

**Combined Residents of Whitehorse
Action Group (CROWAG) Incorporated.**

ABN 40385662637 Inc. No A0104002C

Email - crowag.inc@gmail.com

Web - www.crowag.org



6th November 2018

CEO City of Whitehorse

C.C. Ward Councillors.

Re: North East Link Project

Dear Noelene,

The recently incorporated Combined Residents of Whitehorse Action Group (CROWAG), representing many community groups across Whitehorse concerned with development impacts on amenity and liveability in Whitehorse are concerned with the potential negative impacts from the North East Link project (NEL).

The City of Whitehorse, representing its residents, is an important stakeholder in the NEL project. As such CROWAG is concerned that input from Whitehorse is lacking in the NEL project's business case and in its strategic planning with particular reference to the issues of impacts on traffic, parklands & open space, linkages (including pedestrian, cycling links and biolinks) and the overall amenity within Whitehorse.

Could you please advise CROWAG what City of Whitehorse is doing in relation to the following:

1. Traffic congestion shifting and dubious modelling.

- Traffic congestion impacts for Whitehorse.

How will City of Whitehorse influence the NEL construction and associated widening of the Eastern Freeway to alleviate rather than worsen the existing congested traffic situation for the main north-south arterial roads in Whitehorse (i.e. Elgar Rd., Station St., Middleborough, Surrey/Blackburn and Springvale Roads). What strategies will City of Whitehorse implement to prevent traffic congestion shifting from Greensborough/Rosanna to Box Hill/Blackburn/Nunawading?

- Transport Outcomes – Impacts on Whitehorse amenity by heavy traffic volumes.

In the NEL Business Case Transport Outcomes (page 7-1, electronic page 35), Table 7-3 – Change in traffic volumes on key arterial roads in 2036 (page 7-6). None of the roads listed are located south of the Eastern Freeway?

- What strategies are City of Whitehorse going to implement to ensure that 'Change in traffic volumes on key arterial roads in 2036, south of the Eastern

Freeway, are captured into the NEL Business Case and the mechanism by which this anticipated impact can be managed?

- Are the model forecasts still valid?

Traffic Modelling - Paradigm shifts in travel behaviour (Page R-72): 'The model's behavioural relationship reflects peoples' attitudes and preferences at the time the VISTA surveys were conducted (between 2007 and 2010).'

What strategies will City of Whitehorse adopt to ensure NEL model forecasts are reviewed with up to date input data before NEL commits to the final design? The sample data is already more than 8 years old and Melbourne's population has been growing at rates in excess of the Department of Planning projections. By project completion more than 1 million extra people will be living in Melbourne taking the population close to 6 million people.

2. Amenity, Parkland and Open Space.

- The Koonung Trail.

The existing six-lane sections of freeway (three lanes in each direction) between Springvale Road and Bulleen Road will be doubled to between 12 and 14 lanes. In fact there will be 20 lanes between Station Street and Middleborough Road. This widening of the freeway is designed to help address traffic issues into the future and widening is also planned for the entry and exit ramps for Springvale Road. What strategies will City of Whitehorse implement to maintain walking/cycling and community amenity and connectivity adjacent to the Eastern Freeway along this section?

- Amenity.

Off road walking and cycling provides benefits to a range of users in the community. The attractiveness of this off-road infrastructure influences usage.

- What strategies will City of Whitehorse implement to ensure the NEL project results in no net loss of public open space and what strategies are in place to ensure remedial works are delivered to ensure the return of amenity to the existing public open space areas impacted by the project.
- How will sensitive landscapes be managed during and after the project?
- What strategies will be implemented to ensure significant indigenous and other vegetation including habitat trees are replanted along or near the NEL corridor that meet the current offset provisions of the Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation:

https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/91146/Guideline_s-for-the-removal,-destruction-or-lopping-of-native-vegetation,-2017.pdf

3. **BOX Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre – has the south of the freeway been forgotten?**

In the business case there is no land use impact analysis south of the Eastern Freeway?

How will the City of Whitehorse ensure that the NEL project identifies and responds to land use impacts south of the Eastern Freeway? Demonstrable land use impacts immediately north of the Eastern Freeway section of the NEL project are detailed in the business case.

The Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC) is mentioned a number of times, but only in passing. What strategy will City of Whitehorse implement to ensure that the Box Hill MAC is included in the Business Case land use analysis?

It is anticipated that, the unrestrained high-rise development currently occurring in central Box Hill will double its residential population in the next 3-5 years.

How will council work to mitigate the combined impacts on the NEL and the Box Hill MAC on traffic, parklands & open space and the overall amenity within Whitehorse?

It is important to receive responses to questions raised in this letter as soon as possible so that CROWAG can inform its membership and the wider Whitehorse community of council's strategies for both of these mammoth projects.

Alternatively, the CROWAG Executive seeks a meeting with council to discuss council initiatives to help ameliorate the group's concerns as a matter of urgency

David Morrison
President
CROWAG Inc.