



Beaufort Bypass Environment Effects Statement

Consultation Plan

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1. Introduction

Beaufort bypass

In mid-2014, the Victorian and Australian governments announced \$4 million would be allocated to Western Highway bypass planning for Beaufort and Ararat. Part of the funding commitment enables a bypass planning study to be completed for Beaufort.

In 2015, the Minister for Planning determined an Environment Effects Statement (EES) would be undertaken under the Environment Effects Act 1978. VicRoads is the proponent for this process.

An EES is an assessment of the potential environmental and social impacts of a proposed project. It is prepared to inform the Minister for Planning's assessment on the level of environmental effects a project may have, which is considered by decision-makers in deciding whether to approve a project.

A Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) process is required to reserve land in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. The PSA may be exhibited with the EES or at a later date.

Consultation plan

Engagement is an integral component of any VicRoads project and is an essential part of project planning and decision making.

VicRoads wants to understand the needs, expectations and concerns of the Beaufort community and stakeholders, as well as who is using the road system, how they use it and what they need and expect from it. We engage with customers and community to find out how we can best serve them, how we can incorporate their needs into our planning and operations, and how we can provide opportunities for people to be involved in decisions that impact them.

Genuine and timely consultation with communities and stakeholders enables us to invest and manage our resources for the greatest benefit. Stakeholders are individuals, groups or organisations that affect, or can be affected by project decisions. In the context of this project, the local Beaufort community is a major project stakeholder.

As part of preparing the EES, the Ministerial Guidelines require that the proponent must prepare and implement a Consultation Plan to inform individuals and groups who could be affected and provide opportunities for input.

This Consultation Plan has been prepared specifically for the Beaufort bypass EES in accordance with the procedures and requirements of the Environment Effects Act 1978. The Consultation Plan guides the consultation activities VicRoads will lead and undertake to inform the EES process. The consultation program will also be integrated with the Social Impact Assessment process being undertaken as part of this EES.

Input and feedback received will help the project team understand key issues and existing conditions in the local area during the preparation of the EES. It will also inform decisions on project design.

Consultation activities relating to the Western Highway duplication project and Beaufort bypass have been ongoing since 2009. This Consultation Plan has been prepared in recognition of the ongoing duplication works, but with a specific focus on the stakeholders and community of Beaufort. The consultation approach, stakeholders and issues reflected in this Consultation Plan build on previous consultation undertaken for other investigations in relation to the Beaufort bypass.

Consultation objectives

This consultation process focuses on enhancing understanding of the EES process and ensuring that stakeholders and the community are provided opportunities to input.

This consultation program has the following key activities:

- Inform stakeholders and the community about the Beaufort bypass project and EES process, including project's purpose, benefits, and relationship to the broader Western Highway project.
- Inform public and stakeholders about the opportunities for input to the EES studies/ impact assessment.
- Consult with stakeholders to expand upon feedback received through previous consultation activities.
- Seek input and gather further information from community and stakeholders to identify issues of concern, obtain local knowledge and understand perceptions of potential effects.
- Respond to stakeholder feedback including concerns about possible issues and describe how these have been considered in the design process.

Consultation principles

This Consultation Plan has been prepared to align with the VicRoads Engagement Standards (February 2016) and the Public Participation in Government Decision-Making Better Practice Guide prepared by the Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2015).

This consultation approach also reflects the core values of International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Consultation will focus on the 'inform', 'consult' and 'involve' levels of participation as described on the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum. These are described below.

Inform: To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Consult: To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

Involve: To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

A detailed description of the consultation activities and communications materials within each level is included in Appendix A of this report.

2. Western Highway duplication

Relationship to the Beaufort bypass

The Beaufort bypass is being considered in association with the ongoing Western Highway duplication. Bypass planning is not included in the current scope of works of the duplication project.

However, we understand that local communities and motorists who travel the highway regularly will be familiar with the works, which have been ongoing on either side of the town since 2010.

As bypass planning continues and construction of duplicated sections of the Western Highway progresses, it is critical that the respective consultation programs interact with each other to ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the status of all projects along the highway, how they relate to each other, where to find information, and how to provide effective feedback.

Scope of duplication works

With traffic along the Western Highway expected to increase in the future, planning for duplication between commenced in 2008.

The Australian and Victorian governments have committed \$672 million for the duplication of the highway, including construction to Ararat, to provide a safer and more efficient four-lane divided route. In addition to separating the traffic lanes, highway safety will be improved with sealed road shoulders, safety barriers, protected turning lanes, intersection improvements, and service lanes for local access at some locations.

A progressive program of upgrade works commenced west of Ballarat in 2010:

- Ballarat to Burrumbeet, completed in April 2013
- Burrumbeet to Trawalla, completed in June 2015
- Trawalla to Beaufort, completed in March 2013
- Beaufort to Buangor, completed in April 2016
- Buangor bypass, completed in mid 2016
- Buangor to Ararat, construction to commence 2017
- Ararat to Stawell, planning completed in 2013. Early works (pre-construction) underway

The duplicated highway finishes at either side of Beaufort, where four lanes of traffic must merge into two lanes (one lane in each direction) and continues in this arrangement through the centre of town.

Project benefits

- Improved road safety
- Enhanced road freight efficiency
- Improved journey reliability
- Better access to local facilities
- Improved roadside facilities.

Other projects along the highway

Planning for Western Highway bypasses of Ararat and Horsham.

About the Western Highway

- One of Victoria's busiest rural highways.
- Approximately 6,500 vehicles travelling west of Ballarat daily, including 1,500 trucks.
- Principal road link between Melbourne and Adelaide, and interstate trade link
- Key transport corridor through Victoria's western district, supporting farming, grain production, tourism, manufacturing and services

3. Beaufort bypass

Proposed bypass

In addition to the Western Highway duplication project, we are undertaking planning for a potential bypass of Beaufort. The planning for the bypass will help us identify potential routes for the bypass so land can be integrated into the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.

These planning works are jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments. There is currently no funding for detailed design or construction of a bypass. A separate planning process is also underway for an Ararat bypass.

The Beaufort bypass route will be approximately nine kilometres, with the current planning investigation area spanning the eastern, northern and western outskirts of the township. More information about the investigation area is provided in the section about 'EES investigations'

A bypass route would link to the recently duplicated highway to the east and west of Beaufort and connect to major intersecting roads and would include:

- Interchanges to connect Beaufort to the new Western Highway route
- Waterway crossings
- Overpass of the Beaufort-Ballarat rail line at the eastern end of the investigation area
- Intersection upgrades at local roads and provision for service roads as required
- Connections for the existing and future transport network
- Changes to local road access as required

Project benefits

A Beaufort bypass will provide the following benefits for the Beaufort community and road network users:

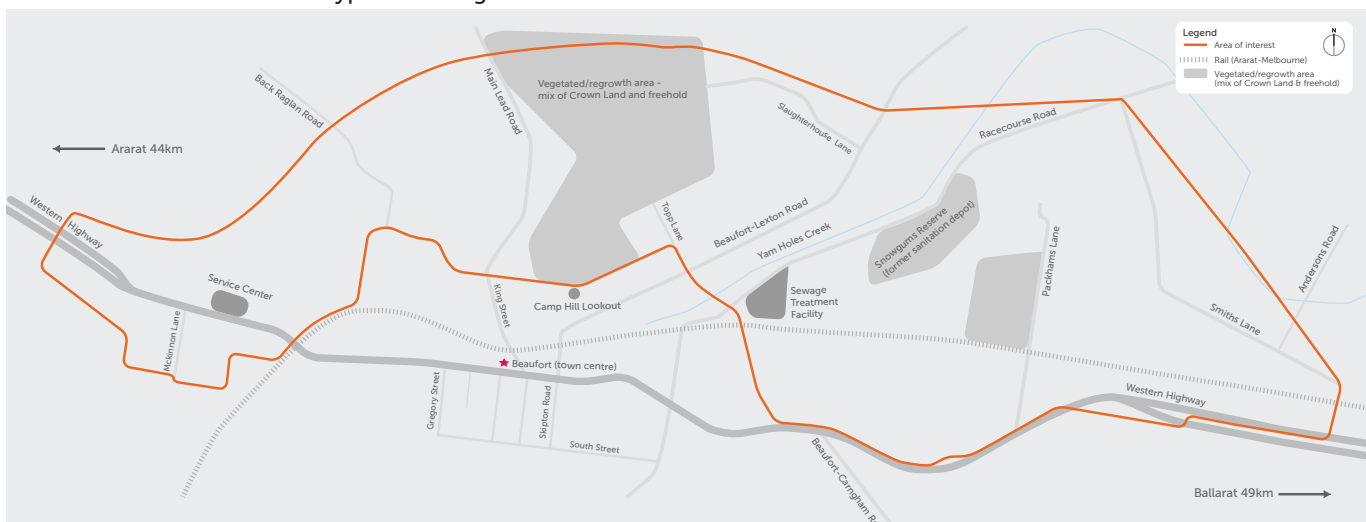
- Improve road safety and maintain the functionality of the town's road network
- Improve the amenity of the township by removing heavy vehicles
- Improve freight movement and efficiency across the transport network

Planning scope

The Beaufort bypass project involves planning for a new four-lane highway (two lanes in each direction) around the township. No funding has been committed for the detailed design or construction of a bypass. The planning process includes investigations to understand current conditions and early design work. Planning investigations will:

- Provide greater clarity to landowners and residents in the investigation area regarding the scope of potential impacts or changes
- Provide certainty regarding land use planning
- Provide certainty for regional investment

Beaufort bypass investigation area



EES investigations

VicRoads is preparing the Environment Effects Statement (EES) to meet the EES Scoping Requirements outlined by the Minister for Planning. The EES Scoping requirements, prepared by DELWP, detail the matters which must be investigated to inform the Minister's assessment.

VicRoads is the proponent for the EES process. When this process is complete, the Minister will make an assessment which must be considered by government and statutory decision makers.

The EES will include extensive field studies and consultation with the public and stakeholders to inform the development of the project and the selection of a bypass route. EES investigations will include the following:

- Traffic Assessment, including a Benefit and Cost analysis
- Flora and Fauna Assessment
- Agricultural assessment
- Air quality and greenhouse gas assessment
- Contaminated land assessment
- Groundwater and hydrology assessments
- Heritage and cultural heritage assessments/ Cultural Heritage Management Plan (Complex Assessment)
- Landscape & Visual Assessment
- Land use planning assessment
- Social and economic impact assessments
- Noise Assessment
- Geotechnical Assessment

The Social Impact Assessment will include detailed consultation with specific stakeholders. This assessment will be undertaken in close collaboration with this consultation program.

Technical studies will be undertaken by a team of suitably qualified specialists. The results of these studies and technical investigations, as well as outcomes from consultation activities, will be made publically available when the EES is released for public exhibition prior to the Minister's assessment. Questions, input and feedback from the community and stakeholders are welcome throughout the process.

More information about the EES process and ways the community can contribute can be found at on the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning's website at: dtpli.vic.gov.au/planning/environmental-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria

A Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA) process is required to reserve land in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme. The PSA may be exhibited with the EES or at a later date.

Proposed EES timeframe



4. Key messages

Western Highway

- As the principal road link between Melbourne and Adelaide, the Western Highway serves interstate trade between Victoria and South Australia.
- It is also the key transport corridor through Victoria's western district, supporting farming, grain production, regional tourism and a range of manufacturing and service activities.
- The Western Highway is one of Victoria's busiest rural highways. Between 6,500 (west of Ballarat) and 23,000 (between Melbourne and Ballarat) vehicles travel the road each day.
- Traffic is expected to increase in the future, and the Australian and Victorian governments have committed \$672 million for the duplication of the highway between Ballarat and Stawell, and additional funding for Beaufort, Ararat and Horsham bypass planning.

Beaufort bypass planning

- Beaufort bypass planning is not part of the Western Highway duplication project or the concurrent planning for an Ararat bypass.
- A Beaufort bypass will complement the Western Highway duplication.
- This project is in the early stages of planning and development and a bypass alignment is yet to be determined.
- There is currently no funding for detailed design or construction of a bypass.

Project benefits

- A bypass will improve road safety, freight efficiency and town amenity by reducing the number of heavy vehicles travelling through the centre of the township.
- A bypass will make it safer for people travelling through the town's road network.
- The bypass will aid Victoria's overall growth and freight efficiency as the amount of freight on road and rail increases in the future.

Community consultation

- Consultation with stakeholders and the community will be ongoing throughout the Beaufort bypass EES process and will tie into consultation in relation to the Western Highway duplication.
- Consultation is a critical element of the EES process and the Ministers assessment, and will also support the Social Impact Assessment.
- Consultation during the EES process gives the public the chance to:
 - share local knowledge, views and ideas
 - help us understand key issues
 - keep informed on planning progress and outcomes
 - inform decisions on project design
- Consultation activities will include:
 - public information sessions and workshops to help people understand how the EES process works and how to provide input and feedback
 - establishing a Public Engagement Group to represent local interest in Beaufort
- We will keep you updated on the progress of the bypass planning, project design and outcomes.
- We will continue to speak with property owners and residents in the bypass investigation area to understand individual circumstances and work with landowners to lowering the impact as the design progresses.
- VicRoads will continue to provide support to stakeholders through project updates and information about the EES process.
- This Consultation Plan does not specifically relate to consultation activities undertaken following the completion of the EES document. However we will continue to consult with stakeholders and the community as the project progresses.

Investigations

- VicRoads has identified an investigation area north of Beaufort and has begun preliminary studies and data collection to help identify potential impacts a bypass may have in the area.
- We're still in the early stages of investigating potential route options, which forms part of an EES.
- This project will investigate potential impacts bypass alignments may have on environment, cultural heritage, social, economic, land use planning, agriculture, hydrology, traffic volumes and safety. Visual impacts on the current landscape will also be considered.

What happens next

- When the EES is complete, and the Minister is satisfied with the documentation, environmental assessments and design information will be exhibited. During this time, the public can make written submissions on the EES.
- The Minister will appoint an independent inquiry to consider public submissions and evaluate the effects of the project having regard to the EES.
- The Minister for Planning will then assess the project based on:
 - EES documents
 - public submissions
 - VicRoads response to submissions
- The Government and statutory decision-makers must then consider the Minister's assessment before an amendment can be made to the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.
- For more information about the EES process in Victoria or to view a copy of the Ministerial Guidelines, please visit this (DELWP) website dtpli.vic.gov.au/planning/environmental-assessment/what-is-the-ees-process-in-victoria

Contact details

- Call** (03) 5333 8720
- Email** beaufortbypass@roads.vic.gov.au
to join our email distribution list
- Visit** 88 Learmonth Road, Wendouree
- Website** vicroads.vic.gov.au – search 'Beaufort bypass planning'.
- Write** Regional Director – Western Victoria,
VicRoads, PO Box 5580, Ballarat, 3353

5. Previous consultation and issues

Public and stakeholder consultation has been ongoing as part of the broader Western Highway duplication project. While focussed on the highway duplication, this consultation has also raised public awareness about the potential for a Beaufort bypass and identified potential issues and concerns.

The duplication project required alignments and bypass tie-in points to be identified to determine where construction would start and finish at either side of Beaufort. The potential for a Beaufort bypass was the subject of public engagement as part of the Western Highway duplication project between 2009 and 2013.

Engagement for the Beaufort bypass planning will build on previous consultation activities and draw on the information and feedback gathered through the Western Highway duplication project.

Working with the Western Highway duplication project

The Western Highway duplication team has valuable information to share regarding lessons learned from the EES processes undertaken for Beaufort to Ararat and Ararat to Stawell, particularly around the estimation of tree numbers affected by the project and the public understanding of the regulatory process.

Working closely with the Western Highway duplication project team will give the Beaufort bypass planning team a better understanding of stakeholder interests in the area and another avenue to target engagement activities for the EES.

The Western Highway duplication project formed an Environmental Consultation Group in 2015 to give stakeholders and interest groups an opportunity to express their concerns and provide input on environmental issues. A broader community group – the Community Consultation Group – was also formed in 2015, which focuses on all aspects of the highway.

The Beaufort bypass planning team will continue to engage with these groups via the Western Highway duplication project during the EES.

Key issues relevant to Beaufort

Consultation activities completed to date have identified a number of concerns, expectations, requirements and preferred outcomes from the public and key stakeholders. Many of these are likely to also be relevant to the Beaufort bypass EES.

Stakeholder interests identified to date include:

- What the EES process is and how it works
- EES and planning timeframes including the release of alignments and consultation program
- Current status of planning, including previous work conducted by council
- Opportunities for the public and stakeholder to influence the location of the bypass alignment
- How the Beaufort bypass links in with the ongoing Western Highway duplication
- Assessment and approval decision making processes and responsibilities
- Design details including the what a bypass will look like and operate such as the number of lanes and speed limits
- Potential impacts to business and tourism in the township
- Environmental and heritage sensitivities in the area including indigenous/non-indigenous cultural heritage, flood mitigation and potential for tree removal
- The experience of tree count discrepancy for the Western Highway duplication project EES and what has been learned from that
- The likelihood and process of land acquisition
- Potential construction impacts such as noise, dust, roadwork disruption/delays, emergency services access
- Operational changes such as changes to access, interchange locations, service road locations
- Land use impacts, particularly with regard to agriculture.

Summary of previous consultation

2011: Investigations to identify tie-in points

- Discussion with Pyrenees Shire Council and targeted stakeholders
- Public information session, attended by almost 100 people

2014: Project objectives

- Targeted stakeholder workshop
- Commence workshops and meetings government agencies, technical stakeholders, project partners (ongoing)

2014: Issues and opportunities

- Commence meetings with landowners, residents, businesses in the investigation area (ongoing)
- Commence site investigations

2015: Funding announcement and update

- Public information session attended by more than 150 people
- Commence distribution of emails, letters to landowners, newsletters, website updates
- Commence project enquiry email address and phone number
- Attendance at Western Highway duplication consultation events (ongoing)

Early 2016: Western Highway updates

- Attendance at four community information sessions about the Western Highway duplication (approximately 150 people in total attended)
- Attendance at community session about Ararat bypass planning (more than 100 people attended).

6. Project stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or organisations that affect, or can be affected by project decisions. However, stakeholder interest and ability to influence project outcomes will vary. People, attitudes, ideas and perceptions are not static and neither are stakeholders – they will emerge and evolve throughout the engagement process.

While all project stakeholders identified will receive information about the project and be invited to contribute, it is not guaranteed that all stakeholders will actively participate. It is also important to note that participants may not be a statistically representative sample of the community. With an emphasis on inclusive engagement, we will make every effort to hear from all community cohorts, individuals and groups with an interest in the project.

Beaufort community profile

The residential community of Beaufort is a major stakeholder. Understanding the demographic characteristics of the Beaufort community helps us to develop a consultation approach and program that meets the needs and preferences of the local stakeholders.

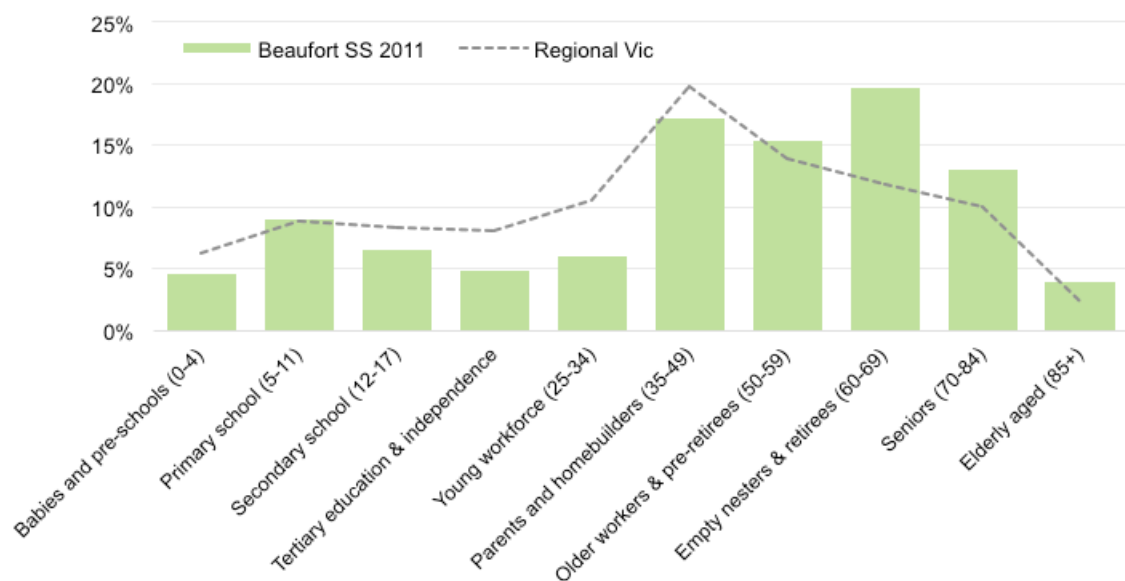
Beaufort is a town of approximately 1,400 residents* across 608 households. There are 738 private dwellings in Beaufort with an occupancy rate of 84%.

The median resident age is 51 years. The graph below shows that the population of Beaufort is aging significantly, compared to the Regional Victorian average.

The community of Beaufort is predominantly born in Australia (87.5%), or other English speaking countries including England (3.3%) and Scotland (1.0%). The vast majority of residents speak only English at home (94%).

Labour force participation in Beaufort is low (38.1%) and unemployment is high (7.3%) compared to the Regional Victorian average (5.2%). Labourers, and Technicians and Trades Workers make up 29.6% of the workforce. Local Government Administration is the most predominant employment sector for Beaufort residents (8.0%) followed by Hospitals (7.2%), Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming (4.5%), Supermarket and Grocery Stores (3.9%), and Cafes, Restaurants and Takeaway Food Services (3.5%).

Figure 2 Beaufort community age profile 2011. (2016 Census data was not available at the time of publication)



*Beaufort State Suburb 2011. ABS Census code: SSC20098

Stakeholder identification

Beaufort bypass planning will attract interest from a variety of stakeholders with a range of interests, perceptions and expectations. Described below is a broad list of stakeholder types that have been identified for the Beaufort bypass EES. Stakeholders have been identified with input from various sources including:

- VicRoads existing information from the regional office and Western Highway duplication project
- Consultation with local government to determine individuals and groups affected, taking into account land use and social planning policies and proposals
- Input from the community at public information sessions and in response to other forms of communication

Stakeholders have been broadly grouped according to their likely interest and involvement in the project, but may not be an exhaustive list. Stakeholder lists will be reviewed and updated throughout the project and new groups will be identified and included as required.

Public Engagement Group

A Public Engagement Group will be convened from September 2016 to represent local interests in Beaufort and provide a further avenue for feedback to the EES process.

The group will comprise 12 members. The project will consult with Pyrenees Shire Council on the format and membership of the group, which will include a range of segments of the local population such as:

- Local businesses
- Residents
- Local schools
- Service clubs, faith organisations and sporting clubs
- Environment group
- Registered Aboriginal Party

It is proposed that the group will share the community's views and ideas, provide local knowledge and experience, and raise project awareness to assist the principal consultant's work when undertaking investigations.

Nominations were invited through the project website and promoted through Council's networks. Nominations closed in July 2016, and the group appointed in August, 2016. Terms of Reference for the Public Engagement Group will be confirmed and jointly signed-off at the group's first meeting.

Registered Aboriginal Party

The preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is required under section 49 of the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 as part of any EES.

This process involves targeted consultation with the local Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) who is responsible for providing advice on heritage places and objects and for the evaluation and approval of Cultural Heritage Management Plans.

Technical Reference Group

In accordance with the requirements of the Environment Effects Act, a Technical Reference Group (TRG) has been established by DELWP on behalf of the Minister for Planning. The TRG will advise DELWP and VicRoads throughout the EES process, particularly on the scope and preparation of the EES.

The TRG is chaired by DELWP and includes representatives from VicRoads, Pyrenees Shire Council, Department of Economic Development Jobs, Transport and Resources, Parks Victoria, Heritage Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, and Aboriginal Victoria.

Approach to stakeholders

During the early stages of planning, the project team will identify and engage with stakeholders who reside, own land or own businesses in the investigation area.

The project will seek to expand stakeholder participation during project development to encourage and gather input and feedback from a range of stakeholders including residents, business owners/operators, special interest groups, transport groups, commuters, emergency services and industry groups.

The consultation program will seek to utilise existing stakeholder connections to raise awareness of bypass planning, project status and encourage participation in the EES engagement program to understand individual and group interests.

Engagement with government decision-makers will be ongoing throughout all project phases.

Table 1 - Stakeholder groups

PROJECT DECISION MAKERS	
Australian Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Environment • Infrastructure Australia • Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
Victorian Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Premier and Cabinet • Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources • Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning • Cabinet/Policy Strategy Budget Committee/ Expenditure Review Sub-Committee • VicRoads (Project Review Committee)
Statutory assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victorian Minister for Planning (environmental assessment and planning approval) • Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Department of the Environment • Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (environmental assessment and planning approval)
Legislative decision makers	<p>Includes Ministers, Agencies or statutory bodies responsible for public works, or administering relevant approvals legislation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority • Aboriginal Victoria • Environment Protection Authority Victoria • Registered Aboriginal Party
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT	
Federal Members of Parliament	
VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT	
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	Central Highlands Water
Emergency Services (police, ambulance, CFA, SES)	Parks Victoria
Aboriginal Victoria	Environment Protection Authority Victoria
VLine	Public Transport Victoria
Local Members of Parliament	VicTrack
PROJECT PARTNERS AND ADVISORS	
Principal consultant	
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Impact Assessment team and Biodiversity team)	

TECHNICAL REFERENCE GROUP (TRG)

Members from government agencies, local government and statutory authorities make up the TRG. The TRG includes representatives from DELWP, VicRoads, Pyrenees Shire Council, Department of Economic Development Jobs, Transport and Resources, Parks Victoria, Heritage Victoria, Country Fire Authority, Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority, and Aboriginal Victoria.

TECHNICAL STAKEHOLDERS AND ASSET OWNERS

Telecommunication carriers	Energy networks
Emergency services	Rail authorities (VLine/VicTrack)
Water networks	

DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY AFFECTED

Landowners	Business owners
Residents	Special interest groups
Property developers	Freight transport operators
Transport network users	Schools and school communities

BROADER PUBLIC

Beaufort bypass Public Engagement Group	Industry groups
Environmental Consultation Group	Resident associations and other public groups
Western Highway Community Consultation Group	Local sporting associations
Social service providers	Local schools
Local residents	Local service clubs, faith organisations and sporting clubs
Local chamber of commerce	Victorian Farmers Federation
Local businesses	
Tourism groups	
Environment and Landcare groups	

MEDIA

Local and metropolitan newspapers	Television
Radio	Social media/online media

7. Consultation approach

The consultation program will include a range of engagement activities throughout the EES process. The consultation approach has been developed to provide stakeholders and the community with opportunities to share local knowledge, provide input on key issues and concerns, and to stay informed about planning progress and outcomes.

Effective and timely consultation is critical to ensure that stakeholder input and feedback is sought at appropriate project milestones to inform project decision making. The engagement approach must also ensure that the expectations of the public and stakeholders are managed regarding the level of influence and involvement they have throughout the EES process. Clear and consistent messaging about the EES process and the consultation program is essential to establishing shared understanding about the parameters of consultation.

Ensuring that interactions are transparent and responsive will help stakeholders understand how feedback has been used and how they can provide input in a way that is most valuable for project decision making.

VicRoads will work with council to identify the need for information to be targeted to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and hard to reach groups. Materials and interpretation services will be available as required to meet the needs of stakeholders with special requirements.

Consultation approach and activities

The consultation program for the EES has been designed in four phases to reflect the EES process and project milestones.

The following table outlines four phases and provides a summary of EES activities and the corresponding consultation objectives and outcomes. This Consultation Plan relates specifically to Phase 2.

Phases 3 and 4 will follow a statutory consultation process with prescribed structures and activities. VicRoads will continue to assist stakeholders during these phases to understand the EES findings and navigate the submission process.

All project milestones and public engagement activities will be advertised and supported through project updates and communications materials (refer to Phase 2 consultation activities).

Summary of consultation approach and project timeframes (Table 2)

Each project phase will have a corresponding consultation program which will include face-to-face activities such as public information sessions, online engagement platforms, and supporting materials such as project newsletters and updates. This Consultation Plan specifically relates to activities in Phase two.

Table 2 - Summary of consultation approach and project timeframes

PHASE	TIMEFRAME	EES MILESTONES AND ACTIVITIES	CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES	CONSULTATION OUTCOMES
Phase 1 Early engagement Led by VicRoads	Completed 2015 – early 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare referral application • Identify investigation area • Commence specialist studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the Beaufort bypass planning process. • Raise project awareness. • Inform stakeholders and community about options to provide input into the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback used to inform the EES referral process triggering the requirement for an EES. • Preliminary understanding of potential issues, sensitivities and opportunities. • Feedback provided to principal consultant to inform Phase 2.
Phase 2 Preparation of the EES Led by VicRoads	Current 2016 – late 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILESTONE: Draft EES scoping requirements advertised (Led by DELWP) • Interim milestone –present outcome of preliminary investigations and draft bypass route alignment options • Interim milestone –present refined investigations and refined bypass route alignment options • MILESTONE: Release of investigation findings and further refined bypass route alignment options for public exhibition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILSTEONE: Present scoping requirements • Prepare EES engagement program. • Continue to raise project awareness. • Raise awareness of the EES process. • Inform about the EES process and opportunities for stakeholders to provide input. • Convene Public Engagement Group • Receive feedback on local issues and opportunities to inform design options and Social Impact Assessment • MILESTONE: Receive feedback on issues identified and alignment options. • Report back to stakeholders and the community to share EES findings and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback informs the EES reporting and findings. • Feedback informs design and refinement of alignment options. • Stakeholders and community understand the EES process and are positioned to provide input into the subsequent phases of engagement. • Engagement reports published on project website at key milestones.
Phase 3 Public exhibition	Early 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILESTONE: EES findings prepared for public exhibition • Consider EES submissions • Present to EES inquiry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILESTONE: Presentation of completed EES. • Invitation for written submissions and formal feedback from the public as part of a statutory submission process. • VicRoads will continue to provide support to stakeholders through project updates and information about the EES process.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions to be considered by the Minister in assessment of the EES.
Phase 4 Planning approval process	Following assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare amendment to the Pyrenees Planning Scheme • Seek adoption of amendment • MILESTONE: Panel hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILESTONE: Statutory exhibition as part of the Planning Scheme Amendment process. • Inform of the outcome of the assessment process and next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback considered by planning decision making authorities.

Phase 2 consultation activities

The preparation of the EES occurs under Phase 2 of this program. This phase includes the most intensive engagement period as investigations are undertaken to inform the design process and to identify issues, impacts and opportunities.

The consultation program in Phase 2 will also be critical to the identification, assessment and development of mitigation measures as part of the Social Impact Assessment which will inform the EES.

Table 3 on page 19 outlines the key consultation activities to be undertaken in Phase 2.

Phase 3 and 4 consultation activities

Additional engagement activities will take place as part of the formal exhibition of EES and the assessment process during Phase 3. At this phase, the EES is released for public comment at which time the public can make written submissions about the project.

During Phase 4, decisions on the EES and amendments required will be made. The assessment on environmental effects of the project will be issued to VicRoads and statutory decision makers, as well as made publically available on DELWP website.

This Consultation Plan will be reviewed prior to these phases being undertaken.

Role of the principal consultant

The principal consultant was appointed in August 2016 to manage the EES process in collaboration with VicRoads.

The EES is a complex process made up of a series of tasks. Community and stakeholder consultation must be consistent across all tasks and stages of the process. The principal consultant will work with VicRoads to deliver the community and stakeholder consultation program in accordance with this Consultation Plan. The principal consultant will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that stakeholders and the community are well informed and understand the process
- Ensuring that feedback is accurately recorded to inform the EES process
- 'Closing the loop' by providing timely and transparent response to stakeholders and the community.

How input and feedback will be used

Input and feedback received will help the project team understand key issues during the preparation of the EES and inform the project design process.

A consultation report will form part of the EES document and provide an overview of key themes raised during consultation and detail how feedback has been incorporated into the project. Consultation feedback will help the planning team identify what changes can be made to the project, specialist studies and potential alignments and what mitigation measures or improvements can be developed.

Table 3 - Phase 2 consultation activities

CONSULTATION ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION
Information sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least two public information sessions will be held in Beaufort. • Project team and principal consultants will be in attendance to explain information and answer enquiries. • Session materials will include posters, fact sheets, maps, graphics, montages, video animation and feedback forms. • Opportunity to provide input/feedback.
Online engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be hosted on VicRoads project page. • Targeting stakeholders who want to provide feedback via online channels and review information or stay up-to-date on progress. • Project information will be accompanied with maps, graphics, surveys and feedback forms to encourage input. • Includes project enquiry email account and contact phone numbers.
Key stakeholder engagement	<p>Ongoing briefings, meetings and workshops with key stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project partners • Technical stakeholders • Planning decision-makers • Technical Reference Group • Public Engagement Group • Special interest groups.
Landowner engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence and meetings with landowners in investigation area. • To be arranged at project milestones and as requested.
Reporting back	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information bulletin/enews, media release, report published on project website. • To be provided at project milestones.
Promotion of information sessions, project updates and opportunities for feedback/input	<p>All planned public activities will be advertised in the local area through a variety of platforms including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising in print media • Distribute e-news to subscribers • Social media advertising • Flyers in local businesses, public spaces and community facilities • Media releases • Advertising signage

8. Recording and reporting

All data and feedback received through consultation activities are collected and stored in a project stakeholder database to ensure stakeholder input is on record and available to all members of the project team. Information stored includes records of phone calls, meetings, emails, letters, feedback forms and any other means of correspondence. The stakeholder database is a secure database, and all information collected is stored and managed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

After each public information session, an event summary report will be prepared and made available to stakeholders. This summary report will include an overview of the number of people attending the session, key themes discussion and feedback received. Reports will not include details of individuals or specific conversations.

VicRoads will provide updates to the TRG outlining consultation activities and outcomes. The updates will include explanation of how stakeholder input is being considered and addressed during the development of the EES.

The Public Engagement Group will receive updates on project decisions including a summary of feedback received through each public activity and how this feedback influenced project decisions.

The effectiveness of communications and consultation activities in achieving the objectives set out in this plan will be determined through a number of measures including: numbers participating in consultation activities such as public information sessions, use of feedback forms, and response to website and email updates.

9. Review and evaluation

Consultation needs will typically evolve throughout the lifespan of a project. This consultation program is designed to adapt as new information becomes available and with the changing needs of stakeholders.

The consultation program will be reviewed at milestone points throughout Phase 2 of this project and amended as required. This review will consider whether stakeholder lists are complete and accurate and if tools and techniques are effective. The review will also consider stakeholder preferences and any feedback received regarding the consultation process.

DELWP and the TRG provide advice in the preparation and implementation of this Consultation Plan, as well as its review at key project milestones.

An evaluation framework provides a consistent format for milestone reviews. This framework will reflect the project objectives and incorporate a range of simple measurements.

Table 4 - Evaluation framework

OBJECTIVE	EXAMPLE MEASURES
To inform stakeholder and the community about the project and EES process, and to raise awareness of the project's purpose, benefits, and relationship to the broader Western Highway duplication project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people attending public events • Feedback themes, and how these change over time • Number of new additions to project databases including, enquiries and enews subscriptions • Number and frequency of stakeholder meetings
Expand upon feedback received through previous consultation activities and gather further information from community and stakeholders that will be used to identify issues and potential impacts and use local knowledge to inform the EES process, design, specialist studies and assessment of alignment options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant stakeholders identified for engagement and amendments to stakeholder lists • Number and frequency of stakeholder meetings • Evaluation and feedback forms provided at events.
To respond to stakeholder feedback including concerns about possible issues and describe how these have been considered in the design process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and nature of enquiries and complaints • Response time to community or stakeholder request or enquiries. • Number and frequency of stakeholder meetings

Appendix A - IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

The IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum is a widely used tool designed to assist with planning public engagement activities for major projects.

The Spectrum will be used as a guide during engagement and consultation activities for the Beaufort bypass EES.

The following table adapts the IAP2 spectrum to be specifically relevant to the Beaufort bypass EES.

Table 5 - IAP2 Spectrum adapted to Beaufort bypass EES

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE
Definition	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
Objective	To provide balanced and objective information to support understanding by the public.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.
Commitment	To keep the public informed.	To listen to and acknowledge the public's concerns.	To work with the public to exchange information, ideas and concerns.
Stakeholders	General public and stakeholders that have an interest in Western Highway upgrades and bypass planning, including decision makers, Federal Government, State Government, project partners, Technical Reference Group, technical stakeholders, directly and indirectly affected stakeholders, the broader public and media.	Project partners, directly and indirectly affected stakeholders, Technical Reference Group, technical stakeholders and the broader public.	Project partners, Technical Reference Group, technical stakeholders, directly impacted landowners and stakeholders, indirectly impacted landowners and stakeholders and the broader public.
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters Media releases and reports, advertising Social media, project website, emails Fact sheets and information bulletins Information displays Maps, montages and video animation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information sessions, briefings Workshops, feedback forms Meetings/conversations, presentations Online engagement project reports Reports following community engagement Public exhibition (written submissions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public engagement/ advisory groups, feedback forms Information sessions, workshops Online engagement Public exhibition (written submissions) Meetings/conversations

