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West Gate Tunnel IAC

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

Online submission via www.planning.vic.gov.au/west-gate-tunnel-project-hearing

Dear Sir or Madam,

West Gate Tunnel Project - Environmental Effects Statement

Western Melbourne Tourism Inc (WMT) is an association incorporated for the purposes of promoting and developing the tourism sector within the western metropolitan region, embracing the municipal boundaries of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils. WMT is overseen by an independent board comprising representation from five of the above six western metropolitan partner councils (excl Maribyrnong) as well as the local arts sector, Parks Victoria, Victoria University and other sector representation from the tourism industry in the region.

Currently approximately 4 million people visit Melbourne's west annually and the outlook for future growth of the visitor sector for the region is very positive.

WMT has a strong strategic interest in the profile and supporting the development of a stronger visitor economy for Melbourne's west. The WMT board is committed to working together with its key stakeholders to enable an increase in recognition and greater contribution of the region's visitor economy. It is also seeking to ensure potential visitors are aware of the unique aspects of the region that make Melbourne's west a compelling place to visit, and this interest converts to visitation growth. More background about Western Melbourne Tourism can be found at www.melbourneswest.com.au.

The development of major infrastructure such as the West Gate Tunnel is significantly important to the further development of the visitor economy of the region. In the terms of the benefit to the visitor economy of the region we offer broad support to the project. We foresee the project will enhance access to the region, relieve congestion and provide a much needed second crossing of the Maribyrnong River.

Our submission relates to the following areas:

- Urban design /gateway element of the project;
- Cycling and pedestrian linkages;
- Tollway fees for interstate and International visitors to the region.

Urban design /gateway element of the project

The construction of the tunnel entry point represents a significant opportunity to provide a key landmark and/or gate way element for the region. So much of the current negative perception of Melbourne's west is sourced from the featureless

bland flat 'freeway view' of the region seen by many millions in vehicles using the Princes Freeway and Geelong Road.

The proposed freeway upgrades offer significant opportunities to enhance the driver view and visual perception of the region. The tunnel entrance and new gateway offers a wonderful opportunity for a land mark identity element to define the entry and exit to the region – 'a landmark for the region to known by' for visitors to the local region, Melbourne and Victoria.

We want to be assured the investment in these urban design elements is the equivalent of other similar projects such as the City Link (Tullamarine gateway) and Eastlink (Ringwood bypass). We would like to ensure these elements are 'as built' and not simply glossed up elements on rendered drawings. Further, are there current design options beyond the 'Foot in Footscray'? Has there been a design competition to explore the most creative options? We would also be interested to see more detail to show the visual articulation of the driver view. The EES material does appear yet to fully address this.

We would also seek to ensure improved wayfaring signage is integrated into the urban design planning to enable strengthened directional signage to local attractions in the region, as well as broader sources of visitor information by displaying website URLs, or directions to the local visitor centres in the region.

Cycling and pedestrian linkages

The investment in this infrastructure represents a significant opportunity to upgrade access to the region for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as vehicles. As trails are improved more and more people are visiting the region by bike. The region has some key trails linking to Docklands, the city and other parts of Melbourne. eg Maribyrnong River Trail and Bay West Trail.

The creation of an interconnected network of bike paths for the western region, linking the major employment and business hubs with central Melbourne, is of significant economic value to the region and will greatly assist in the attraction of business investment and development to Melbourne's west.

As the terrain of Melbourne's west is relatively flat cycling offers a significant growth opportunity to the region. A comprehensive review of this cycling infrastructure was completed in a *West Trails*, a Western Metropolitan Region Trails Strategic Plan.

The following is a list of identified missed opportunities to further enhance cycling infrastructure:

Western Trails Project	West Gate Tunnel Project	Comment
Fill the 2km gap on the Stony Creek Trail between Cruikshank Park (Francis Street) to existing section west of Hyde Street	A new connection from the Federation Trail to Hyde Street Reserve and Spotswood Railway Station, connecting the neighbourhoods of Yarraville and Spotswood	Project identified in Western Trails Strategy

Western Trails Project	West Gate Tunnel Project	Comment
Complete missing section (2.5km) of the Federation Trail from Fogarty Avenue to Hyde Street including bridge across the railway	The extension of the Federation Trail (which currently does not connect through Yarraville) and providing new connections to New Street (at South Kingsville) and a new crossing of Stony Creek to link with the northern side of the Hyde Street Reserve and the Bay West Trail on the eastern side of Hyde Street including grade separation at Williamstown Road	Project identified in Western Trails Strategy
Complete missing gap in Kororoit Creek Trail under the Geelong Road Bridge	Completion of the Kororoit Creek shared path Stage 1 upgrade (Geelong Road to Grieve Parade)	Project identified in Western Trails Strategy
Extend Stony Creek Trail 2.5km north west to Sunshine Road (including a train crossing)		Not identified in West Gate Tunnel proposed projects
Fill 600m gap on the Stony Creek Trail from Somerville Road to Cala Street.		Not identified in West Gate Tunnel proposed projects
Completion of the Coastal Trail (700m) at Greenwich Reserve through to the rear of the Newport Power Station.		Not identified in West Gate Tunnel proposed projects
Extend the Kororoit Creek Trail 6.0km from the Princes Highway to Millers Road, including three underpasses to connect to the Coastal Trail.		Not identified in West Gate Tunnel proposed projects
	A shared use path near the Newport Freight Railway Line, connecting the Bradmill and Precinct 15 urban renewal sites	Not identified in Western Trails Strategy
	A new bridge over Whitehall St connecting to the Maribyrnong River waterfront and taking cyclists off busy Whitehall St	Not identified in Western Trails Strategy

Western Trails Project	West Gate Tunnel Project	Comment
	New paths across the West Gate Freeway, improving safety and access for pedestrians and cyclists including replacement pedestrian overbridges and improvements under the freeway at Millers Road and Williamstown Road	Not identified in Western Trails Strategy
	A new 2.5 kilometre elevated 'veloway' on Footscray Road, giving cyclists a safe express route to and from the central city and supporting the growing number of Melbournians riding to work each day (with the existing path remaining in place as an alternative route featuring new landscaping)	Ensure the 2.5km veloway is at least 4.0m wide to meet Austroads Guidelines.

Tollway fees for interstate and international visitors to the region

Tollway fees have been proven to be a significant issue for tourist visitors using both CityLink and Eastlink. Visitors are often unaware that charges apply. We would recommend a review of a system that affords some exemption for visitors eg 'a visitor transponder'. Some investigation is required of alternate models to avoid the negative impacts of having visitors unknowingly charged ; or the economic value of making the road selectively tolled to exclude visitor vehicles; or enabling a free useage at no cost ie via shadow tolling through measuring vehicle usage, such as currently applies to the existing Peninsula Link.

If you would like to contact me to elaborate further on these submissions I am available on 0417 545141 or email richard@melbourneswest.com.au. We also welcome the opportunity to present directly to the EES hearings.

WMT greatly appreciates the opportunity to provide input to this EES process. We look forward to receiving further information as the inquiry progresses.

Yours sincerely

Richard Ponsford
Executive Officer
Western Melbourne Tourism Inc