



Town and Country Planning Association Incorporated

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North East Link Project Environment Effects Statement Inquiry and Advisory Committee Hearing – Monday, 9 September 2019 Submission 709 – Presentation Speaking Notes

Slide 1: Introduction

The TCPA thanks the Inquiry and Advisory Committee for opportunity to present today

In the interests of time, the TCPA will focus on any outstanding matters from its original submission and on matters that have emerged since the submission was lodged.

Slide 2: Town & Country Planning Association Inc. (TCPA)

The TCPA is a politically independent, not-for-profit association incorporated in Victoria in 1994 and is independent of any party political organisation. Its members and supporters represent a wide cross-section of land use and transport planning expertise and interests.

TCPA began life in 1914 as the Victorian Town Planning and Parks Association. The name was later changed to the TCPA (1941).

- Its original objects were “**to give the town a bit of the country, and the country a bit of the town**, to secure better housing, to protect existing parks, to safeguard native animals and plants and erect memorials to explorers”.

The TCPA advocates for integrated planning of land use and transport for ecological sustainability and a healthy living environment.

Its objectives include:

- To promote the application of principles of ecological sustainability to existing and new settlements and urban regeneration;
- To encourage the practice of environmental planning;
- To advocate the establishment of an effective strategic planning framework;
- To motivate, educate and inspire popular support for environmental planning;

Each year the TCPA awards the Sir James Barrett Memorial Medal to recognise the best contribution annually to town planning in Victoria. Notable recipients have included:

- 1964, Colonel Sir Alfred Newcombe Kemsley, Secretary of Melbourne’s Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (1923-29) and member of the Town and Country Planning Board (1946-68)
- 1972, Ruth and Maurice Crow, community activists
- 1973, Peter McIntyre, architect
- 1985, Professor David Yencken, builder, academic and former Secretary to the Ministry for Planning and Environment
- 1986, the Hon. Evan Walker, architect, politician and former Minister for Planning
- 1987, John Bayly, architect, town planner, academic and member of the former Town and Country Planning Board
- 1987, the Hon. Alan Hunt, lawyer, politician and former Minister for Planning

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- 2010, Professor Rob Adams AM
 - 2011, Sue Course, community activist
 - 2014, Alan Parker, bicycling advocate and former TCPA Vice-President
 - 2016, Professor Michael Buxton
 - 2017, Alan Davies, journalist, *The Urbanist*
 - 2018, Cr Jackie Fristacky AM, City of Yarra

Slide 3: TCPA activities

TCPA activities include:

- writing submissions to government on urban planning matters
- alerting members to events such as public forums and lectures related to urban planning
- alerting members to news items related to urban planning
- writing commentary and opinion articles
- writing policies such as the Charter for Planning

Recent TCPA submissions on urban planning matters include

- House of Representatives Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport and Cities *Inquiry into the Australian Government's role in the development of cities*, July 2017
- City of Melbourne, *Draft Transport Strategy 2030*, June 2019

TCPA advocacy has evolved and grown since 1960s

- 1960s: Preservation of the Yarra Valley
- 1970s: More pro-public transport and anti-roads
- 1980s: Actively promoting bicycle paths
- 1990s: Sustainability; and Need for integrated land use and transport planning across the state
- 2000s: Walking and cycling to maintain health → older age cohort

TCPA support for research on transport and health

- Engineering students at The University of Melbourne researching the impacts on human health in urban environments particularly with regard to green/blue spaces and transport corridors Referenced by Mr Kayak on behalf of Yarra Valley Parkland Walkers (Submission 661)
- International Conference on Transport and Health 2019 – Melbourne, November 2019

Slide 4: TCPA and the North East Link Project (NELP)

TCPA acknowledges:

- Long history to resolve the “missing link” involving propositions for several alignments
- The concerns of existing communities experiencing adverse amenity due to traffic impacts
- The concerns of the community regarding impacts on urban “green space” and riverine environments – particularly preservation of the Yarra Valley

TCPA does not rule out a road solution, but as with any solution, its strategic justification and process need to be comprehensive and on-going

Slide 5: EES Scoping Requirements

TCPA members and supporters have had experience and roles in numerous EES processes

- Important to be able to demonstrate the response to EES Scoping Requirements

TCPA found navigating these matters through the EES documents complex

- Spread and cross-referenced across multiple sections in various chapters
- Our submission suggested a table outlining which chapters and sections responded to each requirement of sections 3 and 4 of the Scoping Requirements would assist reader

NELP EES submissions and evidence presented at earlier hearing days appear to recognise this complexity in their various introductions and cross referencing.

Slide 6: North East Link – City-shaping infrastructure of state and national significance

EES paints the link as a sub-regional road of little interest outside its study area despite it being acknowledged as the “missing link” in Melbourne’s and Victoria’s road network.

Submissions and evidence to the IAC provide more discussion on the freight benefits and significance of the project, but do so inconsistently, omitting mention of:

- The role of NELP in a future Principal Freight Network (PFN) or the National Land Freight Network¹ as proposed in relevant Commonwealth² and state freight strategies
- *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* Implementation –
Action 50: “Incorporation of the Principal Freight Network following stakeholder engagement in planning schemes”
 - Engage with stakeholders to confirm the Principal Freight Network and prepare guidelines to be incorporated into planning schemes by December 2017

To date, while Freight Victoria has been established within the Department of Transport, no progress on the PFN is evident and this matter was not addressed in the Department’s own submissions.

Slide 7: Need for a new Victorian Transport Plan

NELP does not have the benefit of a Victorian transport plan as required by the *Transport Integration Act 2010*

- *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* and the Regional Growth Plans are a good start – no state-wide strategy
- Last effective overall Victorian transport plan, *The Victorian Transport Plan*, was produced in 2008.
 - It was initially specifically referenced in the Act, but the reference was later removed
 - Moot point as to whether it remains a transport plan under the Act.
Regardless, it is over 10 years old and only reflected a 2030 timeframe.

¹ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport/freight/network.aspx>

² National Land Freight Strategy 2013

https://www.transportinfrastructurecouncil.gov.au/publications/files/National_Land_Freight_Strategy_Compressed.pdf

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- TCPA believes that a new Victorian transport plan is urgently required to give structure and context to the delivery of transport infrastructure and services between today and 2050 (and beyond).
 - 10 years between plans is too long!

Slide 8: Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28: Increasing cycling for transport

The *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28* is not referred to in the EES. The EES needs to address how the proposal addresses the Strategy's goals and associated strategic approaches

- Goal 1: Invest in a safer, lower-stress, better-connected network
- Goal 2: Make cycling a more inclusive experience

EES had little discussion or data on bicycle and pedestrian usage, routes and movements. If the Strategy seeks to increase cycling for transport, the TCPA believes it will be important to obtain better data and analyses on active transport when considering major transport projects, including Bicycle Network projects.

Slide 9: Walking and Cycling Community Technical Discussion Group

The North East Link Project established a Walking and Cycling Community Technical Discussion Group (Walking & Cycling CTDG) that included representatives from bicycle user groups as well as the general community, including at least one TCPA member.

TCPA understands the Walking & Cycling CTDG considered changes to the project reference design that would meet the goals of the Victorian Cycling Strategy and provide low stress, high quality routes that are:

- Safe and comfortable for riders and walkers regardless of age and ability – including opportunities for separation of bicycle and pedestrians
- Convenient — connecting to schools, shops, public transport hubs and jobs

The *EES Attachment IV: Stakeholder consultation report*

- Notes only the concern at steep grades up to Belford Road in Kew
- Proposed a new 500-metre bicycle path on the north side of the Eastern Freeway and under the Belford Road bridge in the reference project
- *“The group has further input to provide and NELA would work with them to develop a report outlining their priorities for walking and cycling” (p25)*

TCPA remains concerned that EES has no discussion on the scope and outcomes of the Walking & Cycling CTDG's deliberations and there has been no further commentary on the final contents of its report

Slide 10: Yarra Valley valued as green space for walkers and cyclists

TCPA advocacy for the Yarra Valley includes the Main Yarra Trail

- TCPA concern that the project will create two disconnected linear park/trails through one of Melbourne's most significant active transport corridors. This would profoundly reduce its value as a highly valued community and environmental corridor.
- TCPA understands that the Walking & Cycling CTDG considered improvements to both the Main Yarra and Heidelberg Artists' trails

The health and fitness benefits for walking and cycling in the Yarra Valley are not just for Melburnians, but for tourists as well.

TCPA supports previous submissions and presentations made to this IAC. In particular:

- Yarra Valley Parkland Walkers (Submission 661)
- Ms Glennys Jones (Submission 338)

Slide 11: Question from IAC: Walking and cycling infrastructure

Question raised in hearings which I hope I have captured correctly.

- *Would the cost of providing the extra works that walkers and cyclists are asking for be better spent providing new road facilities in the outer suburbs where the need is greater?*

TCPA believes that

- Improvements to infrastructure providing better and more attractive access for walkers and cyclists provide value added opportunities which can offset construction costs
 - Commercial uses can generate income for the public land manager and the Public Purse in general (road authority, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, local council)
- Transport corridors are multi-purpose and multi-modal
- Transport projects should address the safety and access needs of all modes and users regardless of location
- Addressing only the motor vehicle needs/costs ignores a significant segment of users and would not be consistent with the *Transport Integration Act 2010* objectives for the transport system.

Slide 12: Emerging issues since EES

A number of matters have emerged since the EES. I shall briefly touch on those of interest to the TCPA.

Referral to Heritage Victoria for a section of the Eastern Freeway

- *EES Technical Report K – Historical heritage assessment* includes some discussion on the attributes of Stage 1 of the Eastern Freeway
- TCPA looks forward, in due course, to reading the recommendations to the Heritage Council from the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria

Bulleen Industrial Zone business relocation

- TCPA understands that the proposal is to shift the businesses from Bulleen to a Council-owned site **outside the UGB** and adjacent to some high tension power lines and that several submissions have been made to the EES by affected businesses.
- *Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land*
TCPA notes that the Victorian Government is currently seeking public opinions on the manner in which Victoria's strategic agricultural land within the green wedges and peri-urban land within 100 kilometres of Melbourne can be maintained for that purpose³.
- TCPA is concerned that compromising the green wedge by allowing urban commercial/industrial uses being established outside the UGB prior to the finalisation of that review in 2020 would be premature and set a highly undesirable precedent.

³ *Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land*
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/protecting-melbournes-ag-land>

Slide 13: City of Melbourne –Draft Transport Strategy 2030

Since the end of its consultation period in June 2019, Melbourne City Council has considered submission and proposes to finalise the strategy in early October.

TCPA is concerned that:

- Draft Transport Strategy principally focussed on the Hoddle Grid without considering developments in the broader area – including the NELP
- NELP EES did not address the Draft Transport Strategy even though their consultation processes overlapped
- As noted by the Yarra City Council (Submission 386) and the Victorian Transport Action Group (Submission 704), the proposed busway for DART services will have “downstream” impacts in the CBD which should have been considered by both the EES and the Draft Transport Strategy

TCPA notes that the Draft Strategy addresses management and separation of pedestrians and cyclists. What are the lessons for major transport projects?

Slides 14 & 15: North East Link and Suburban Rail Loop

Suburban Rail Loop project was announced by the Victorian Government in the lead-up to the 2018 State Election

The design and delivery of the project will be led by the newly established Suburban Rail Loop Authority and investigation and engagement processes underway

The Suburban Rail Loop and the North East Link Project share geography and environmental impacts

- Riverine environment of the Yarra Valley
- Geology

Consideration of the likely constraints and impacts on each by the other will be crucial.

Slide 16: Conclusion

EES should look at alternative ways of meeting and managing future transport demand that will

- Be less detrimental to sensitive, established urban environments and the Green Wedges
- Recognise the impacts on and from other transport and land use planning initiatives currently under consideration
- Provide superior transport choices for Melburnians
- Ensure community expectations for resolving the “missing link” are sustained well beyond the 2050 timeframe in *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*.

Thank you. This concludes the TCPA presentation.

Marianne Richards

President, Town and Country Planning Association Inc.

9 September 2019

Slide 17: Useful references

- TCPA Website – TCPA Charter (1997); publications and submissions since 2000.
 - <https://tcpa.org.au/publications/>
 - <https://tcpa.org.au/tcpa-submissions/>
- *Cities, Citizens and Environmental Reform: Histories of Australian Town Planning Associations*, Robert Freestone (ed), Sydney University Press, 2009
 - Chapter 3, pp91-119:
May, A. and Reidy, S., *Town Planning Crusaders: urban reform in Melbourne during the progressive era*
 - Chapter 9, pp342-372:
Reidy, S. and May, A.: *Dreams come true? Town planning ideals and realities in postwar Melbourne*
- Richards, M. R., *Town and Country Planning Association (Victoria) turns 100*, in *Planning News*, Vol. 44, No. 8, September 2018, pp18-19.