KSh)	Department of Transport and Planning		
Kathleen Petras (KP)	Banyule City Council		
Sam Doyle (SDo)	NELP		
Wiebke Wenzel (WW)	MRPV		
Josh Ribarich (JR)	NELP		
Steven Thanos (ST)	NELP		
Jacinda Shen (JS)	NELP		
Deanna Hadid (DH)	Spark		
Rob Maroney (RMa)	Spark		

Attendees		Apologies	
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
James Hamilton (JH)	Spark		
Nani Clark (NC)	Spark		
Carlos Ibarra (CI)	M80RRA		
Meaghan Block (MB)	M80RRA		

Actions – previous

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
NC248-1	Information to be provided about the tools that are in place to control sediment runoff	M80	31/01/2025	CLOSE D	Update provided at meeting
NC248-2	Information to be provided about kangaroo injuries and fatalities on site	NEL	31/01/2025	CLOSE D	Updated provided post-meeting
NC248-3	Information to be provided about type, number and location of dust monitors used across M80RR sites	M80	31/01/2025	CLOSE D	Update provided post-meeting

Key discussion points/decisions

Owner	Action
Jeni Coutts (JC)	<p>Welcome and Outstanding Business</p> <p><u>Introductions (new attendees)</u> Leah Waymark (Incoming Chair) Steven Thanos (MRPV) Jacinda Shen (MRPV) Kalyan Shrestha (MRPV) Meaghan Block (M80RR) James Hamilton (Spark)</p> <p><u>Outstanding short-term actions</u> SD said in relation to actions 248-1 and 248-2, these matters are covered by project management plans which are regularly audited for compliance and effectiveness. The presentation about the IEA Summary report today would help provide insight into this robust</p>

Owner	Action
	system that is in place and how it is independently identified is more action is needed to meet project requirements or manage impacts.
Jacinda Shen (JS) Steven Thanos (ST)	<p data-bbox="331 293 1433 387">Independent Environment Auditor (IEA) Summary report Presentation covered IEA 6-month summary report November 2023-April 2024, the auditing process and summary of findings</p> <p data-bbox="331 432 1433 488">JC noted finding no. IEA-1023-02 (Project cars were observed parked in no project parking areas on Somers Avenue) has been open for some time.</p> <p data-bbox="331 533 1433 566">JS mentioned the Project is in the final stages of closing the item.</p> <p data-bbox="331 600 1433 633">MG asked which company is the IEA.</p> <p data-bbox="331 667 1433 701">JS said the IEA summary report is done by APP, Arup, Aurecon Joint Venture (AAAJV).</p> <p data-bbox="331 734 1433 790">MG asked if the IEA looks at complaints and data and findings such as water samples and air monitoring and are these reported to EPA.</p> <p data-bbox="331 835 1433 947">JS said complaints and monitoring data is examined closely by independent auditors. For example, for air quality, they'll examine data such as air monitor locations, results, incidents and complaints. These all go into their assessment of environmental compliance and if they see an opportunity for improvement or non-compliance then they'll raise a finding.</p> <p data-bbox="331 992 1433 1025">MG asked if they measure compliance against the Environment Performance Requirements (EPRs).</p> <p data-bbox="331 1059 1433 1126">JS said EPRs are part of the auditing scope. If they find a finding against an EPR, it will be raised against it and remain open until it is closed.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1160 1433 1193">MG asked if community complaints are added to findings.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1227 1433 1261">JS said complaints are reviewed through audit.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1305 1433 1384">DH explained when the project receives a complaint, it is recorded into a database, and this is reviewed quarterly by the IEA. DH added the complaints are assigned as actions which are then given a deadline to respond.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1429 1433 1462">MG asked if there are penalties for findings or breaches.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1496 1433 1563">SD said the auditing process isn't about punishment, but about making sure that the project meets its requirements and that any necessary improvements are identified and rectified quickly.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1597 1433 1630">SP asked if the auditing process is planned or spontaneous.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1664 1433 1731">JH said independent reviewers visit the site roughly every 4 weeks. Independent surveillance officers are also out on site to review and report issues.</p> <p data-bbox="331 1765 1433 1798">SP asked are the findings measured against a standard. Is it a national standard?</p> <p data-bbox="331 1843 1433 1917">JS The Project's EPRs were set from the Environment Effects Statement process and are quite comprehensive and stringent. There are also management plans created by Spark to ensure the benchmark of environment management is met. The Environment Protection Act) also includes the</p>

Owner	Action
	<p>General Environmental Duty (GED) measure which Spark works to, to ensure they are minimising their impact to the greatest extent possible. These are the benchmarks the IEA look to.</p> <p>GS asked how the IEA findings and figures stack up against other projects.</p> <p>JH said it varies project to project. Other projects are audited every quarter. This project is audited month-to-month. Findings are expected to become more site based as the Project becomes more established.</p> <p>SD clarified these IEA findings are for the tunnels (Spark) package. SD added that this summary report is ultimately a historic document that summarises past audit activity, and the auditing process is ongoing every month even if the latest summary report isn't published on the NEL website.</p> <p>SD reiterated in relation to outstanding NCLG actions that this robust process is what is in place to make sure suitable controls are in place to manage any impacts from the project, including around sediment control and kangaroo management.</p>
Rob Maroney (RMa)	<p>North East Link tunnels update</p> <p><u>Presentation covered project milestones and community engagement in 2024, 2024 environmental snapshot, drone footage, TBM tunnelling update, worksite updates, target milestones, and recent community engagement.</u></p>
Deanna Hadid (DH)	<p>MG raised issue with the music used on social media videos on NEL channels and if it can be changed.</p>
	<p>SP asked why there was no Project presence at Macleod Fair late last year.</p>
	<p>DH noted the event and said Spark would consider adding it to the 2025 calendar.</p>
	<p>MG asked how many dust monitors are on site.</p>
	<p>JH said they have 12 monitors on site running 24/7.</p>
	<p>DH added that dust monitors are not always in static locations and can be moved based on feedback raised by the community.</p>
	<p>GJ asked if the size of the workplace enhances or hinders the project's progress.</p>
	<p>RMa said the bigger the site, the more efficient for progress. He also acknowledged logistics are challenging given the project site's size and the project is trying to reduce the impact to community as much as possible.</p>
	<p>DH presented a slide on the NEL TBM tracker. It can be found on the NEL website at: https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/north-east-link/construction/tunnel-works/tunnel-boring-machines-tracker.</p>
	<p>RMa said the TBMs are expected to breakthrough at the Lower Plenty site in coming weeks.</p>
	<p>SP asked if upgrades to the roads in the tunnel are being made now or later in the project.</p>
	<p>RMa said they are already building the road deck as the TBMs dig further along. Culverts are currently being installed which will allow services to travel, separately to traffic, through the tunnel.</p>

Owner	Action
	<p>JC asked how many cross passages will be in the tunnel.</p> <p>DH said there will be 48 cross passages.</p> <p>KP asked where the Lower Plenty box is located.</p> <p>RMa said the box is just north of Lower Plenty Road.</p> <p>SP asked if aggressive truck behaviour has been an issue.</p> <p>DH said they rely on feedback from members of the community. They encourage them to report number plates, date, time and area of where an incident occurred. They use a virtual system that can track and pinpoint which vehicles were on the road at any given time.</p> <p>GJ raised concern with general traffic not obeying the 60km/h speed limit from the Grimshaw St and Watsonia Rd intersection area.</p> <p>SD said the Project has been talking to local police about monitoring and enforcement in other areas of the project, so can pass this on too.</p>
<p>Carlos Ibarra (CI)</p>	<p>M80 Update</p> <p><u>Presentation covered community engagement, social media video, engagement activities, worksite updates, Hurstbridge Rail Line occupation, drone footage, community engagement and trader update.</u></p> <p>GJ asked who the target audience for community engagement meetings is, and if specific stakeholder groups are targeted.</p> <p>CI said meetings are tailored to specific stakeholder groups such as highly impacted residents.</p> <p>MMo asked what type of creeping plants are being planted along the noise walls near the project area.</p> <p>CI took question on notice. Information is also available online.</p> <p>Action: M80RRA to provide information on what types of creeping plants will be planted along the noise walls.</p> <p>Post meeting note: Indicative plant species identified for vertical greening include Clematis aristata (Goat's Beard), Hardenbergia violacea (Purple Coral-Pea), Pandorea jasminoides (Bower Plant) and Aphanopetalum resinsum (Gum Vine). Species selection is subject to further design development based on consultation with relevant stakeholders. Further information about indicative plant species can be found in 'Attachment 2 – Landscape design' of the Urban Design and Landscape Plan.</p> <p>GJ asked if the Hurstbridge Line occupation is day and night. CI said the occupation is day and night with replacement buses that stop at every station, as well as express services.</p> <p>AM asked if there is going to be semi-permanent structures for commuters waiting at bus stops while trains are out of service for the coming months? CI said there will be semi-permanent structures such as small marquee tents at bus stops, where practical.</p>

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	<p>GJ said the cumulative effect of unplanned disruptions compounds with this rail occupation.</p> <p>MMo asked if Nell Street bridge will remain open while the new Nell Street bridge is being built.</p> <p>CI said the Nell Street bridge will remain open to pedestrians during the upgrade works.</p>
Jeni Coutts (JC)	<p>Other Business</p> <p>JC has announced she is resigning as the Northern Community Liaison Group Chair to take up the chair position for Southern Liaison Group. LW will chair future Northern Liaison Group meetings.</p>
Jeni Coutts (JC)	<p>Open Forum</p> <p>GJ asked how members of the public can express interest in joining future NCLG meetings as new members.</p> <p>SD said those interested can send an email to CLG@northeastlink.vic.gov.au expressing their interest and also keep an eye on the North East Link website for information on how to join. SD said there's a particular interest to invite new members in areas that may not have been previously represented.</p> <p>AM asked when the last time the traffic light management was reviewed and raised concern around traffic light signal timing in areas across the project.</p> <p>CI said, where practicable, traffic light priority is always given to road users/commuters compared to the workforce trying to enter/exit project sites.</p> <p>DH added priority is given to road users on arterial roads.</p> <p>SD said members of the community can reach out to the Project if they ever have questions or issues with traffic lights, as the project teams work closely with DTP and can look into it.</p> <p>AM said the issue was with the amount of time worker trucks are given green lights and will email through specific areas of concern.</p> <p>MMo questioned whether speed limit signage is incorrect on Lower Plenty Road westbound towards Rosanna Road. The sign says road work ahead with a 60km/h speed limit in a red circle. MMo said it needs to be changed to a black circle because it's a sudden drop from 80km/h to 60km/h. MMo said there is also an instance on the Greensborough Bypass from Diamond Creek Road towards Greensborough Road. People need more time to slow down, and the correct signage needs a black circle on the speed limit there as well.</p> <p>Action: NEL and Spark/M80RRA to investigate speed limit signs at Lower Plenty Road and Greensborough Bypass areas and make changes where necessary.</p> <p>MMo also said there was an issue with City to M80 Ring Road traffic management. Traffic lights are not cycling properly and causing a significant bank-up of traffic during peak periods.</p> <p>CI acknowledged this is a difficult situation with a lot of construction going on in the area. This means there are reduced speed limits and traffic management in place, and it has an impact on traffic. Unfortunately, there's no easy solution and it will improve as works progress.</p>

Owner	Action
	MG asked for action NC248-1 to be answered.
	SD said that the action items for this NCLG fall largely under having existing management plans in place to manage impacts such as controlling sediment runoff and wildlife control. They document what is done and are part of the auditing process.
	MB said the M80RRA team has made several improvements to controls on site. They've installed a much larger basin. MB said erosion controls include hydro mulching, hydro seeding and soil binders to keep soil in place and as the construction site changes, they're progressively updating their plans. There's also a certified practitioner who visits the site, provides information and reviews the implementation.

Actions – new

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
NC249-1	Information to be provided around what type of creeping plants will be installed along the noise walls	M80RRA	21.03.25	CLOSED	Indicative species provided in post-meeting note.
NC249-2	NEL and M80RRA to investigate speed limit signs at Lower Plenty Road and Greensborough Bypass areas and make changes where necessary	M80RRA and Spark	21.03.25	OPEN	

Actions – Short Term

No.	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
NC248-2	Information to be provided about kangaroo injuries and fatalities on site	NEL	31/01/2025	CLOSED	Information provided to MG post-meeting
NC248-3	Information to be provided about type, number and location of dust monitors used across M80RR sites	M80	31/01/2025	CLOSED	Information provided to GJ in 1:1 meeting

Actions – Long Term

No	Action	Owner	Due	Status	Update
NC242-1	MG: Asks what is the percentage of greenhouse gas emissions for the entire NEL Project?	RH	Q3 2024	Open	We won't be able to provide the emissions total until the final energy models have been received from our delivery partners associated with the project once it becomes available in July.
NC243-6	Would like to know the figures of women and the gender balance in labouring roles and construction.	SM/KM	Q3 2024	Open	

Future Presentations

Scheduled Date	Date Raised	Topic	Owner	Update
Q2	10 May 2024	GJ has requested the five phases of construction for Watsonia Road realignment and traffic plans including traffic signals and timings	CI	
Q4	1 December	JC has requested actual v's modelling for noise and vibration to be presented in 2023	LM	LM to arrange JRo (Spark Environment Manager) to present when results available
Q3	31 March	Vent outlet operation presentation including how will the vent outlets disperse the emissions and how far will they go?	LM	LM to arrange presentation
2025	31 March	Presentation on LXRP's communication plan for the Macleod level crossing removal	JN	LXRP to present at a future meeting
Q1 2024	27 October	AMA to present what goodwill offers will be available to residents	CI	Presentation to be given in future meeting

Additional information - previous

North East Link Tunnels Community Interactions: 588	M80 Completion Community Interactions: 846
Enquiries/Comments: 151	Enquiries/Comments: 209
Project engagement and responses: 286	Project engagement and responses: 435

North East Link Tunnels Community Interactions: 588	M80 Completion Community Interactions: 846
Complaints: 142	Complaints: 198
Positive Feedback: 9	Positive Feedback: 4

Additional information - new

North East Link tunnels Community Interactions: 612	M80 Ring Road Completion Community Interactions:389
Enquiries/Comments: 139	Enquiries/Comments: 87
Project engagement and responses: 272	Project engagement and responses: 202
Complaints: 199	Complaints:99
Positive Feedback: 2	Positive Feedback: 1