

Submission Cover Sheet

West Gate Tunnel Project IAC

Sub no:

123

Request to be heard?: No,

Full Name: John Robert Dickenson
Organisation: Altona North Cricket Club Inc
Address: Blackshaws Road
Altona North 3025
Affected property:
Attachment: West_Gate_Tunn
Comments: Our submission is attached below.

West Gate Tunnel Project – Environmental Effects Statement

Submission by the Altona North Cricket Club

The Altona North Cricket Club is a tenant of the WLJ Crofts Reserve and is impacted by the West Gate Tunnel Project. This submission outlines the issues that are of concern to us and that need to be addressed as part of the consultation process for the Westgate Tunnel Project.

1. Background

The Altona North Cricket Club was established in 1923 and has been a tenant of the WLJ Crofts Reserve since it opened as a sporting complex in 1977. The Club currently has four senior men's cricket teams playing in the Victorian Turf Cricket Association. Prior to 2013 the Club also fielded women's and junior boy's teams. As the demographic of the Altona North area changed there were insufficient numbers of women and boys to enter teams in these competitions. However the demographic has changed again and there are young families with children moving into the Altona North area. As a consequence we will be establishing junior cricket for girls and boys at Altona North / WLJ Crofts in the 2017/2018 cricket season, which commences in October 2017.

As stated in the Environmental Effects Statement, the Altona North area is one of the more disadvantaged areas in Hobsons Bay; it has a high proportion of residents that speak a language other than English at home, and that there is a high proportion of children aged under 11 living in the area. The EES also notes the Altona North area is likely to experience significant change through urban renewal.

The unique characteristics of the Altona North area identified in the paragraph above, and acknowledged in the EES, highlight the importance of sport and recreational facilities in the Altona North area. As the WLJ Crofts Reserve is the major sporting facility in Altona North, the Reserve and its tenant clubs have an important role to play in catering for the current and future sport and recreational needs of this diverse and growing community.

2. Masterplan for the WLJ Crofts Reserve.

We are aware that the Hobsons Bay City Council has allocated funds in the 2017/2018 Annual Budget to undertake a Masterplan study of the WLJ Crofts Reserve. As is generally acknowledged, the Reserve is now in need of significant works to the playing fields, the pavilion and the cricket practice wickets to make it "fit for future purpose", improve amenity and minimise risks to users of the facility. The EES specifically comments that the "Buildings on the reserve need upgrading".

As part of the 2017-2018 Budget process we have provided our written support to Council for the development of the Masterplan for the Reserve and asked to be directly involved in the master planning process.

The Westgate Tunnel Project will have major impacts upon the WLJ Crofts Reserve and as such represents a significant factor in master planning considerations. Accordingly the two projects cannot be undertaken in isolation and must be considered together. We therefore look forward to

working with the Project Team, the Council and other tenant clubs of the Reserve to get the best possible outcomes from the Masterplan for the WLJ Crofts Reserve.

3. Comments on the Environmental Effects Statement

3.1 Adverse Impact on the Cricket Practice Wickets at the WLJ Crofts Reserve

The contents of Volume 2 – West Gate Freeway, Chapter 14 – Effects on the Community are relevant to the WLJ Crofts Reserve and the Altona North Cricket Club.

As stated in the EES, the WLJ Crofts Reserve is a heavily used sporting and passive open space facility. The EES estimates that the change to the Reserve will be minimal as there will only be a loss of a strip of land of 282m² (0.3% of total area) at the northern edge of the Reserve. The EES also states that this loss of land does not affect sporting grounds or buildings and it is not considered likely to impact use.

Whilst the area of land lost in the Reserve is very small, the land lost is in an area that is very critical to our activities as our cricket practice wickets are located very close to this northern border of the Reserve. Based on the information currently available to us we believe that the land lost, the construction of new barriers and land temporarily used to build these barriers, and the planting of new trees along the northern border of the Reserve will encroach upon our practice wickets and have adverse short and long term impacts on our cricket training activities.

As identified in SR09, Table 14.1, Section 14.2.5 of the EES, “People use WLJ Crofts Reserve less because increased noise and visual impact make it less attractive or suitable for their activities”. We believe that this is a critically important issue for us and it has a greater “Residual risk rating” than the “Low” rating afforded to it in the EES. Cricket practice is a vitally important aspect of playing cricket and our practice wickets are used four afternoons and nights per week, plus on Sunday mornings in the pre-season. Our cricketers are adult women and men, plus girls and boys aged from 8 years old upwards. Importantly, the parents of these children are users – and stakeholders. We are very concerned that unless we have practice facilities that are located in an attractive, “player-friendly” location, with minimal noise and visual impacts, we will not attract and retain players at our Club.

For the reasons outlined above we believe that, as part of the West Gate Tunnel Project and in conjunction with the Masterplan for the Reserve, the practice wickets should be relocated to a more appropriate area of the WLJ Crofts Reserve.

And as stated in paragraph 2 above, we look forward to working with the Project Team, the Hobsons Bay City Council and other tenant clubs of the WLJ Crofts Reserve to identify the most suitable location for the practice wickets.

3.2 Increased traffic and congestion on Blackshaws Road

We are concerned that a project of the magnitude of the Westgate Tunnel Project will have very serious impacts on traffic and congestion in Blackshaws Road. We believe that this traffic congestion

will have significant impacts on users accessing the WLJ Crofts Reserve. As the Reserve is used every day, it presents a real problem to user safety as well. This matter needs to be taken into consideration by the Project Team.

3.3 Impact of Construction Works on the WLJ Crofts Reserve

The two briefing sessions that we have attended have been most helpful to us in gaining an understanding of the Westgate Tunnel Project and its impact upon the Reserve. The briefing sessions and the EES indicate the “minimal” impacts that the project will have on the Reserve. However we have real concerns about the actual impacts on the Reserve during the construction phase of the project. Our concerns relate to land occupation, noise, dust, site access and contaminated material. As the Reserve is built on an old tip site we are concerned about contaminated material that may be discovered or disturbed during the construction works.

Another area of concern to us is the potential damage to assets at the reserve – in particular the practice wickets, the playing ovals, the surrounding areas of the Reserve, the existing landscaping and internal roads.

Two further concerns are drainage and flooding that may occur as a result of the project. The Reserve is built on an old tip and the exact details of landfill beneath the Reserve are probably not comprehensively documented. Ground subsidence is now evident throughout the whole Reserve. Whilst this issue will certainly be addressed in the Council’s MasterPlan, the construction works may well cause further drainage and flooding issues at the Reserve. Accordingly it is important that the Project Team work closely with Council to ensure that these problems do not occur.

3.4 Removal of the existing planting on the northern edge of the WLJ Crofts Reserve

Since its establishment, there has been a considerable amount of vegetation planted at the Reserve. The trees and shrubs are now mature and provide a pleasant environment for users of the Reserve.

It is of concern to us that the mature vegetation along the northern side of the Reserve will need to be removed during the construction phase of the project and that new planting will take place later. We wholeheartedly support the replanting program and make the following suggestions:

- The replanting program presents a real opportunity to vastly improve the landscape of the Reserve, not just the northern edge. Significant tree planting could and should be undertaken in appropriate locations throughout the whole Reserve.
- To minimise noise and improve amenity, the landscaping and tree planting should be undertaken as early as possible after project commencement.

3.5 Noise Walls

As stated elsewhere in our submission, noise pollution is of particular concern to us, both during the project construction phase and once the project is completed. We therefore consider it critically important that the noise walls are constructed as early as is possible during the project. The noise walls should be of an appropriate height and constructed of materials that will minimise noise pollution for users of the reserve.

4. On Going Consultation

The Altona North Cricket Club is very supportive of the Westgate Tunnel Project and the positive benefits that it will bring to the Victorian community and our economy. As the original tenant of the WLJ Crofts Reserve we are keen to ensure that the Reserve is not adversely impacted by this project but rather becomes a more significant community resource as an outcome of this project. As such we request that the issues raised in our submission are given full consideration by the Project Team.

We would like the Project Team to consult regularly with us and other tenants throughout the Project.

John Dickenson

Vice President

Altona North Cricket Club

3 July 2017