



22 April 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 I represent Yarra Climate Action Now (YCAN), which is a community group in the City of Yarra campaigning on issues around Climate Change. On behalf of our members, I thank you for this opportunity to speak about the impacts of E W Link. We are totally opposed to this project, and while we share many of the concerns already expressed by others, and addressed some of them in our written submission, today we want to focus on the issues of greenhouse gas emissions and Climate Change in relation to the technical appendix entitled *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment* (which we will refer to as the Appendix).

1.2 It is scientifically accepted that human activity is having a detrimental effect on our atmosphere. As the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere approaches an unprecedented 400 parts per million, it is acknowledged that we are fast reaching a 'tipping point'. To avoid reaching this tipping point, we must reduce carbon dioxide emissions levels to at most 350 ppm.¹

2. Climate Change

Globally

2.1 We have one planet. Australians are already living a 4–5 planet life style, requiring 9 hectares per person, compared to Mozambique with less than 1 hectare per person.²

2.2 With nine of the ten hottest years on record globally having occurred in 21st century and the tenth in 1998³, YCAN regards Climate Change as the most urgent issue of our time.

In Australia

2.3 Australia's profligate lifestyle is already having devastating effects, not only on its own climate, but the world's. 2013 was Australia's hottest year on record. Heat waves are beginning earlier, lasting longer, and reaching higher temperatures. More people are dying from the effects of heat waves. According to the report *State of the Climate*, recently released by the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO, there were more extremely hot days in 2013 than in the thirty years from 1910–40 combined.

¹ <http://350.org/about/science/>

² *One Planet Communities: a real life guide to sustainable living*, Pooran Desai

³ National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) annual report 2014

Australia's temperature has risen by 0.9% since 1910. Autumn rainfall in South East Australia has fallen between 15% and 25%.⁴

3. Why are the only options to be considered – Project vs No Project?

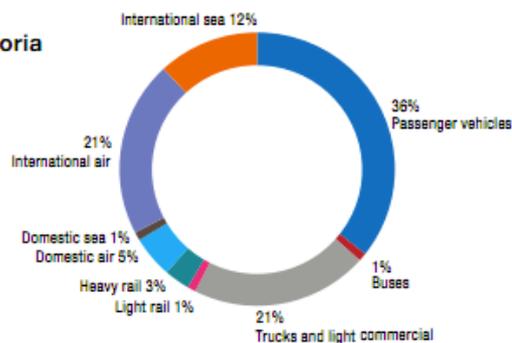
3.1 In the Appendix summary, it is noted that emissions from transport are growing, that 'road transportation is responsible for most of the emissions from the transport sector'⁵ and that transport is responsible for 17% of Victoria's total emissions.⁶

3.2 The Victorian Climate Change Act 2010 (referenced in the Appendix) has created a legal framework for actions responding to climate change, including promotion of 'forms of transport that reduce the overall contribution of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions'.⁷ If the LMA is seriously concerned about this project's impact on Climate Change, a Public Transport option should also have been included.

3.3 Motor vehicles produce 60% of the greenhouse gases attributable to transport.⁸ The report prepared by the Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria, entitled *Victoria: State of the Environment 2013*, indicates that the combined emissions from trams, trains and buses in Victoria only amount to 5% of overall transport emissions.⁹

Figure A.1.6: Greenhouse gas emissions from all transport in Victoria

Source: A. Pekol, *Victorian Transport Facts 2011*.¹⁴



⁴ http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/documents/state-of-the-climate-2014_low-res.pdf?ref=button

⁵ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, section 3.1.2, p.5

⁶ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment* (section 5.1, p.20); RACV website

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/Moreinfoandservices/Environment/Greenhouse.htm>

⁷ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, section 3.1.5, p.7

⁸ RACV website

<http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/Moreinfoandservices/Environment/Greenhouse.htm>

⁹ *Victoria: State of the Environment 2013: Part A Trends and Analysis*, Commissioner for Environmental Sustainability Victoria website

http://www.ces.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/230771/B_CfES_SoE-report_PartA-Ch1_29-66_lo-res.pdf

3.4 This leads us to question the consultants' conclusion that the EW Link Eastern Section 'has the potential to positively impact traffic flow, thus helping reduce emissions from Victoria's vehicle fleet.'¹⁰

The 'modest' decrease in emissions claimed in the Appendix is, we believe, a result of rubbery figures. Table 9¹¹ shows that, if the project goes ahead, vehicle kilometres travelled are predicted to **increase** in both the period up to 2021, and in the period up to 2031. Table 10¹² shows decreased emissions up to 2031, but these reductions are contingent on improved vehicle efficiency and decreased traffic congestion. We do not believe that either of these is likely.

Vehicle Emissions and Efficiency

3.5 Evidence contradicts the assumption that vehicle efficiency will be improved in the future. Though engine efficiency has been improved over the decades, these improvements have been offset by the trend toward larger vehicles, particularly four-wheel-drives, as well as increased use of air conditioning and electronic control components that demand greater weight and power input.¹³

Car emissions increased for all car travel from 177 grams CO₂ equivalent per passenger-km in 1991, to 192 grams in 2002.¹⁴

Decreased Traffic Congestion

3.6 We are particularly concerned about the assumption that traffic congestion will decrease. VicRoads reports that the level of congestion has remained steady from 1997–2006 despite the construction of many major roads.¹⁵ The Federal government's *Review of Traffic Forecasting Performance: Toll Roads* states that 'In general the traffic forecasting performance of toll roads in the world has been found to be poorer than for toll-free roads ... Anecdotal evidence suggests that the forecasting performance for Australian toll roads may have been even worse than the world average.'¹⁶ The review had to rely on anecdotal evidence because no studies have been done in Australia.

Unfortunately, the reality is that new freeways only reduce congestion in the short term as the LMA admitted in this Hearing on Thursday 27th March, when it released new figures on traffic volumes showing that Hoddle St and Alexandra Pde will be more congested when the E W Link is in operation than today.¹⁷

4. Other Transport Options

4.1 The glaring omission is a Public Transport option.

Public Transport, Cycling, Walking

4.2 Our experience as City of Yarra residents confirms that where Public Transport and safe cycling/walking options are available, they are used. Yarra has the

¹⁰ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, Executive Summary, Overall assessment, p.iv

¹¹ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, section 5.3.2, p.21

¹² *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, section 5.3.2, p.22

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics figures via PTUA website

<http://www.ptua.org.au/myths/efficient.shtml>

¹⁴ *Australian Greenhouse Office, National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: Analysis of Recent Trends and Greenhouse Indicators 1990 to 2002* quoted on PTUA website

<http://www.ptua.org.au/myths/efficient.shtml>

¹⁵ VicRoads, Annual Report 2006, p.57

¹⁶ *Review of Traffic Forecasting Performance: Toll Roads*, p.1

www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/public_consultations/files/attach_a_bitre_literature_review.pdf

¹⁷ East West Link Blog No. 17 'Seven Tries but Still No Credible Data', 28 Mar 2014

highest rate of bicycle use in the metropolitan area, a high rate of people walking to work, and 29% of households do not own a car.¹⁸

4.3 A single train has the capacity to take 800 cars off the road.¹⁹ Public transport is the solution to easing congestion.

4.4 Public Transport, combined with cycling and walking, is a far more sustainable, efficient and cheaper way of moving people in a modern city. In Yarra, we know that public transport is good for people's health, good for community cohesion and good for the environment. Freeways aren't.

Victorians Want Public Transport

4.5 Australians do want Public Transport. When the South Morang rail extension opened in Melbourne in 2012, the service reached capacity in the first week.²⁰ When the Mandurah rail line opened in WA in 2007, the master plan predicted daily boardings of 25,000 per weekday. In its first year there were over 50,000 boardings per weekday. By 2013, that had increased to 75,000.²¹

Rail Freight

4.6 One of the EW Link objectives is to improve the capacity and efficiency of Victoria's freight networks. Why has the importance of moving freight by rail not been considered? It is being used successfully in other parts of Australia.²²

5. The Appendix states that emissions from the E W Link are insignificant

5.1 The Appendix, states that emissions, for both construction and operational phases are 'not considered to be significant'.²³ We disagree. One of our members has calculated that the estimated annual emissions for the construction phase are equivalent to the annual emissions of a town the size of Traralgon (24,500 people).

5.2 The Climate Change Authority has recommended cutting emissions by 19% by 2020 if we are to have any chance of keeping global warming to 2°C²⁴. With the difficulty Australia is currently having reducing emissions by even a paltry 5%, the growth in emissions that the EW Link would contribute to Victoria's carbon footprint is, in our opinion, significant.

¹⁸ *East West Link Comprehensive Impact Statement: Summary Report*, p.19

¹⁹ Trains not Tollroads campaign, <http://trainsnottollroads.com.au/the-facts/>

²⁰ *The Age*, 26 Apr 2012 <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/two-days-down-the-track-south-morang-is-still-a-missing-link-20120426-1xo1s.html>

More Victorian examples <http://www.ptua.org.au/myths/nouse.shtml>

²¹ Public presentation by Allanah McTiernan, former WA Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Fitzroy Town Hall, 13 June 2013

²² *The Age*, 22 Mar 2014, 'White elephant of rail comes of age'

²³ *East West Link – Eastern Section Greenhouse Gas Assessment*, section 7, p.28

²⁴ *Reducing Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Targets and Progress Review*, Feb 2014, p. 9

http://climatechangeauthority.gov.au/sites/climatechangeauthority.gov.au/files/files/Target-Progress-Review/Targets%20and%20Progress%20Review%20Final%20Report_Summary.pdf

6. Conclusions

6.1 The final statement in the Conclusion to the Appendix is ‘Overall, greenhouse gas emissions *could* be reduced through the application of best practice as outlined in the performance requirements in section 5.5’ (our emphasis). But there is no commitment to do so.

6.2 Dr Carolyn Whitzman, associate professor in urban planning at Melbourne University says that she ‘can’t think of another city where the central plank of planning strategy is a downtown expressway...’²⁵. In fact, around the world cities such as Boston, San Francisco and Seoul have been revitalised by the **removal** of freeways.²⁶

6.3 So why is the Victorian government committed to such retrograde transport planning with more cars and massive road infrastructure its prime approach? YCAN believes that a Public Transport option with interconnected train, bus, tram and cycle/pedestrian facilities should have been a priority when scoping this project.

²⁵ *The Age* 26 March 2014

²⁶ <http://www.railpage.com.au/news/s/6-freeway-removals-that-changed-their-cities-forever>