Environment Effects Act 1978

SCOPING REQUIREMENTS

For

BEAUFORT BYPASS PROJECT

ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS STATEMENT

December 2016

VICTORIA
State Government

List of abbreviations

AH Act	*Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Victoria)
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DEPI	former Department of Environment and Primary Industries
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (formerly DTPLI)
DSDBI	former Department of State Development, Business and Innovation
DTPLI	former Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure
EE Act	*Environment Effects Act 1978* (Victoria)
EES	Environment Effects Statement
EMF	Environmental Management Framework
EMP	Environmental Management Plan
EMS	Environmental Management System
EPBC Act	*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Commonwealth)
FFG Act	*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (Victoria)
ha	hectare
km	kilometre
m	metre
NES	national environmental significance
P&E Act	*Planning and Environment Act 1987*
RAP	Registered Aboriginal Party
SEPP	State Environment Protection Policy
TRG	Technical Reference Group

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1 Introduction

In light of the potential for significant environmental effects, on 22 July 2015 the Victorian Minister for Planning (the Minister) determined under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) that VicRoads should prepare an Environment Effects Statement (EES) for the proposed Beaufort Bypass Project (the proposed project). The purpose of the EES is to provide a sufficiently detailed description of the proposed project, assess its potential effects on the environment[1] and assess alternative road alignments. The EES will inform input and seek feedback from the public and stakeholders and enable the Minister for Planning to issue an assessment of the proposed project under the EE Act at the conclusion of the process. The Minister's assessment will inform statutory decision-makers' responsible for the proposed project's approvals.

While the scoping requirements are intended to cover all significant matters, the EES will need to address other issues relevant to key statutory decisions, including those that emerge during the EES investigations.

1.1 The proposed project and setting

VicRoads proposes to bypass Beaufort with a new section of the Western Highway, linking completed sections of the Western Highway duplication to the east and west of Beaufort. The proposed project includes the consideration of alternative alignments and selection of a preferred bypass alignment. This will enable the associated identification of land to be reserved for the future construction of the bypass, including interchanges to connect with Beaufort, several waterway crossings, an overpass of the Melbourne-Ararat rail line and intersection treatment of local roads. Figure 1 provides a map of the proposed project location.

The Western Highway is the principal road between Melbourne and Adelaide, and is one of Victoria's busiest rural highways. VicRoads' objectives for the proposed bypass are to improve:

- freight movement and efficiency;
- road safety within the township and arterial road network;
- access to markets and the competitiveness of local industries; and
- amenity within the township.

1.2 Minister's requirements for this EES

The Minister's decision to require an EES encompassed the procedures and requirements set out in Appendix A. In short, though, the EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including the feasibility of associated environmental mitigation and management measures, in particular for:

a. potential effects on biodiversity values, including native vegetation, listed flora, fauna and communities and crown land reserves;
b. potential effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage values; and
c. potential effects on land uses, infrastructure and communities (e.g. severance) along the proposed route.

These scoping requirements provide further detail on the specific matters to be in investigated in the EES, in the context of *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the EE Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines).

[1] For the purpose of assessment of environmental effects under the EE Act, the meaning of 'environment' includes physical, biological, heritage, cultural, social, health, safety and economic aspects (*Ministerial Guidelines*, p. 2).

Figure 1. Location of the project.

2 Assessment process and required approvals

2.1 What is an EES?

An EES is prepared by the proponent to describe the proposed project and its potential environmental effects. An EES should enable stakeholders and decision-makers to understand the proposed project (and alternatives) and the likely environmental effects of implementing the project. An EES has two main components.

1. The EES main report – An integrated, plain English document that sets out an analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed project and relevant alternatives. The main report draws on technical studies, data and statutory requirements such as specific limits for emissions to the environment.
2. The studies that inform the EES – Technical reports on expert investigations and analysis that provide the basis for the EES main report. They will be exhibited in full, as appendices to the main report.

The potential impacts that require investigation are set out in Section 4 of this document.

2.2 The EES process

VicRoads is responsible for completing technical studies, undertaking stakeholder consultation and preparing the EES documentation. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for managing the EES process.

This EES process has the following steps.

- Preparation of a draft study program and draft schedule by the proponent (completed).
- Preparation and exhibition of draft scoping requirements by DELWP on behalf of the Minister (completed). Public comments are accepted during the advertised exhibition period.
- Finalisation and issuing of scoping requirements by the Minister (current step).
- Review of the proponent's EES studies and draft documentation by DELWP and a technical reference group[2] (TRG).
- Completion of the EES by the proponent.
- Review of the complete EES by DELWP to establish its adequacy for public exhibition.
- Exhibition of the proponent's EES and invitation for public comment by DELWP, on behalf of the Minister.
- Appointment of an Inquiry by the Minister to:
  - review the EES and public submissions received;
  - conduct public hearings; and
  - provide a report to the Minister.
- Following receipt of the inquiry report, the Minister provides an assessment of the project for decision-makers.

Further information on the EES process can be found on the department's website[3].

Technical Reference Group

DELWP has convened an agency-based TRG to advise the department and/or the proponent on:

- applicable policies, strategies and statutory provisions;
- the scoping requirements;
- the design and adequacy of technical studies;
- the proponent's public information and stakeholder consultation program;
- responses to issues arising from the EES investigations;
- the technical adequacy of draft EES documentation; and
- coordination of statutory processes.

[2] For critical components of the EES studies, peer review by an external, independent expert may be appropriate.

[3] www.delwp.vic.gov.au/environmental-assessment

The TRG is comprised of invited representatives of relevant state government agencies and departments, as well as the Pyrenees Shire Council.

Consultation

The proponent is responsible for informing and engaging the public and stakeholders to identify and respond to their issues in conjunction with the EES studies. Stakeholders include potentially affected parties, the local community and interested organisations and individuals, as well as government bodies. Under its EES consultation plan the proponent informs the public and stakeholders about the EES process and associated investigations. The proponent's EES consultation plan is reviewed by DELWP and the TRG before it is finalised and published on the DELWP website. The final plan will:

- identify stakeholders;
- characterise public and stakeholders' interests, concerns and consultation needs and potential to provide local knowledge;
- describe consultation methods and schedule; and
- outline how public and stakeholder inputs will be recorded, considered and/or addressed in the preparation of the EES.

Approvals coordination with the EES process

The proposed project may require a range of approvals under Victorian legislation. DELWP coordinates the EES process as closely as practicable with the approvals procedures, consultation and public notice requirements. Figure 2 shows the steps in the EES process and the parallel coordination of statutory processes.

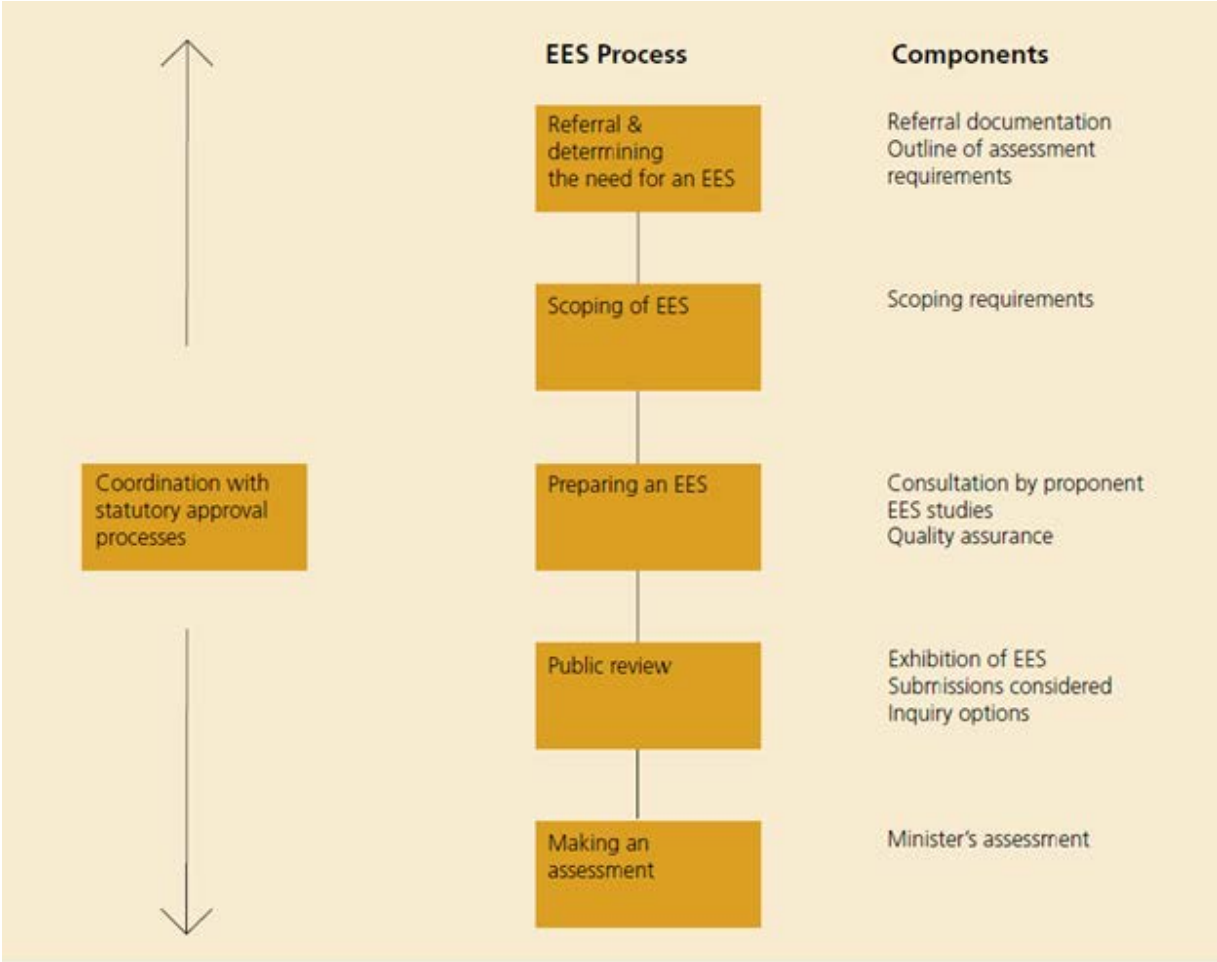


Figure 2. EES Process and parallel coordination of statutory processes.

2.3 Accreditation of EES under the bilateral agreement

VicRoads intends to refer this proposed project under the federal *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in 2017, at which point the Commonwealth Minister will determine whether it is a 'controlled action' requiring assessment and approval under the EPBC Act.

Should the proposed project be a controlled action due to significant impacts on a matter of national environment significance (such as listed threatened species or community), it may be possible for the Victorian EES process to address those matters, in accordance with the Bilateral Agreement in place between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments.

3 Matters to be addressed in the EES

3.1 General approach

The EES should address the environmental effects[4] from all components and stages of the proposed project. The assessment should include:

- the potential effects on individual environmental assets —magnitude, extent and duration of change in the values of each asset— having regard to intended avoidance and mitigation measures;
- the likelihood of adverse effects and associated uncertainty of available predictions or estimates;
- further management measures that are proposed where avoidance and mitigation measures do not adequately address effects on environmental assets, including specific details of how the measures address relevant policies; and
- likely residual effects assuming proposed measures are implemented

Assessments should address direct, indirect, combined, cumulative, short-tem, long-term, beneficial and adverse effects and include adoption of the precautionary principle, such that appropriate methods are applied to assess matters that involve high levels of risk. Further advice on the approach to be adopted in preparing the EES is provided in Section 4.

3.2 General content and style of the EES

The content of the EES and related investigations is to be guided by these scoping requirements and the Ministerial Guidelines. To facilitate decisions on required approvals, the EES should address statutory requirements associated with approvals that will be informed by the Minister's Assessment. The EES should also address any other issues that emerge during the investigations.

Ultimately it is the proponent's responsibility to ensure that adequate studies are undertaken and reported to support the assessment of environmental effects and that the exhibited EES documentation was prepared with effective internal quality assurance in place. Close consultation with DELWP and the TRG during the investigations and preparation of the EES will be necessary to minimise the need for revisions prior to authorisation of the EES for public exhibition.

The main EES report should provide a well-integrated analysis of the potential effects of the proposed project, including proposed mitigation and management measures, as well as alternative alignments (as no clear preference has been determined). Overall, the main report should include the following.

- An executive summary.
- A description of the entire proposed project, including its objectives, rationale, key elements, associated requirements for new infrastructure and use of and connections to existing infrastructure.
- An outline of the justification for a dual carriageway bypass to regional highway standards in the context of other alternatives that may meet the project objectives, (e.g. a truck bypass).
- A description of the relationship of the proposed project to relevant policies and plans.
- An outline of the primary approvals required for the proposed project to proceed.
- Descriptions of the existing environment, to the extent necessary to enable the assessment of potential effects.
- A description of alternatives capable of substantially meeting the proposed project's objectives that may also offer environmental or other benefits (as well as the basis for the choice where a preferred alternative is nominated).

[4] Effects include direct, indirect, combined, short and long-term, beneficial and adverse effects.

- Assessments of the potential effects of the proposed project (including alternative alignments) on environmental assets and values, relative to the "no project" scenario, together with an estimation of likelihood and degree of uncertainty associated with predictions.
- Predictions of residual effects of the proposed project assuming implementation of proposed environmental management measures.
- Intended measures for avoiding, minimising, managing and monitoring effects, including a statement of commitment to implement these measures.
- An offset strategy to address effects on native vegetation and biodiversity values.
- Responses to issues raised through public and stakeholder consultation.
- Evaluation of the implications of the proposed project and its alternatives for the implementation of applicable legislation and policy, including the principles and objectives of ecologically sustainable development and environmental protection.
- A description of the environmental performance regime and track record of the proponent, including relevant experience in delivering and operating similar projects, as well as the organisations health, safety and environmental policies.
- Consideration and a description of the impact on land managers located adjacent to the proposed project, and details regarding the proposed north-south access on both public and private land.
- Consideration of climate change impacts and measures for climate change adaptation.
- The proposed north-south access and access to public land, which will be provided in the event of wildfire, given existing access tracks will be severed.

The proponent must also prepare a concise non-technical summary document (hard copy A4) for free distribution to interested parties. The EES summary document should include details of the EES exhibition, public submission process and availability of the EES documentation.

3.3 Project description

The EES is to describe the project in sufficient detail to allow an understanding of all components, processes and development stages, and to enable assessment of their likely potential environmental effects. The project description should canvass the following.

- Contextual information about the project, including its objectives and rationale, an analysis of the ability of the existing highway infrastructure to accommodate future road users' needs and the implications of the project not proceeding.
- The relationship of the project to relevant statutory policies, plans and strategies (if relevant).
- Details of all the project components including:
  - location of potential alignments and construction corridors;
  - footprints and layouts;
  - concept designs and specifications;
  - methods of construction, expected timeframes and staging, and anticipated operational arrangements (to the extent relevant and practicable); and
  - aspects of the operational phase of the proposed project that could give rise to environmental effects.
- Land use activities in the proposed project area and vicinity, supported by plans and maps where applicable.
- Other necessary works directly associated with the proposed project, such as road upgrades, infrastructure and services relocation or augmentation.
- Social, community and economic framework plans which address the impact of heavy vehicle removal from Beaufort.
- Special consideration regarding bridge construction across Yam Hole Creek, to reduce the potential for flooding Beaufort, and to allow movement for wildlife along the creek corridor.

3.4 Project alternatives

The EES should document consideration of alternatives by the proponent and include an explanation of how alternatives were shortlisted for evaluation within the EES. The EES should investigate and document the likely social, strategic, economic and environmental effects of the alternatives, particularly where an alternative(s) offer(s) a potential for superior environmental, social or economic outcome and are capable of meeting the objectives of the proposed project. The discussion of relevant alternatives should include:

- an explanation of how alignment alternatives and design alternatives were initially identified and what evaluation process was used to select feasible alternatives for more detailed examination;
- a comparative integrated assessment of the feasible alignment alternatives identified for the proposed project, as well as any potentially suitable design variants to these, particularly with respect to key social, economic and environmental effects;
- a description of the environmental, social and economic effects of alternatives, including justification as to why a preferred alternative is selected through the development of the EES; and
- a description of how the "avoid and minimise principle" for clearing native vegetation and the occurrence of threatened flora and fauna species has been considered in the assessment of alignment alternatives, as well as the feasibility and costs of likely offset requirements.

The depth of investigation of alternatives should be proportionate to their potential to avoid and minimise potential adverse effects as well as meet the proposed project objectives.

3.5 Applicable legislation, policies and strategies

The EES will need to identify relevant legislation, policies, guidelines and standards, and assess their specific requirements or implications for the proposed project, particularly in relation to required approvals, including (but not limited to):

- *Environment Protection Act 1970,* including the principles of environment protection and relevant State Environment Protection Policies (SEPPs);
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987,* and relevant provisions in the Pyrenees Planning Scheme;
- *Transport Integration Act 2010*;
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*;
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*;
- *Fisheries Act 1995*;
- *Wildlife Act 1975*;
- *Water Act 1989*;
- *Road Management Act 2004*;
- *Heritage Act 1995*;
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*;
- *Traditional Owners Settlement Act 2010*;
- *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*;
- *Land Act 1958*;
- *EPBC Act 1999*; and
- *Native Title Act 1993.*

In addition to any relevant plans or strategies referenced under the Pyrenees Planning Scheme, the EES will also need to identify and address other relevant policies, strategies, subordinate legislation and related management or planning processes that may be relevant to the assessment of the proposed project, such as *Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (2013), Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy 2013-2019, Glenelg Hopkins Native Vegetation Plan (2006),* state planning policy in relation to biodiversity, EPBC Act policy statements and recovery plans for nationally listed threatened species and ecological communities.

3.6 Consultation

The proponent is responsible for informing and consulting with the public and stakeholders throughout the preparation and exhibition of the EES, in accordance with a suitable EES consultation plan (Section 2.2). The EES should document the process and results of the consultation undertaken by the proponent during the preparation of the EES, including:

- issues raised and suggestions made by stakeholders or members of the public; and
- the responses then made by the proponent in the context of the EES studies or the associated consideration of mitigation measures.

The EES should also outline a program for accessible community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications proposed for implementation of the proposed project, including opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with the proponent to seek responses to issues that might arise during construction of the proposed project.

3.7 Draft evaluation objectives

Table 1 includes draft evaluation objectives that identify desired outcomes in the context of potential effects from the proposed project and relevant legislation. During the development of the EES the proponent can consider refining the objectives and proposed evaluation framework, as well as develop specific assessment criteria to assist the evaluation of effects.

Table 1. Draft evaluation objectives.

Objective	Legislation
Road efficiency, capacity and safety – To provide for an effective Western Highway bypass of Beaufort, to improve travel efficiency, road safety, and capacity, as well as improve amenity and local transport network in Beaufort.	TI Act, P&E Act, RM Act
Biodiversity – *To avoid and minimise adverse effects on native vegetation, as well as habitat for threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities, including those listed under the FFG Act, and address offset requirements for predicted losses consistent with relevant policy.*	P&E Act, FFG Act, Wildlife Act, EPBC Act
Catchment values and hydrology – *To protect catchment values, surface water and ground water quality, stream flows and floodway capacity, and avoid impacts on protected beneficial uses.*	EP Act, Water Act, C&LP Act
Cultural heritage – *To avoid and minimise adverse effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values, and to identify best practice mitigation measures*.	AH Act, Heritage Act
Social and community – *To minimise and manage adverse effects on the well-being of the local community, including potential impacts on cohesion and severance of community access to services, facilities and infrastructure.*	EP Act, P&E Act, TI Act, CL (Reserves) Act
Land use and economic – *To minimise and manage adverse effects on local business (including agriculture) and existing or planned land uses.*	TI Act, P&E Act
Amenity – *To minimise adverse air quality, noise or vibration effects on the amenity of residents and local communities, as far as practicable during construction and operation.*	EP Act, P&E Act, TI Act
Landscape and visual – *To minimise adverse effects on visual and landscape values as far as practicable, during construction and operation.*	P&E Act
Environmental management framework – *To provide a transparent framework with clear accountabilities for managing environmental effects and hazards associated with construction and operation phases of the proposed project, in order to achieve acceptable environmental outcomes*.	P&E Act, TI Act, EP Act, EE Act
Sustainable development – *Overall, to identify an alignment and conceptual design for the Western Highway bypass of Beaufort that would achieve a sustainable balance of environmental, economic and social outcomes and provide a net community benefit*.	TI Act, EE Act, P&E Act

The framing of the draft objectives reflects the key subject matters to be investigated for the EES, relevant legislation and policies (Section 3.5), the objectives and principles of ecologically sustainable development and environmental protection, as well as environmental issues identified by the proponent in preliminary documentation.

As noted in Section 4, the level of effort applied to the investigation, management and mitigation of issues in the context of the draft evaluation objectives should be proportionate to the significance of potential adverse effects. The proponent should consult closely with DELWP Impact Assessment Unit and the TRG throughout the preparation of the EES to ensure that the investigation of issues is appropriately targeted.

4 Assessment of specific environmental effects

Preparation of the EES document and the necessary investigation of effects should be consistent with the principles of a systems approach and proportionality to risk, as outlined in the Ministerial Guidelines (p. 14). A risk-based approach should be adopted during the EES studies, so that a greater level of effort is directed at investigating and managing those matters that pose relatively higher risk of adverse effects. The following sections set out specific requirements for the assessment of effects, using the following structure for each draft evaluation objective.

- *Key issues* or risks that the proposed project poses to the achievement of the draft evaluation objective. In addition to addressing the highlighted issues, the proponent might undertake an appropriate environmental risk assessment.
- *Priorities for characterising the existing environment* to underpin predictive impact assessments having regard to the level of risk. Any risk assessment by the proponent could guide the necessary data gathering.
- *Design and mitigation measures* that could substantially reduce and/or mitigate the risk of significant effects.
- *Assessment of likely effects through* predictive studies or estimates of effects that are reasonably likely, as well as evaluation of their significance, having regard to their likelihood.
- *Approach to manage performance* measures that are proposed to manage risks of effects, assuming that identified design and mitigation measures are applied, to achieve appropriate outcomes. This should inform the assessment of likely residual effects (assuming proposed measures are implemented).

4.1 Road efficiency, capacity and safety

Draft evaluation objective

To provide for an effective Western Highway bypass of Beaufort, to improve travel efficiency, road safety, and capacity, as well as improve amenity and local transport network in Beaufort.

Key issues

- Impacts from through traffic (including heavy vehicles) in Beaufort.
- Effective integration of the proposed project with local transport networks including public transport.
- Identify and compare expected or modelled transport performance of identified alignment alternatives, in terms of travel times, capacity, traffic volumes, road safety and accessibility.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Characterise traffic and road conditions (times, capacity, volumes, road safety) for the "no project scenario."
- Characterise existing transport patterns —private vehicles, commercial/freight heavy vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and public transport— to identify influences on capacity, travel times, safety and accessibility and planned future land uses.

Design and mitigation measures

- Potential design solutions, appropriate for a rural town such as Beaufort, to optimise linkages with the existing local road network and maintain or enhance access (or vehicles, pedestrians, bicycle and public transport).
- Address potential risk areas to road safety, such as wildlife corridors, and outline any specific measures to avoid, minimise and mitigate road safety issues.
- Identify proposed north-south road access to public and private land.
- Identify proposed access to public land in the event of wildfire, should existing access tracks be severed.

Assessment of likely effects

- Assessment, including modelling projections, of the effects on traffic volumes and travel time outcomes.
- Assessment of the effects on the accessibility, safety and connectivity for commercial vehicles, local car users, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.

- Assessment of the possible timing and implications of the bypass on traffic network performance.
- Describe the implications of each alternative in meeting the proposed project's transport objectives.

4.2 Biodiversity

Draft evaluation objective

To avoid and minimise adverse effects on native vegetation, as well as habitat for threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities, including those listed under the FFG Act, and address offset requirements for predicted losses consistent with relevant policy.

Key issues

- Loss or degradation of native vegetation and habitat for threatened species and communities, including those listed under the FFG Act and DELWP Advisory List.
- Degradation to local and downstream ecology of aquatic environments.
- The impact of the road bypass on wildlife movement within continuous vegetation linkages.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Characterise the distribution and quality of biodiversity values that could be affected by the proposed project, including remnant native vegetation, large old trees, terrestrial and aquatic habitat for threatened species and patterns of wildlife movement in the area.
- Accurately identify remnant vegetation on private and public road reserves using the current definition of native vegetation as outlined in the Victorian Native Vegetation Clearing Guidelines.
- Identify the existence or likely existence of any threatened species or communities listed under the FFG Act and DELWP Advisory List.
- Identify any potentially threatening processes that could result from the proposed project under the FFG Act and any declared weeds or pathogens.
- This characterisation is to be informed by relevant databases, literature and appropriate seasonal or targeted surveys. In the absence of positive identification of listed species, but where suitable habitat is identified, a precautionary approach to the further investigation of their occurrence should be applied, where practicable.

Design and mitigation measures

- Identify potential and proposed alignment and design alternatives, as well as mitigation measures which could avoid or minimise significant effects on biodiversity values, including native vegetation, large old trees and any listed threatened ecological communities or flora and fauna species.
- Assessment of the expected or predicted effectiveness of mitigation measures, within the proposed alignment, any statutory or policy basis for the mitigation measures, the proponent's ability to implement these measures as well as monitoring and auditing of effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures.
- Assessment of the cumulative effect on biodiversity values and extent of remaining remnant vegetation on a regional scale and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation measures in addressing regional ecological effects.
- Identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts on the environment including wildlife movement and connectivity (e.g. suitable fencing and overhead or under-road wildlife crossings including in relation to bridges for waterway crossings).

Assessment of likely effects

- Assess the likely direct and indirect effects of each alignment alternative on wildlife movement and biodiversity values, including native vegetation, large old trees, listed threatened flora and fauna species and ecological communities, including those listed under the FFG Act and DELWP Advisory List.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed offset measures to address requirements for alternatives that may be implemented, in accordance with the *Permitted Clearing of Native Vegetation Biodiversity Assessment Guidelines (2013)* and the relevant requirements of the Pyrenees Planning Scheme.
- Provide an offset strategy to address these requirements for the final alignment options examined in the EES, to identify feasibility and availability of offsets.
- Identify any additional, proposed measures to manage residual effects on biodiversity values during construction of the proposed project, as part of the EMF.
- Commit to undertake appropriate management plans.

4.3 Catchment values and hydrology

Draft evaluation objective

To protect catchment values, surface water and ground water quality, stream flows and floodway capacity, and avoid impacts on protected beneficial uses.

Key issues

- Potential changes to the extent and severity of floodwaters in the area, that could have an effects on Beaufort or other significant locations.
- Potential adverse effects on the functions and values of existing waterways during construction and operation.
- Potential for unsuitable soil conditions to support the proposed bypass, including the potential for unearthing acid sulphate and contaminated soils.
- Potential for effects on surface water quality, stream flows and ground water, in particular on protected beneficial uses.
- Potential for increased salinity, and related impacts on vegetation, soil and habitat values.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Undertake a hydrology assessment of the study area for the proposed project consistent with outcomes of the Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA) catchment and modelling study of Beaufort.
- Identify and characterise surface water environments, ground water, salinity and floodplain environments that could be affected by relevant alternatives, including an analysis of drainage features and flood behaviour.
- Undertake a geotechnical assessment to identify soil types and structures in the study area and to identify the potential for unsuitable soil conditions to support the bypass, and potential location of acid sulphate, contaminated soils and fill.

Design and mitigation measures

- Undertake assessment (modelling) of the hydrology of the study area to inform concept design(s) to minimise the impacts of the proposed project.
- Identify potential and proposed design alternatives and mitigation measures which could avoid or minimise effects on catchment functions and values, in particular for creeks and other surface water environments.
- Identify the potential risks at waterway crossings, and the potential for soil erosion, soil stability, aquifers, acid sulphate, cut and fill and storage of top soil in flood plains.
- Identify potential and proposed design alternatives and mitigation measures which have the least environmental, social and economic impact.

Assessment of likely effects

- Identify potential effects of alternatives on surface water environments especially in relation to run-off impacts on water quality and flood flows.

- Assess the potential for effects of alignment alternatives on groundwater and for effects of groundwater on the proposed project, as a result of intersection works with the groundwater.
- Assess the potential for effects associated with the exposure and disposal of any waste including acid sulphate and contaminated soils.
- Identify the potential risks of saline discharges and discharge impacts to soil, vegetation and habitat.
- Confirm which alignment alternatives have the greatest risk from a geotechnical perspective and the relative cost implications of each alignment alternative.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed principles or approach for managing surface run-off, preventing sedimentation of waterways, flood risks and risks associated with excavation spoil, areas of contaminated land and other waste management.
- Identify an approach to manage risk and impacts associated with construction and operation.
- Include identified measures in the EMF.

4.4 Cultural heritage

Draft evaluation objective

To avoid or minimise adverse effects on Aboriginal and historic cultural heritage values, and to identify best practice mitigation measures.

Key issues

- The potential for adverse effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- The potential for adverse effects on significant non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Identify and characterise Aboriginal cultural heritage places and areas of sensitivity within the study area for alignment alternatives, in particular in the vicinity of waterways and other areas identified through site prediction modelling.
- Other factors for consideration include a mortuary tree assessment, and evaluation of cultural landscapes and intangible heritage values (that may be impacted).
- Identify and document known and previously unidentified historic heritage values within the proposed project area, including any areas of significant archaeological interest, consistent with the *Guidelines for Conducting Archaeological Surveys* (Heritage Victoria 2008), as updated in 2013.

Design and mitigation measures

- Potential design and other measures to avoid effects on any Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage for each alternative.

Assessment of likely effects

- Identify the potential effects on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage resulting from the project for relevant alignment alternative for adverse effects on old gold diggings, 'historic puddlers' and the channel for the original water supply to Beaufort.

Approach to manage performance

- Provide an outline or draft of the CHMP which will be prepared for the project in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act*.
- Identify proposed measures to manage residual effects on non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values as part of the environmental management framework.

4.5 Social and community

Draft evaluation objective

To minimise and manage adverse effects on the well-being of the local community, including potential impacts on cohesion and severance of community access to services, facilities and infrastructure.

Key issues

- Potential social impacts from displacement of residences, existing land uses and impacts on businesses.
- Variable (positive or adverse) effects from relevant alignment alternatives on community access to and within Beaufort, including severance/access to community facilities, services and infrastructure.
- Impacts of relevant alignment alternatives on opportunities for the future growth and development of Beaufort.
- Potential for inconsistency with existing strategic land use planning objectives, policies or plans.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Identify and characterise impacts on residences and social and community environments that could result from each alternative.
- Identify potential change to land use plans for Crown land or land occupied by community facilities and infrastructure within or adjacent to relevant alignment alternatives.
- Describe local movement patterns of residents and farmers with respect to access to Beaufort Township and community facilities and services.

Design and mitigation measures

- Identify the potential impacts on places of cultural significance which could be affected by alignment alternatives, and identify potential and proposed design measures that avoid or mitigate impacts.
- Identify potential and proposed design responses and other mitigation measures which could either reduce adverse effects or enhance opportunities for community access.
- Consider and incorporate the Pyrenees Shire Council's strategic planning objectives in the design where appropriate.
- Seek to identify opportunities to improve community wellbeing.

Assessment of likely effects

- Assess the potential for direct effects on community facilities or other assets and significant disruption patterns of community access or interaction.
- Assess the wellbeing and community cohesion effects, with consideration of effects identified from other town bypass projects.
- Assess the potential for indirect effects on community wellbeing through the loss of native vegetation and culturally significant trees.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed measures to manage residual effects on residents and farmers well-being, and impacts on infrastructure during project construction, as part of the EMF.

4.6 Land use and economic

Draft evaluation objective

To minimise and manage adverse effects on local business (including agriculture) and existing or planned land uses, as well as contribute to positive economic outcomes for the area.

Key issues

- Potential economic impacts of land severance/changes to existing land uses and local business or planned land uses.

- Economic performance of project alternatives in terms of relative benefits and costs.
- Potential impacts on land managers located adjacent to the proposed bypass and township entry points.
- Economic impacts of relevant alignment alternatives on future growth and development of Beaufort.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Identify and characterise economic impacts on land-uses that could result from each alternative.
- Identify the extent of land severance for each alignment alternative and the potential impacts on land manager located adjacent to the proposed bypass.
- Identify existing and potential future economic activities likely to be affected by the alignment alternatives.

Design and mitigation measures

- Identify the potential impacts on existing and proposed land uses which could be affected by alignment alternatives, and identify potential and proposed design measures that avoid or mitigate impacts.
- Identify potential impacts from alignment alternatives in relation to future growth of the town and the required land capacity to accommodate forecast growth, with consideration of Council's strategic planning objectives.
- Identify opportunities to refine alignment alternatives that could avoid or reduce the displacement of residences and the severance of productive land.
- Identify mitigation measures to avoid or reduce the negative impact of the project on residents, economic activities and productive land during construction.

Assessment of likely effects

- Assess the likely displacement of residences, businesses and farmers by alternative alternatives and the degree of social dislocation and inconvenience that may be experienced within the community.
- Assess the likely effects of alignment alternatives on existing and proposed land use patterns, policies and strategies in Pyrenees Planning Scheme.
- Assess the likely economic costs and benefits and impacts of each alignment alternatives, having regard to construction costs, land use effects, social and community impact and development stimulus.
- Assess the likely impacts on land managers on each of the route alternatives including those near town entry points.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed measures to manage residual effects on existing economic activities and land uses, consistent with relevant land use planning objectives, policies or plans.
- Identify measures to avoid and mitigate project risks.

4.7 Amenity

Draft evaluation objective

To minimise adverse air quality, noise or vibration effects on the amenity of residents and local communities, as far as practicable during construction and operation.

Key issues

- Increased noise levels from the project's construction and operation could affect amenity in areas in close proximity to the road alignment alternatives.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Characterise the existing noise setting in adjacent established residential, rural residential, commercial and open space areas and at other sensitive land use locations.

Design and mitigation measures

- Identify design responses or other mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or manage any significant noise, air quality or vibration effects at sensitive land use locations during the project construction and operation, in the context of relevant guidelines, planning policy and VicRoads *Traffic Noise Reduction Policy 2005*.

Assessment of likely effects

- Assess likely noise increases (due to operation) at sensitive land use locations along each alignment alternative, both with and in the absence of the proposed mitigation measures.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed measures to manage residual effects on amenity during project implementation, including: noise and dust emissions and the effects of vibration during and after project construction.
- Include identified measures in the EMF.

4.8 Landscape and visual

Draft evaluation objective

To minimise adverse effects on visual and landscape values as far as practicable, during construction and operation.

Key issues

- The potential for adverse effects on landscape and visual values, particularly the sensitive landscape areas of local or regional significance including; Camp Hill State Forest, Snowgums Bushland Reserve, Beaufort Trotting Track, Beaufort Main Lead Common and Beaufort Motorcycle Track, and waterway crossings including culturally significant watercourses in the landscape.
- Consider the adverse effects on landscape and visual values associated with potential impacts to 'treed roadsides' and, in general, the impacts associated with loss of trees and other vegetation.
- Consideration of the interaction of the proposed alignment alternatives with view sheds to the wider landscape and significant landscapes in the area.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Identify landscape character types and values and their sensitivity to change for each relevant alignment alternative, including the preparation of a photomontage to scale for each alignment alternative.
- View sheds to the areas of works for relevant alignment alternatives from Beaufort and other settlements.

Design and mitigation measures

- Identify potential and proposed design alternatives and measures to protect landscape values which could be affected by relevant alignment alternatives. Provide design solutions to enhance the visual amenity of the immediate environs of each alignment alternative.

Assessment of likely effects

- Assess the likely effects of relevant alignment alternative on landscape and visual amenity values including impacts from vegetation removal and any loss of landscape connectivity.
- Assess the likely effects of relevant alignment alternatives on landscape and visual amenity values to the sensitive landscape areas of local or regional significance.

Approach to manage performance

- Identify proposed principles for managing residual effects on landscape and visual amenity, including enhancement of the visual amenity for residents and farmers living in the vicinity of the project as part of the EMF.

4.9 Environmental management framework

Draft evaluation objective

To provide a transparent framework with clear accountabilities for managing environmental effects and hazards associated with construction and operation phases of the project, in order to achieve acceptable environmental outcomes.

Key issues

- Weak management of environmental effects during project construction and operation could result in failure to meet statutory requirements and sustain stakeholder confidence.

Priorities for characterising the existing environment

- Outline the means by which a register of environmental risks associated with the project will be developed and maintained during project implementation (including matters identified in preceding sections in these directions as well as other pertinent risks).

Design and mitigation measures

- Proposed framework for managing the risks of adverse environmental effects, including:
  - the context of required approvals and consents, in particular requirements for related environmental management plans (EMPs);
  - the environmental management system (EMS) to be adopted, including organisational responsibilities and accountabilities;
  - the environmental management measures proposed in the EES to address specific issues, including commitments to mitigate adverse effects and enhance environmental outcomes; and
  - proposed objectives, indicators and monitoring requirements, including for managing or addressing
    - traffic during construction,
    - construction noise and dust,
    - noise during project operation,
    - wellbeing of residents, business and farmers during construction,
    - disruption of and hazards to existing infrastructure,
    - landscape and visual amenity,
    - biodiversity values,
    - surface runoff, flood potential and ground water,
    - waste including potentially contaminated materials,
    - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage values; and
    - greenhouse gas emissions during construction.
- Outline EMPs for construction and operational phases.
- Outline a program for community consultation, stakeholder engagement and communications during the construction and operation of the project, including opportunities for local stakeholders to engage with the proponent to seek responses to issues that might arise when the project is undertaken.

Assessment of likely effects

- Evaluate the likely effectiveness of the proposed environmental management framework in controlling adverse effects.
- Evaluate the proposed project's energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions during construction and identify measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Approach to manage performance

- Procedures for:
  - verifying or monitoring environmental performance and compliance with requirements; and
  - review of the effectiveness of the environmental management framework for continuous improvement.
- Arrangements for management of and access to baseline and monitoring data, to ensure the transparency of environmental management.
- Develop a risk assessment process and mitigation measures to minimise the impact.

4.10 Sustainable development

Draft evaluation objective

Overall, to identify an alignment and conceptual design for the Western Highway bypass of Beaufort that would achieve a sustainable balance of environmental, economic and social outcomes and provide a net community benefit.

Key issues

- The choice of the preferred alignment alternative for the project needs to provide an optimal balance of environmental, economic and social outcomes.

Assessment of likely effects

- Provide an integrated assessment of the economic, social and environmental performance of the project either proceeding or not, drawing on the findings of the specific assessments set out above, including the proposed approaches to avoiding, mitigating, managing and offsetting potential adverse effects.
- Provide a proportionate assessment of any relevant aspects of sustainability not otherwise addressed in the preceding sections.
- Evaluate the overall implications of the project in the context of key aspects of legislation and statutory policy as well as the principles and objectives of ecologically sustainable development and environment protection.

Appendix A – EES Procedures and Requirements

DECISION ON PROJECT: Western Highway Beaufort Bypass

Decision under section 8B(3)(a) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

Assessment though an Environment Effects Statement (EES) under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* **is required** for the reasons set out in the attached Notice of Reasons for Decision.

Procedures and requirements under section 8B(5) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*

The procedures and requirements applying to the EES process, in accordance with both section 8B(5) of the Act and the *Ministerial guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Ministerial Guidelines), are as follows:

i) The EES is to document investigations of potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including the feasibility of associated environmental mitigation and management measures, in particular for:
   a. potential effects on biodiversity values, including native vegetation, listed flora, fauna and communities and Crown land reserves;
   b. potential effects on Aboriginal cultural heritage values; and
   c. potential effects on land uses, infrastructure and communities (e.g., severance) along the proposed route.

ii) The matters to be investigated and documented in the EES will be set out more fully in scoping requirements. Draft scoping requirements will be exhibited for 15 business days for public comment, before final scoping requirements are endorsed by the Minister for Planning.

iii) The proponent is to prepare and submit to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) a draft EES study program to inform the preparation of scoping requirements.

iv) The level of detail of investigation for the EES studies should be consistent with the approach set out in the scoping requirements and be adequate to inform an assessment of the significance and acceptability of its potential environmental effects, in the context of the Ministerial Guidelines.

v) DELWP will convene an inter-agency Technical Reference Group (TRG) to advise the Department and the proponent, as appropriate, during the preparation of the EES on the scoping requirements, the design and adequacy of the EES studies, and coordination with statutory approval processes.

vi) The proponent is to prepare and implement an EES Consultation Plan for informing the public and consulting with stakeholders during the preparation of the EES, having regard to advice from DELWP and the TRG.

vii) The proponent is also to prepare and submit to DELWP its proposed schedule for the completion of studies, preparation and exhibition of the EES, following confirmation of the scoping requirements. This schedule is intended to facilitate the alignment of the proponent's and DELWP's timeframes, including for TRG review of technical studies for the EES and the main EES documentation.

viii) The proponent is to apply appropriate peer review and quality management procedures to enable the completion of EES studies to a satisfactory standard.

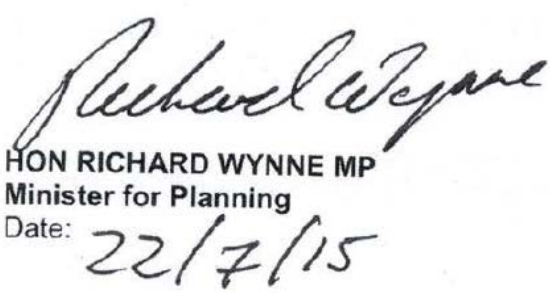
ix) The EES is to be exhibited for a period of 30 business days for public comment, unless the exhibition period spans the Christmas–New Year period, in which case 40 business days will apply.

x) An inquiry will be appointed under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* to consider environmental effects of the proposal.

Notification

The following parties (proponent and relevant decision-makers) are to be notified of this decision in accordance with sections 8A and 8B(4)(a)(i) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978,* as appropriate:

- VicRoads (proponent)
- Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water
- Pyrenees Shire Council
- Secretary of Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
- Wathaurang Aboriginal Corporation (Registered Aboriginal Party)
- Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority



HON RICHARD WYNNE MP
Minister for Planning
Date: 22/7/15