

The Victorian Minister for Planning invites public comment – Beaufort Bypass

ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT (EES) AND DRAFT PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT (DRAFT PSA) C50pyrn

Written submissions on the exhibited documents are invited starting 28 March 2022 and closing at 11.59pm 13 May 2022.

Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) has prepared an EES and draft PSA C50pyrn, which the Minister for Planning has allowed to be exhibited for public comment/submissions.

The EES examines the potential impacts of construction and operation of the Beaufort Bypass on the environment and identifies how the proponent plans to avoid, reduce and manage those impacts. The EES process will conclude with the Minister issuing an assessment of the project. RRV then intends to request an amendment to the Pyrenees Shire planning scheme (PSA C50pyrn).

The EES and draft PSA C50pyrn will be on public exhibition for 30 business days from 28 March 2022 to 13 May 2022. During this time, members of the public are welcome to make written submissions about the EES and draft PSA.

The Project

The Beaufort Bypass (the Project) comprises 11 kilometres of dual carriageway that bypasses Beaufort and connects two recently duplicated sections of the Western Highway to the east and west of the Beaufort township.

The Project includes:

- half diamond interchanges on either side of the Beaufort township at the eastern and western tie ins to the Western Highway
- full diamond interchange at Beaufort-Lexton Road
- one road-over-rail bridge across the Melbourne-Ararat line
- overpass structures which will bridge across the existing road network
- culverts and 2 small bridges over waterways
- ten watercourse realignments.

RRV is the proponent for the project. RRV is a dedicated government body charged with managing and maintaining roads in regional Victoria and is responsible for planning the Beaufort Bypass. RRV sits within the Victorian Department of Transport (DoT).

EES Process

The Victorian Minister for Planning declared that an EES is required for the Project under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* on 22 July 2015.

The EES process will inform decision-making on the Project under Victorian legislation. Further information about the EES process can be found on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) website at planning.vic.gov.au/environment-assessment/browse-projects/projects/beaufort-bypass

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC) Process

On 24 February 2021, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment determined that the Project is a 'controlled action' as it is likely to have a significant impact on Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES), which are protected under the EPBC Act.

The relevant provisions for the controlled action (EPBC 2021/8874) are listed threatened species and communities (section 18 & section 18A).

The EES process is an accredited assessment process under the EPBC Act through a Bilateral Assessment Agreement that exists between the Commonwealth and State of Victoria. Therefore, this EES also considers MNES for the purposes of assessment of the controlled actions under the EPBC Act.

You can make a submission on the matters assessed for the purposes of the relevant provisions under the EPBC Act, by making a submission on the EES.

After considering the Victorian Minister for Planning's assessment under the EE Act, the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment will then make a decision as to whether to approve the controlled action application for the Project under the EPBC Act.

Planning Scheme Amendment

A draft PSA C50pyrn affecting the Pyrenees Planning Scheme has been prepared and is included in the exhibited documents (EES Attachment VI).

The draft PSA will enable the Project to be implemented in accordance with conditions contained within an incorporated document without the need for further planning permission. The PSA also includes Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) to reserve land for road purposes and to enable that land to be acquired for the Project.

You may make a submission or provide comments on the draft PSA by making a submission on the EES.

How to access the EES and draft Planning Scheme Amendment

The EES Document, Attachments, Technical Reports, Summary Report and the draft PSA documents are now available to read and download online via regionalroads.vic.gov.au/map/grampians-improvements/beaufort-bypass. Hard copies are available to view at the following locations during the public exhibition period:

- **Regional Roads Victoria Office:**
88 Learmonth Road, Wendouree
- **Pyrenees Shire Council office:**
5 Lawrence Street, Beaufort
- **Beaufort Community Resource Centre and Library:**
72 Neill Street, Beaufort
- **DELWP Ballarat Office:**
402 Mair Street, Ballarat

Response to Covid 19 Restrictions and accessing information

In the event COVID-19 restrictions are in place during the exhibition period and physical distancing is required in Victoria, conventional exhibition of the EES will not be possible. In absence of the physical display of printed copies in the public places outlined above, alternative arrangements will be available to ensure appropriate access to copies of the EES documents for any interested person or parties.

You can request a free EES information pack from RRV.



The EES information pack will contain:

- A USB loaded with the complete EES, technical reports and key approval documents
- A printed copy of the EES Summary Report

If you have accessibility issues, or electronic options are impractical, you can request a hard copy of the complete EES, by calling RRV on **133 RRV (778)**. Please note the EES has several volumes and we encourage the use of electronic versions.

Electronic versions of these documents can be accessed by people with vision impairments.

How to make a submission

Submissions on the exhibited EES and draft PSA from interested persons and organisations must be received by 11.59pm 13 May 2022. As this is a joint advertisement, submissions and comments on the draft PSA are to be made as a submission on the EES, even if comments only relate to the draft PSA. Only one submission is needed to address your views about the Project, its effects and the relevant documents.

Online submissions are preferred and can be lodged via the Victorian Governments engagement website online form at engage.vic.gov.au/beaufort-bypass-IAC from 28 March 2022 until 11.59pm 13 May 2022.

Where a submitter is unable to lodge a submission online, they must contact Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) through the DELWP Customer Call Centre on **136 186** (select option 6) and request a hardcopy submission coversheet. Each hardcopy submission must be accompanied by a coversheet issued by PPV.

All submissions must state the name and address of the person making the submission. Petitions and pro-forma responses will be treated as a single submission and only the first listed person from a petition or pro-forma submission will be registered and contacted.

Submissions will be treated as public documents and will be published on the Victorian Government's engagement website. Do not include personal information in the body of your submission (such as your email address, phone number or photos of people, particularly children). Your submission and your name will be made public.

The submission process is independently collected by Planning Panels Victoria.

Inquiry and Advisory Committee process

The Minister for Planning will appoint a joint Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* and *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The Inquiry and Advisory Committee will review the EES, draft PSA and public submissions, and will review and consider the environmental effects of the Project in accordance with Terms of Reference issued by the Minister for Planning. The Terms of Reference will be published on engage.vic.gov.au/beaufort-bypass-IAC.

The Inquiry and Advisory Committee will hold a Directions Hearing approximately 5 weeks after the exhibition period, where the necessary arrangements and timetable for public hearing will be established.

Further information about the Directions Hearing arrangements (including whether it will be held in person or conducted online by video conference) will be published on engage.vic.gov.au/beaufort-bypass-IAC when determined. The IAC will follow the health advice from the Victoria Government and the Chief Health Officer in making this decision.

The Public Hearing is likely to commence approximately 6 weeks after the Directions Hearing and will run for a period as established at the Directions Hearing.

Members of the public and any other parties seeking to be heard at the public hearing are required to submit a written submission and indicate on the online submission form or hard copy submission coversheet that they would like to be heard at the Hearing.

Information on the Hearing process and the timetable for the hearings will be published as it becomes available at engage.vic.gov.au/beaufort-bypass-IAC

Questions

Questions relating to the Beaufort Bypass, EES documentation and the draft PSA should be directed to RRV at beaufortbypass@roads.vic.gov.au or by calling **133 RRV (778)**.

For questions about the IAC process (including questions about how to make a submission), please contact Planning Panels Victoria at **136 186** or planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au

Questions relating to the EES process should be directed to the Impact Assessment Unit at DELWP at environment.assessment@delwp.vic.gov.au or by calling **(03) 8392 5503**.

More detail about the Beaufort Bypass is available at regionalroads.vic.gov.au/map/grampians-improvements/beaufort-bypass