Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Western Distributor

Preliminary Social Impact Assessment

November 2015

Table of contents

Table index

1. Introduction

1.1 About the Western Distributor

The Western Distributor Project connects the West Gate Freeway to CityLink and provides an alternative crossing of the Yarra River. The Project traverses a corridor that is highly developed with residential, commercial and industrial uses as well as some areas of public open space. The alignment crosses four waterways: the Kororoit Creek, Stony Creek, the Maribyrnong River, and Moonee Ponds Creek.

The overall Project has four sections:

1. West Gate Freeway – widening of the West Gate Freeway between the junction of the M1 and M80 freeways and Williamstown Road in the vicinity of the Westgate Bridge to facilitate movement of traffic to and from Western Distributor, and increase capacity.
2. Western Distributor – a southern tunnel portal near the Jemena Terminal Station in the vicinity of Hyde Street and Stephens Street, Yarraville, a 1.6km tunnel under Yarraville, a northern portal on the west bank of the Maribyrnong River, a bridge over the river to an elevated road above Footscray Road, secondary bridge structures providing direct access to the Port of Melbourne and ramps from the elevated road providing connections to CityLink and the arterial road network on the north and west sides of the CBD.
3. Cook Street/Webb Dock – upgrade of Cook Street from 2 lanes to 4 between Todd Street and Salmon Street with realignment of the ramp east of Salmon Street to CityLink, to improve safety and access to Webb Dock.
4. Monash Freeway Upgrade.

The Cook Street/Webb Dock works and Monash Freeway Upgrade will be implemented separately from the Western Distributor and associated upgrades to the West Gate Freeway. The Western Distributor Project ('the Project') as referred to in this document includes only the West Gate Freeway and Western Distributor components as described in the following section.

The Victorian Government is considering the Transurban market-led proposal in respect of the Project at Stage Three of the market-led proposal process, in accordance with the Victorian Government's Market-led Proposals Interim Guideline.

This Preliminary Social Impact Assessment Report outlines the potential benefits and impacts of the State's Project scope for the business case. This scope is set out below in Section 1.2.

The business case was undertaken to inform government of the merit of investment in the Project. The scope of the Project presented in Section 1.2 should not be considered to be the finalised scope for the Project. This scope was developed in order to have a reasonable basis on which to develop a range of assessments as part of the typical business case development process. Should the Project proceed past the business case stage, the State will undertake a more exhaustive consultation and engagement process on all aspects of the Project scope to ensure that all appropriate and relevant views have been considered before refining the scope through a detailed, inclusive and transparent planning approval phase.

1.2 Project description

The scope of the Western Distributor Project for the purpose of the business case can be separated into five components. Each of these components is discussed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Description of Project components

Project component	Description
West Gate Freeway - Widening	Widening, associated pavement rehabilitation and carriageway separation of the West Gate Freeway in both directions to provide overall capacity of 6 lanes each direction (additional 2 lanes each way) between Williamstown Road and M80 configured as 3 lanes on each of the separated carriageways. Separated carriageways with braided connections with the following features: • Eastbound – The outer carriageway destined for the Western Distributor and inner carriageway destined for the West Gate Bridge with grade separated connections at each end as well a flyover connection from the outer to inner carriageway near the standard gauge freight railway overpass (west of Williamstown Road). Arterial road connections provided along the outer carriageway. • Westbound – The outer carriageway destined for M80 and the central carriageway destined for Princes Freeway West grade separated connections to both carriageways from the Western Distributor and the West Gate Bridge. Williamstown and Millers Road access via the outer carriageway and Grieve Parade access from the central carriageway via a braided flyover of the M80 carriageway. Strengthening of bridges along the West Gate Freeway to 75% SM1600 to accommodate High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFV) at higher mass limits Separation of carriageways via solid safety barrier, provision of emergency lanes in the central carriageways and stopping bays along the outer carriageways Posted speed of 100km/h from M80 to west of Williamstown Road Replacement of two existing pedestrian bridges spanning over the West Gate Freeway in the vicinity of Wembley Avenue and Rosala Avenue Upgrade noise walls along the West Gate Freeway with concrete and Perspex noise walls.

Project component	Description
Western Distributor – Yarraville alignment (including tunnel)	Connections between the West Gate Freeway and the tunnel portals and rebuilding of the Williamstown Road interchange bridges New west-facing ramps for vehicles to access Hyde Street from the elevated connection Two 15.5m diameter bored, 1.6km tunnels ultimately catering for three traffic lanes in both directions, operating only as two lanes with shoulders initially, using a single tunnel boring machine Southern portal on the north side of the West gate Freeway near Hyde Street Northern portal east of Whitehall Street, north of Somerville Road, west of the Maribyrnong River
Western Distributor – Elevated road and port access	Single span bridge across the Maribyrnong River Direct access to the Port of Melbourne at Mackenzie Road (to/from West Swanson Dock) Viaducts in both directions above Footscray Road Eastbound viaduct connection to Appleton Dock Road at the existing intersection with Footscray Road (to access East Swanson Dock, Victoria Dock, Appleton Dock) with a return westbound viaduct connection from Footscray Road Grade separated shared user facility at Appleton Dock Road, Footscray Road and Mackenzie Road intersections
Webb Dock Access	Single lane widening of Cook Street (Eastbound) from Todd Road to the West Gate Freeway ramp terminal intersection. Dedicated new connection and an upgrade to the West Gate Freeway-to-CityLink northbound ramp(Ramp M) including widening for ramp metering, realignment and regrading along the ramp and signalisation of the Cook Street/Salmon Street intersection.
Western Distributor – Eastern interchange and CBD bypass	Inbound and Outbound: Connections to CityLink via modified Dynon Road ramps Access via ramps onto Footscray Road with additional connections to Dynon Road and Wurundjeri Way. Final resolution of scope will include consultation with Melbourne City Council, other stakeholder and the community.
Freeway Management System	Ramp metering upgrades (increased storage provisions) and new installations including the West Gate Freeway, Western Distributor and Princes Freeway West, including metering of the West Gate Freeway/CityLink connections (East-to-North and North-to-West) Installation of LUMS and supporting ITS along the West Gate Freeway and Western Distributor, including adjacent sections of the Princes Freeway West and M80.

As explained above in Section 1.1 above this document focuses on the West Gate Freeway and Western Distributor components as described above and does not consider Webb Dock Access or the Monash Freeway Upgrade.

1.3 Approach

The formal statutory approvals process for the Project has not yet commenced, however some initial stakeholder engagement has been undertaken by the State, along with participation in some of the stakeholder engagement currently being undertaken by Transurban. Therefore there has been limited opportunity to date to canvass community and stakeholder views or undertake specific investigations into the potential social impacts that may result from the Project.

However a significant amount of work has been previously undertaken in relation to other projects in the study area which can be used to understand the local communities, and to guide the identification of the expected social benefits and impacts.

Accordingly, this assessment is informed by the following relevant studies:

- Relevant findings from Truck Action Plan Stage One, including the Phase 2 Social Impact Assessment Existing Conditions and Constraints Report (December 2009, prepared by Akin Planning with GHD Pty Ltd).
- Relevant findings from the 2011 draft Comprehensive Impact Statement (CIS) prepared for the WestLink project under the MTPF Act. The draft CIS included the results of detailed studies that identified and assessed the potential social impacts on residents, communities and businesses that could result from the construction and operation of WestLink.
- Commissioned research undertaken for the 2008 East West Link Needs Assessment (EWLNA), including the East West Transport Link, Urban Structure and Victoria's Prosperity Final Report and the Demographic, Social and Land Use Analysis Final Options Assessment.
- Various internal Department of Transport reports covering the social and other benefits of large scale transport projects in Victoria, interstate and overseas.

2. Overview of potential social benefits and impacts

The Project will pass through a highly urbanised landscape in the inner west of Melbourne which features established and diverse residential neighbourhoods and industrial areas, with shopping and commercial centres, parks and reserves, and community and recreation facilities. The Project will not only directly impact these local areas; it will also indirectly influence patterns of growth and development in the Melbourne CBD and across the city more broadly, as well as help to shape the future of some of Melbourne's and Victoria's most important industries.

The anticipated benefits of the Project are substantial, with many of these associated with the economic opportunities likely to be generated by improved accessibility to the CBD, the Port of Melbourne and other key commercial and industrial centres in Melbourne. These benefits will largely be realised over the longer term when the Project becomes operational, along with anticipated changes in the road network as a result of related projects such as the City to Tullamarine Widening on CityLink.

In both the short and long term, the removal of large volumes of heavy vehicle traffic from surface roads in the inner western suburbs of Yarraville, Kingsville, Seddon and Footscray will create opportunities to deliver social benefits for these other local communities to the south of the motorway including Spotswood, South Kingsville, Brooklyn and Altona North. Local benefits may include improved amenity due to quieter and safer streets, public open spaces, and walking and cycling connections.

As with any large scale infrastructure project, the Project will lead to some adverse social impacts for some members of the community. It is anticipated that many of these impacts are likely to be short-term and localised, and will occur mainly during the project's construction phase. However there will also be some localised long-term impacts which are likely to be significant for the affected community members.

While the long lead-in times and construction periods for infrastructure projects of this scale means that forecasting their future impacts is challenging, a number of broad social benefits and impacts can be anticipated based on an understanding of the communities and the nature of these types of projects and their likely impacts.

3. Social context

The area surrounding the Project extends across Melbourne's inner west from the Port of Melbourne precinct in the City of Melbourne Local Government Area (LGA) through the Maribyrnong LGA to the M80 Interchange in the Hobsons Bay LGA. The Project would provide an upgraded West Gate Freeway and a second river crossing to the Melbourne CBD.

Over 80,000 people live across this area which has been undergoing renewal, with former industrial sites being redeveloped as residential areas. Growth is expected to continue as more areas are renewed and people are attracted to the area by the close proximity to the Melbourne CBD and relatively affordable housing prices.

Table 2 below displays selected socio-economic indicators of disadvantage for the suburbs within the Project area for 2011, and the relevant LGAs. Communities who may be more vulnerable to potential impacts resulting from the Project are a key consideration in understanding and managing potential social impacts. Key characteristics of note include:

- Footscray has a very high unemployment rate, which is consistent with the higher rate of social housing within the suburb compared to the LGA average.
- Altona North has a significantly larger population of seniors over 70 years, which is consistent with the higher rate of people who require assistance, and a higher unemployment rate.
- Footscray, Altona North and Brooklyn all display higher levels of cultural diversity compared to the LGA averages.
- Most suburbs have a high rate of car ownership, indicating a high reliance on cars. Changes to local roads and traffic are therefore likely to be significant for local communities.

Beyond the immediate Project area, Melbourne's outer western suburbs have been identified as key growth areas that are expected to absorb a large proportion of the city's future population growth.

Table 2 Socio-economic indicators of vulnerability for suburbs within project study area, 2011

2011 demographic indicators	Yarraville	Kingsville	Seddon	Footscray	Maribyrnong LGA	Spotswood - South Kingsville	Altona North	Brooklyn	Hobsons Bay LGA
Total population	13,913	3,501	4,697	13,193	71,634	4,169	11,510	1,643	83,861
Indigenous	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Residents over 70 years	8.7%	6.6%	6.3%	8.3%	9.2%	7.5%	18.4%	12.7%	10.2%
Need for assistance	4.6%	3.4%	3.7%	5.5%	4.6%	4.2%	8.8%	5.7%	5.2%
Unemployment rate	4.3%	5.4%	3.0%	11.8%	7.0%	5.2%	7.2%	5.8%	5.6%
Residents born in Non Main English Speaking Countries	8.3%	23.1%	24.2%	41.5%	34.4%	20.3%	35.5%	34.6%	23.1%
Renting social housing	2.7%	3.0%	5.4%	8.3%	6.2%	2.1%	4.8%	0.8%	3.0%
Households with one or more cars	83.4%	79%	77%	63%	84.8%	83.3%	79.4%	77.8%	84.5%
SEIFA Score of Advantage and Disadvantage	1,054	1,026	1,042	956	1,063	1,023	910	946	1,001

Source: profile.id, 2011, Community profile for Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay Councils

4. Potential benefits

The social and economic benefits of major infrastructure projects typically extend beyond their immediate vicinity. In particular, large scale transport projects have the potential to boost productivity, stimulate business and employment growth, and promote significant shifts in patterns of residential and commercial development. At a local level, these changes can translate to positive impacts such as encouraging diversity within communities, higher value business activities and easier access to jobs.

As well as benefits to users of the arterial road network, economic and social benefits will be realised through the Project's contribution to higher levels of productivity, reduced congestion, improved accessibility to jobs (especially for residents in the city's growth areas in the west), and improvements to amenity in the inner west (including reduced congestion and traffic on local streets).

4.1 Business and industry benefits

Over the past 20 years, Melbourne's economy has shifted from a strong reliance on manufacturing to a more diverse industry base, with significant growth in the knowledge and creative industries. It is expected that the Project would contribute to further connectivity and productivity benefits for the inner western and western suburbs.

Through the reduction of traffic, particularly heavy vehicle traffic, in the inner west, the Project will lead to improved local amenity and support the transition from a predominantly industrial environment to one which includes a broader range of land uses.

Productivity benefits for businesses in these areas are likely to include:

- Improved travel times, accompanied by lower transport and operating costs, an increase in the speed and reliability of business-to-business connections and better access to business services.
- Improved freight efficiency due to the more timely, reliable and cost-effective delivery of freight and the ability to store containers in less expensive locations.
- Improved safety through a more steady flow of traffic at constant speed, reducing the chance of accidents occurring.

4.2 Connectivity and accessibility benefits

The Project will contribute to improved reliability and efficiency of Melbourne's road transport system. Connectivity with the Port of Melbourne and key distribution facilities in the city's west will be improved, especially those involved in manufacturing and the transportation of goods.

The relationship between high accessibility to employment and improved economic outcomes is well established. The Project may contribute to improved access to employment opportunities for western Melbourne by improving connectivity to the CBD.

Residents in inner western suburbs may benefit from improved access to local services and facilities (e.g. parks, shops, schools, recreation facilities) through reduced traffic on local roads.

The Project may also provide an opportunity to connect sections of the Federation Trail, which currently does not connect through Yarraville. This would improve local and regional connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst contributing to improved health and wellbeing outcomes for these communities.

4.3 Community and amenity benefits

One of the main social benefits offered by the Project is the removal of heavy vehicle traffic from local streets in the inner western suburbs. By redirecting the growing number of trucks and other vehicles from these streets, these areas will become safer, less polluted and more attractive places to live. Removing this traffic also offers the potential for other improvements in these local communities including:

- Relieving congestion on inner western streets and allowing for improvements in noise and air quality and potentially public transport provision.
- Creating more opportunities for cycling and walking.
- Undertaking urban renewal projects to assist in creating more compact, accessible communities.

The Project may contribute to development 'uplift' and property value increases over the longer term in the inner western suburbs as these places become increasingly attractive to a greater number of households and businesses.

There may also be an opportunity to improve Stony Creek Reserve. While highly valued by the communities of Spotswood and Yarraville, particularly as the inner west currently has limited access to public open space, the reserve is not well-designed and lacks facilities. By improving the design of Stony Creek Reserve and including new public facilities, the Project offers opportunities to increase local access to high quality public open space, leaving a lasting community benefit and improving local amenity. Any potential improvements to Stony Creek Reserve would be undertaken in consultation with local communities and stakeholders to ensure their values and issues are met.

5. Potential impacts

Negative social impacts generally occur on major infrastructure projects when they directly interface with residential, commercial and recreational areas. Adverse impacts associated with the Project are likely to arise due to the scale of the project, a long construction phase and the challenges of working in a densely populated urban environment.

The potential impacts on communities and businesses in the Project study area and broader region have been considered for the construction and operation phases.

5.1 Construction

Construction activities can result in temporary impacts that particularly affect communities adjacent to the Project area, or who travel through the area. These include:

- Amenity impacts e.g. noise, visual, dust, odour and vibration.
- Site occupation and spoil management.
- Traffic impacts.
- Changed access arrangements.

While these may be temporary impacts, the overall long construction timeframes of large infrastructure projects can mean that these impacts are particularly adverse for local communities.

To manage these impacts to within acceptable limits and reduce the effects for local communities, an extensive suite of targeted mitigation measures will be implemented. These measures will include detailed environmental, construction and traffic management plans.

5.2 Operational

Potential long term social impacts on communities adjacent to the Project are likely to include:

- Open space in the inner west is limited and project elements that reduce the amount of useable public open space or which compromise open space values will have adverse impacts for local communities. However potential improvements to open space provided by the Project may offset these impacts over the long term by improving local access to high quality open space.
- Recreational facilities including the West Gate Golf Course, Stony Creek Reserve, McIvor Reserve and Donald W McLean Reserve may be impacted. This would impact both users of these facilities (many of whom may be from the broader region and local areas) as well as the local communities.
- Changes to cycling and walking routes and trails particularly Federation Trail in the vicinity of West Gate Freeway and Stony Creek.
- Widening of the freeway may lead to a reduction in distance between some residential areas and the freeway. This may reduce amenity for these residential areas through increased noise, decreased air quality and loss of landscaping and screening. In some areas the freeway widening may also lead to loss of local street connections, leading to decreased access for local residents on these streets.
- Increased traffic on the Project once operational may negatively impact amenity values for surrounding communities through increased noise and decreased air quality.

- Accessibility and connectivity through relocation of pedestrian over bridges, re-routing of bicycle and pedestrian pathways, and re-distribution of traffic on the local road network.
- Local residents from socio-economically disadvantaged groups may be more likely to be vulnerable to social impacts resulting from the Project (eg elderly, people with a disability, social housing tenants, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds) such as changes to local roads and access. Their needs should be considered in developing management and mitigation measures.

Potential impacts of the greatest significance within the Yarraville community have been avoided or minimised by tunnelling a section of the project where adverse impacts would otherwise be greatest. Communities and businesses most susceptible to residual social impacts include those located immediately adjacent to tunnel entrance and exit points, ventilation structures and elevated road structures. These residual impacts are likely to be amenity impacts related to visual, noise and air quality impacts.

As is typical of projects of this nature and size, some property acquisition will be inevitable. However, concerted efforts have been made in the design process of the Base Case to minimise the number of residential and commercial properties affected.

Community members who may be directly affected by potential property acquisition impacts will be notified before land is reserved and given an opportunity to express their views. Where land acquisition is required, affected owners and occupants would be contacted to discuss proposals, provide support and supply information on compensation procedures and possible timeframes.

Detailed socio-economic impact assessments and management plans, complemented with a comprehensive community engagement program, will ensure that potential social issues are identified and managed promptly and appropriately during all phases of the development of the Project.

GHD

180 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
T: (03) 8687 8000 F: (03) 8687 8111 E: melmail@ghd.com.au

[redacted]

Document Status

Rev No.	Author	Reviewer		Approved for Issue		
		Name	Signature	Name	Signature	Date
0	[redacted]	[redacted]		[redacted]		[redacted]

www.ghd.com