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REASONS FOR AMENDMENT TO ORDER UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

Public works: Suburban Rail Loop Stage One

Proponent: Suburban Rail Loop Authority

Description of project

The public works are the works proposed to be undertaken for the purposes of the Suburban Rail Loop Stage One, comprising the construction and operation of the rail and supporting infrastructure:

- twin-bore rail tunnels between Cheltenham and Box Hill, via a stabling yard in Heatherton, travelling beneath Clayton, Monash University, Glen Waverley and Burwood;
- six new stations constructed at Cheltenham, Clayton, Monash, Glen Waverley, Burwood and Box Hill, with interchanges to existing railway stations at Cheltenham, Clayton, Glen Waverley and Box Hill;
- stabling, train wash and maintenance facilities, an operational control centre and a power substation at the proposed stabling yard;
- dive structures and rail tunnel portals at either side of the proposed stabling yard;
- a power substation in the vicinity of the proposed Burwood Station; and
- an intervention and ventilation shaft between the proposed Glen Waverley and Burwood stations.

Order

Being satisfied that works proposed to be undertaken for the purposes of the Suburban Rail Loop Stage One could reasonably be considered to have, or be capable of having, a significant effect on the environment, the Minister for Planning declared the works to be public works for the purposes of the *Environment Effects Act 1978*, by Order published in *The Government Gazette* on 22 December 2021.

Reasons for Order

The project is a large-scale infrastructure project, constructed over several years affecting residents, businesses and educational and recreational land uses.

The works have the potential for significant environmental effects on a range of environmental values, having regard to the nature of the area within which the project is proposed to be constructed and operated and its dynamic and varied social and community setting.

An environment effects statement will provide a transparent and integrated framework for:

- assessment of the potential environmental effects, taking into consideration design options, scheduling and mitigation alternatives for planning and delivery of the project; and

- evaluation of the effectiveness of proposed measures to avoid, minimise, manage and offset environmental effects.

On 20 December 2021, I approved the order under section (1) of the section 3(1) of the *Environment Effects Act 1978* declaring that the works proposed to be undertaken by the Suburban Rail Loop Authority for the purposes of the Suburban Rail Loop Stage One to be Public Works for the purposes of the EE Act (Order).

The Suburban Rail Loop Authority had requested that certain specified works be excluded from the declared public works (excluded works) to facilitate, subject to obtaining any necessary approvals, the commencement of works that may form part of the project before the completion of the environment effects statement process.

The Suburban Rail Loop Authority provided a document titled "*Impact Assessment and Approvals Report – Initial Works*" dated 11 November 2020 (Assessment Report) assessing the potential impact of the works proposed to be excluded from the scope of the EES. The works to be excluded from the Order were specified in Schedule 1.

Since this time, the Suburban Rail Loop Authority has progressed further design development of the excluded works. The description of the works to be excluded from the public works order in Schedule 1 has been amended accordingly. Refinements have also been made to improve clarity, including in relation to ancillary activities that are excluded to support the implementation of the initial works.

The scope of works provided for in the revised Schedule 1 is consistent with utilities, new underground power lines, road modifications and investigative works, which are relatively minor and are generally similar in nature to routine works undertaken by infrastructure providers across metropolitan Melbourne. These works will not have, or be likely to be capable of having, a significant effect on the environment.

Vegetation removal will be required to undertake the initial works. Impacts to ecological values and trees within the study area can be avoided and minimised. Temporary construction facilities are also needed to support the initial works. The works are of a scale wherein temporary construction facilities would be unlikely to have significant environment effects, they are temporary in nature and locations for the facilities are available within the study area that would not affect ecological and heritage assets.

The ground improvement works at the proposed stabling facility have decreased in scope since they were previously excluded from the order. Deep dynamic compaction ground improvement trial technique is no longer proposed to be used. The Assessment Report describes the way in which these works will be carried out, and the measures that can be adopted to manage the environmental effects of these works. I remain satisfied that the nature of these effects can be monitored, managed and conducted in a way to minimise the impact upon the broader environment and nearby residents.

I have therefore approved an amendment to the Order which:

- Updates the description of the excluded works in Schedule 1.
- Updates the overview map of Suburban Rail Loop Stage One illustrating the proposed location for the intervention and ventilation facility in Glen Waverley and a refined tunnel alignment near the Monash station.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Wynne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Richard Wynne MP
Minister for Planning

Date: 5 / 08 /2021