

REFERRAL OF A PROJECT FOR A DECISION ON THE NEED FOR ASSESSMENT UNDER THE *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*

REFERRAL FORM

The *Environment Effects Act 1978* provides that where proposed works may have a significant effect on the environment, either a proponent or a decision-maker may refer these works (or project) to the Minister for Planning for advice as to whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required.

This Referral Form is designed to assist in the provision of relevant information in accordance with the *Ministerial Guidelines for assessment of environmental effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978* (Seventh Edition, 2006). Where a decision-maker is referring a project, they should complete a Referral Form to the best of their ability, recognising that further information may need to be obtained from the proponent.

It will generally be useful for a proponent to discuss the preparation of a Referral with the Impact Assessment Unit (IAU) at the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) before submitting the Referral.

If a proponent believes that effective measures to address environmental risks are available, sufficient information could be provided in the Referral to substantiate this view. In contrast, if a proponent considers that further detailed environmental studies will be needed as part of project investigations, a more general description of potential effects and possible mitigation measures in the Referral may suffice.

In completing a Referral Form, the following should occur:

- Mark relevant boxes by changing the font colour of the 'cross' to black and provide additional information and explanation where requested.
- As a minimum, a brief response should be provided for each item in the Referral Form, with a more detailed response provided where the item is of particular relevance. Cross-references to sections or pages in supporting documents should also be provided. Information need only be provided once in the Referral Form, although relevant cross-referencing should be included.
- Responses should honestly reflect the potential for adverse environmental effects. A Referral will only be accepted for processing once IAU is satisfied that it has been completed appropriately.
- Potentially significant effects should be described in sufficient detail for a reasonable conclusion to be drawn on whether the project could pose a significant risk to environmental assets. Responses should include:
 - a brief description of potential changes or risks to environmental assets resulting from the project.
 - available information on the likelihood and significance of such changes.
 - the sources and accuracy of this information, and associated uncertainties.
- Any attachments, maps and supporting reports should be provided in a secure folder with the Referral Form.
- A USB copy of all documents will be needed, especially if the size of electronic documents may cause email difficulties. **Individual documents should not exceed 10MB as they will be published on the Department's website.**

- A completed form would normally be between 15 and 30 pages in length. Responses should not be constrained by the size of the text boxes provided. Text boxes should be extended to allow for an appropriate level of detail.
- The form should be completed in MS Word and not handwritten.

The party referring a project should submit a covering letter to the Minister for Planning together with a completed Referral Form, attaching supporting reports and other information that may be relevant. This should be sent to:

Postal address

**Minister for Planning
PO Box 500
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 8002**

Couriers

**Minister for Planning
Level 16, 8 Nicholson Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

In addition to the submission of the hardcopy to the Minister, separate submission of an electronic copy of the Referral via email to ees.referrals@delwp.vic.gov.au is required. This will assist the timely processing of a referral.

PART 1 PROPONENT DETAILS, PROJECT DESCRIPTION & LOCATION

1. Information on proponent and person making Referral

Name of Proponent:	VIDA Rail
Authorised person for proponent	Matthew Gault
Position:	Chief Executive Officer - VIDA Rail
Postal address:	Level 9/121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, 3000
Email address:	railprojects@bigbuild.vic.gov.au
Phone number:	1800 105 105
Facsimile number:	N/A
Person who prepared Referral:	Christopher Stewart
Position:	Senior Manager – Planning and Environment
Organisation:	VIDA Rail
Postal address:	Level 9/121 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, 3000
Email address	railprojects@bigbuild.vic.gov.au
Phone number:	1800 105 105
Facsimile number:	N/A
Available industry & environmental expertise: (areas of 'in-house' expertise & consultancy firms engaged for project)	<p>VIDA Rail, formerly known as the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP), is a division of the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA), an administrative office in relation to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).</p> <p>VIDA Rail has extensive 'in-house' expertise in rail and road planning, construction, statutory planning, urban design, heritage, ecology and environmental management. At the time of writing, VIDA Rail has removed 87 level crossings.</p> <p>VIDA Rail is experienced in delivering level crossing removal projects across Victoria with successful results and will draw on this experience and existing VIDA Rail policies to deliver the Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project (the Project). VIDA Rail has designed the Project to maximise the opportunities presented by its context and ensure an appropriate response to any potential environmental impacts.</p> <p>The AECOM-GHD Joint Venture (JV) is engaged by VIDA Rail to provide technical advisory services, including investigation and assessment of various matters to inform this referral and the development of the Project design. The AECOM-GHD JV also have extensive technical experience, providing support to VIDA Rail since 2016. Additional sub-consultants have been engaged to provide specialist advice where required. This includes</p>

	through the North-Western Program Alliance (NWPA), a delivery arm of VIDA Rail.
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2. Project – brief outline

<p>Project title: Brunswick Level Crossing Removal Project (the Project).</p>
<p>Project location: (describe location with AMG coordinates and attach A4/A3 map(s) showing project site or investigation area, as well as its regional and local context)</p> <p>The Project is located approximately five kilometres (km) north of the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD) on the Upfield Line, approximately 150 metres west of Sydney Road.</p> <p>The Project is proposed to occur within the Referral Project Area (RPA).</p> <p>The RPA extends from the local government area (LGA) of the City of Melbourne in the south (Parkville), to the City of Merri-bek (Brunswick) in the north. The southern extent of the Project in Parkville is expected to occur predominantly within the rail corridor, with limited works occurring in areas of open space and public recreation, including Royal Park. The majority of the RPA, once it moves north of Park Street, occurs within Brunswick, which is a highly urbanised area that is undergoing rapid change.</p> <p>A map book showing the RPA is provided in <i>Attachment 1</i> and the RPA coordinates are provided in <i>Attachment 2</i>.</p>
<p>Short project description (few sentences):</p> <p>The Project involves the removal of eight level crossings on the Upfield Line at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albion Street, Brunswick • Hope Street, Brunswick • Victoria Street, Brunswick • Albert Street, Brunswick • Dawson Street, Brunswick • Union Street, Brunswick • Brunswick Road, Brunswick • Park Street, Parkville. <p>The Project will involve the construction of an elevated rail bridge, rising at Tinning Street, Brunswick and lowering south of Park Street, Parkville. The existing three stations, Jewell, Brunswick, and Anstey will be decommissioned and replaced with two new stations referred to as 'Brunswick North' and 'Brunswick South' (placeholder names).</p> <p>At the time of this referral, the Project is in a preliminary design phase. Preliminary design elements have been developed based on VIDA Rail's previous experience, a thorough understanding of stakeholder technical standards, current and future transport network planning, client contractual requirements, and quality construction practices.</p> <p>The design elements to be further refined during ongoing design phases and through consultation with regulatory stakeholders include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exact bridge heights • pier locations • elevated rail bridge alignment and tie-in locations • road crossing treatments and integrated transport connections

- architectural and station design treatments
- bridge undercroft / new open space hard and soft landscape elements.

Key elements of Project's designs including walking and cycling connections, accessibility, landscaping, open space and station precinct design will also be shaped by community consultation.

A detailed Project description including further information on the location of the new stations is provided in *Attachment 1* and in Section 3 below.

3. Project description

<p>Aim/objectives of the project (what is its purpose / intended to achieve?):</p> <p>The Project aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve safety, reduce congestion and provide more reliable travel times for vehicles and other road users travelling around Brunswick and Parkville. • Deliver safe, accessible, convenient and high-quality train stations to meet the needs of all users. • Improve active transport, safety and connectivity by transforming the Upfield Bike Path by delivering separated cycling and pedestrian paths improving the journeys for the 2,500 bike riders and pedestrians each day. • Improve rail operational conditions for future rail network upgrades and service uplifts. • Improve local amenity by revitalising the urban corridor and creating new open space from Albion Street to Park Street with opportunities to create parks and community spaces similar to other Level Crossing Removal Projects. • Preserve, where possible, significant heritage values of the Upfield Line. This includes retaining and refurbishing Brunswick and Jewell stations which are listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR).
<p>Background/rationale of project (describe the context / basis for the proposal, e.g. For siting):</p> <p>Background</p> <p>In early 2015, the Victorian Government announced the removal of 50 of the most dangerous and congested level crossings across Melbourne. In 2018, the Victorian Government expanded its commitment to remove 75 level crossings and then again in 2021 to remove 85 level crossings.</p> <p>In October 2022, an additional 25 level crossings were announced for removal (including those that are proposed to be removed as part of this Project) bringing the total number to 110 to be removed by 2030.</p> <p>Why the level crossings need to be removed</p> <p>Level crossings are a key cause of congestion on Melbourne's roads.</p> <p>Each weekday approximately 71,000 vehicles travel through the level crossings proposed to be removed, with the boom gates down for up to 30 minutes of the morning peak (from 7am to 9am). Up to 16 trains travel through the level crossings during the morning peak.</p> <p>As well as causing congestion, there have been 36 near misses (where a train comes in close proximity to a person or vehicle) at these level crossings since 2016.</p> <p>Benefits of the Project:</p> <p>The LXR program of works is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to change the way people live, work and travel.</p> <p>The key benefits of the Project are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced traffic congestion on roads, including Brunswick Road (a major arterial road) which is used to access the Tullamarine Freeway and improved travel times on five bus routes. • Improved connectivity for the 2,500 daily users of the Upfield Bike Path. The Project will deliver separate cycling and pedestrian paths, and connection into the existing cycling and pedestrian path at Moreland Road, thereby providing a safer commute. • Approximately 4 hectares (equivalent to two MCGs worth) of open space created for local communities under and on either side of the elevated rail bridge.

- Improved and safer east-west connections for all users once the rail line is elevated.
- Modern and accessible stations with direct and easy access to residential areas, RMIT University (Brunswick Campus), community and education facilities, employment, retail and dining precincts.
- Creating opportunity to increase future services on the Upfield Line.
- Preserving, retaining and repurposing existing heritage structures and elements in consultation with Heritage Victoria to give a new lease of life to heritage assets and interpretation of the heritage elements significance.
- Revitalisation of the existing dilapidated rail corridor environment and support the urban renewal and densification that is occurring in the surrounding area.
- Opportunities for local apprentices, trainees and engineering cadets to work on a large-scale infrastructure project.
- Increased opportunities for local social enterprise and Aboriginal owned businesses.

How the environmental effects of the Project will be managed:

The environmental effects of the Project are discrete in nature and are capable of being managed under existing legislative requirements, internal processes, standards and procedures, and relationships with regulators and key stakeholders.

VIDA Rail will manage the effects of the Project in-line with existing legislative and approval requirements, including under:

- The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* – the Project will utilise Clause 52.03 (Level Crossing Removal Project) as the single planning provision, which will require the preparation of a comprehensive Environmental Management Framework, a consultation report, project boundary, native vegetation and other secondary consents to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.
- Permits and consents under the *Heritage Act 2017* including for any impacts to the Former Coburg Railway Line and Royal Park.
- Duties and obligations under the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.
- Preparation of a voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.
- Compensation for landowners affected by land acquisition in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986*.
- Management of wildlife under the *Wildlife Act 1975*.

Approval under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* is not expected to be required.

The removal of native vegetation will be managed under Clause 52.03 in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017).

Main components of the project (nature, siting & approx. dimensions; attach A4/A3 plan(s) of site layout if available):

The main components of the Project are:

- construction of an elevated rail bridge
- road works to remove level crossings
- decommissioning of the three existing stations and replacing them with two new elevated stations
- improvement of cycling and pedestrian connections
- new and revitalised urban spaces, including the retention of Victorian heritage listed Jewell and Brunswick station buildings.

Note – All heights and specifications listed below are approximate, based on previous VIDA projects and subject to change through the Project's ongoing design phases.

Elevated rail bridge

The Project involves the construction of twin elevated rail bridges supported by single piers for a length of approximately 2.1 kilometres. Within the Station precinct each bridge will be supported by single piers. The rail begins to rise onto the bridge north of Tinning Street and returns back to grade south of Park Street in Royal Park. Retaining walls and/or embankments will be located at both ends of the bridge to support the track as it transitions into the existing network and to minimise the extent of the works.

The height of the underside of the bridge will vary depending on the natural ground levels and required height clearances above the roads. However, generally the elevated rail bridge is expected to be between 5 to 5.5 metres from ground level to the underside of the structure.

Architectural screening with an approximate height of 1.8 metres or greater (from the top of the U-trough structure) will be installed as required at the new station locations. Additional visual screens, with an approximate height of 1.2 metres or greater (from the top of the U-trough structure) will be installed along the rail bridge as required. Other visual screening mitigation measures will also be investigated. A suite of rail system upgrades (such as signalling and electrical works) will be required to support the operation of the Upfield Line.

Road works

The Project will involve road works at each level crossing and will include the removal of rail tracks and associated infrastructure, roadway regrading, asphalt works and construction of associated pedestrian crossing infrastructure. To meet the vertical clearance requirements for the elevated rail bridge and to facilitate gradients required for the return of rail to at grade, Park Street is proposed to be slightly lowered. Retaining walls will then be constructed on the north and south side of Park Street. Associated utility and drainage works will also be required. The east west service road and footpaths on the north side of Park Street will remain at the existing ground surface level.

Short-term road closures are expected at each level crossing and on local roads adjacent to the rail corridor during the road works and installation of the elevated rail bridge. The road disruptions will be planned and approved in consultation with the appropriate road authorities.

Proposed new stations

The proposed new Brunswick North and Brunswick South stations will be architecturally designed and include landscaped forecourts for the community to gather, pick-up, drop-off (PUDO) areas, separated cycling and pedestrian paths, Parkiteer bike cages, station buildings and waste bin enclosures.

Proposed new Brunswick North station

The new Brunswick North station will be located approximately 200 metres south of the existing Anstey Station, between West and Hope streets. The station will also have elevated platforms, approximately 160

metres in length, with entrances at either end of the platforms. Lift and stair access to platforms will be provided at both entrances.

Proposed new Brunswick South Station

The new Brunswick South station will be located approximately 200 metres north of the existing Jewell Station, adjacent to RMIT (Brunswick Campus), between Union and Dawson Streets, Brunswick. The station will comprise of elevated platforms, approximately 160 metres in length, with entrances at either end of the platforms. Lift and stair access will be provided at both entrances.

Bike and pedestrian connections

The Project will transform the Upfield Bike Path delivering separated cycling and pedestrian paths between Moreland Road and Park Street to connect into the existing separated path network from Bell Street to Moreland Road. This cycling and pedestrian path network will connect to the neighbouring street networks to allow for improved east west connectivity to local community facilities and destinations and connect to the existing Upfield Bike Path south of Park Street and the Capital City Trail. The separation of cycling and pedestrian paths will provide safer local connections along the Upfield Line and reduce pedestrian and bike rider conflict, promoting active transport as a viable alternative mode of transport.

New and revitalised urban spaces

The Project will deliver enhanced public open spaces under and on either side of the elevated rail bridge between Albion Street and Park Street. The public open space will incorporate both historic and cultural heritage elements to reinforce the unique sense of place for Brunswick and Parkville. As part of the public open space, VIDA Rail proposes to retain the VHR listed stations, Jewell and Brunswick, and other state-listed heritage assets. The level of interpretation and refurbishment appropriate for each element has and will continue to be consulted on with Heritage Victoria. The public open space will be designed to improve biodiversity and canopy cover and will utilise water sensitive urban design (WSUD) to passively irrigate the vegetation and treat stormwater locally on site or locally nearby for flood mitigation and water quality treatment purposes. The area will be landscaped to attract the local community and visitors and to provide a high-quality open space.

Ancillary components of the project (e.g. Upgraded access roads, new high-pressure gas pipeline; off-site resource processing):

Ancillary works for the Project include (but are not limited to):

- utilities works and service relocations (above and below ground)
- temporary use of car parking (erection of temporary fencing/hoarding, line marking)
- site establishment, including:
 - temporary fencing;
 - temporary site offices and sheds;
 - hardstands; and
 - laydown areas and storage
- creation of temporary access ways
- temporary and permanent drainage infrastructure
- road diversions
- pedestrian and cycling path diversions
- removal of redundant infrastructure
- removal, pruning or lopping vegetation.

Temporary laydown areas

Five temporary laydown areas for the Project have been identified.

Table 1 - Temporary laydown areas

Location	Proposed use
Area near Anstey Station on the eastern side of the train line (just north of Florence Street)	Nil. At the time of preparation of the RPA this lot was vacant. Due diligence has since identified that an apartment building has been constructed on this lot. As such, the Project will not use this lot.
Bulleke-bek Park	Storage of construction material (to the smallest extent possible)
Car park on the north-west corner of Hope Street and Breese Street	Storage of construction material
Clifton Park (between Albert Street and Victoria Street to the west of the construction area)	Storage of construction material
VicTrack land between the rail and tram line within Royal Park	Storage of construction material

These areas have been identified as suitable for use as laydown areas as they:

- are in proximity to the proposed works
- are nearby or have access to suitable roads for vehicles that will need to use the laydown areas
- have minimal built structures present or can easily be reinstated
- have minimal or no ecological or heritage value.

Any additional laydown areas for the Project will be selected in accordance with the principles set out in Section 5 below.

Key construction activities:

The Project will have three key construction phases:

- early works
- main works
- finishing works.

A detailed description of construction activities is provided in Section 6 Project implementation.

Key operational activities

Following the construction of the Project, key operation and maintenance phase activities will include:

- operation, monitoring and controlling of the asset in accordance with the rail and road network requirements
- commissioning and handover of train operations
- maintenance, including routine inspections and monitoring of the condition of the asset, planned routine maintenance and refurbishment work, and unplanned intervention and repair of the asset.

Operation and maintenance activities will be consistent with existing practices and subject to the evolving operational demands of the road and rail networks.

Key decommissioning activities (if applicable):

The Project works will replace the existing at grade rail line. Both Brunswick and Jewell stations will be decommissioned with the station buildings to be retained and repurposed. Anstey Station will be demolished

Is the project an element or stage in a larger project?

No Yes If yes, please describe: the overall project strategy for delivery of all stages and components; the concept design for the overall project; and the intended scheduling of the design and development of project stages).

Is the project related to any other past, current or mooted proposals in the region?

No Yes If yes, please identify related proposals.

In 2021, VIDA Rail (known as LXP at the time) delivered the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project on the Upfield Line. The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project involved the removal of four level crossings (Moreland Road, Reynard Street, Munro Street and Bell Street in Coburg), construction of a 2.5 kilometre elevated rail bridge and new stations at Coburg and Moreland.

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project introduced incorporated document C178 into the Moreland Planning Scheme (now Merri-bek) in July 2018. A referral under the *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) was not required for the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project.

What is the estimated capital expenditure for development of the project?

At the time of this referral, the Project is in the preliminary design phase, and development of costs estimates is still underway.

The estimated cost of the Project is expected to exceed the High Value High Risk framework thresholds set by the Department of Treasury and Finance of \$250 million and will be subject to their appropriate governance and assurance arrangements.

4. Project alternatives

Brief description of key alternatives considered to date (e.g. Locational, scale or design alternatives. If relevant, attach A4/A3 plans):

No Project option:

Without the removal of the level crossings, delays and congestion in this area is expected to worsen due to future service uplifts on the Upfield Line. This no project option would also limit the future accessibility to the stations and train network efficiency.

Additionally, the no Project option is inconsistent with the strategic intent and local planning policy of the surrounding area. The Project will provide improved public transport access, walkability and cyclability outcomes, as well as new and revitalised open space and will support the housing densification and ongoing urban renewal of the area. These outcomes are consistent with local and state planning policy. A no Project option would therefore fail to meet the strategic planning objectives and intent for the area (as addressed further in Section 7 – Planning Context).

Design options (type of level crossing removal):

Several options for removal of the level crossings were investigated to assess their feasibility including:

- Rail over road (full online build): building an elevated rail bridge over the existing roads within the existing rail corridor, also called an online build (the subject of this referral).
- Road over/rail under: keeping the rail line at grade with road overpasses and underpasses.
- Rail under road: lowering the rail line into a cutting or trench.
- Hybrid options (such as roads partially raised, and rail partially lowered).

A number of the options had increased environmental, heritage and social impacts compared with the design that is the subject of this referral. Given that the level crossings are immediately adjacent to each other, the design approach at one crossing typically limits the design possibilities for adjacent level crossings. This includes limiting the feasibility of hybrid options (i.e. some crossings rail over, some crossings rail under).

Rail over road (full online build) – preferred option and the subject of this referral:

The rail over road (full online build) option has been selected for the following reasons:

- Minimises the potential impact to places on the VHR (such as Royal Park, the Former Coburg Railway Line and the Former Brunswick Gas and Coke Company Retort).
- Minimises the need for more extensive property acquisition.
- Improves east-west connections across the rail line.
- Provides significant opportunities for new public open space.
- Improves safety and journey experience by improving the Upfield Bike Path through the delivery of separated cycling and pedestrian paths reducing conflicts between bike riders and pedestrians.
- Reduced property acquisition, when compared to offline construction, as constructed directly above existing rail tracks and within the rail reserve.

Note that a full offline build, where the new rail line and infrastructure is built off to the side, outside of the active rail line, was not progressed due to the limited space next to the rail line and narrow corridor. There would need to be a high number of private property, residential and business acquisitions to create the space to allow the construction safely outside of the active rail line. Due to this reason, it was not progressed.

Road over/under rail

The road over rail or road under rail solutions (keeping the rail line at grade with road overpasses and underpasses) were not selected for the following reasons:

- Greater impacts to heritage places on the VHR.
- Compulsory acquisition of a significant number of private properties.
- Poor urban design outcomes and pedestrian linkages given the barrier of the rail line remains, new road barriers are introduced, and east-west connections are limited.
- Lack of opportunity for improvements to the Upfield Bike Path.
- Extensive and lengthy road closures during construction.
- Limited opportunity for new public open space.
- Truncation of access to private properties adjacent to the new road structures (driveway and laneway closures).

Rail under road

The rail under road (lowering the rail line into a cutting or trench) was not selected for the following reasons:

- Increased impacts to heritage places on the VHR.
- Compulsory acquisition of a significant number of private properties.
- Lack of feasibility without reconstruction of the elevated rail bridge previously delivered as part of the Bell to Moreland LXP.
- Poor urban design outcomes as the barrier of the rail line remains, with limited new east-west connections and limited new public open space.
- Longer rail occupations and closures of the Upfield Line during construction.

Number of stations

As part of the option assessments, the opportunity to rationalise the number of stations was also investigated. The following two options were considered:

- Option 1 - Retaining and replacing all three stations
- Option 2 - Consolidating three stations into two stations.

When compared against several technical and engineering selection criteria, it was determined that the consolidation of the number of stations from the existing three to two stations would provide better outcomes.

If Option 1 was selected, the three stations would be all located within 1500 metres which would make them among the closest stations on the network and continue to limit the number of services running on the Upfield Line.

Option 2, with a two-station design was chosen because it:

- Minimises the amount of land required for station infrastructure, thereby freeing up a larger area for new public open space.
- Provides safer separated cycling and pedestrian paths for the 2,500 bike riders and pedestrians who use the Upfield Bike Path daily.

- Paves the way for future upgrades on the northern rail corridor, including extra train services in the future.
- Improves the operational efficiency of the service on the Upfield Line by reducing the amount of time the train needs to allow for slowing down and stopping at a third station.

For some passengers, the travel time to get to the station will be shorter, and in cases where it is longer, the increase is expected to be less than two minutes walking. Both new stations will have two entrances, with one at each end of the 160 metre platforms providing direct access to existing residential, retail and commercial areas.

Location of stations

Extensive technical and engineering assessments determined the locations for the new elevated stations. VIDA Rail considered:

- balancing the distance between the stations along the Upfield Line to create a modern transport network
- alignment with key civic and residential areas
- equitable distance for passengers to access the new stations
- improving access for the wider community
- using land in the rail corridor
- minimising compulsory property acquisition
- key environment and heritage constraints including not impacting Victorian heritage-registered sites, including the Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House (Lux Foundry) and the Brunswick Baths
- not limiting the impact on current and future rail operations.

The new locations will be spaced approximately 1 to 1.2 kilometres apart — from Moreland Station in the north to Royal Park Station in the south — creating a modern and accessible transport network and maximising current and future patronage catchments.

This equal distance between stations removes bottlenecks in the rail corridor – critical for any potential future upgrades of the Upfield Line – while providing equitable station access for passengers.

The new Brunswick North Station will cater to the neighbourhood's rapidly growing residential community and will be centrally located between West Street and Hope Street, providing access to Bulleke-bek Park, West Street and Orient Grove via a northern entrance and have a southern entrance to provide access to Hope Street.

The new Brunswick North Station could not be located south of Hope Street as comparatively it would increase the distance to the station for some passengers, increasing their commute time and reducing accessibility. The option south of Hope Street would also limit future rail operations, impact the VHR listed Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House site, require more significant compulsory property acquisition and bring the rail bridge closer to residential properties north of Hope Street.

The new Brunswick North Station could not be located further north as it would require more significant compulsory property acquisition, increase passenger walking distance to the new station for some passengers and limit future rail operations.

The new Brunswick South Station will be centrally located between Dawson Street and Union Street, provide access to Dawson Street via a northern entrance, have a southern entrance to provide access to Railway Place and Union Street and connect passengers to RMIT University (Brunswick Campus), Brunswick Baths,

Brunswick Library, Brunswick Town Hall, and the Saxon Street Cultural and Community Hub, Balam Balam Place.

The new Brunswick South station location has a wider rail corridor which provides more space for the station precinct and separated cycling and walking paths. The new southern station could not be located further north due to the narrow rail corridor and proximity of the Brunswick Baths. Locating the station further south would have a significant impact on the VHR listed Jewell Station building. An overview of key alternatives considered by VIDA Rail, including plans, are available in *Attachment 3* and in *Selecting the best design for Brunswick and Parkville* on [Victoria's Big Build website](#).

Brief description of key alternatives to be further investigated (if known):

No other alternatives are currently under investigation.

5. Proposed exclusions

Statement of reasons for the proposed exclusion of any ancillary activities or further project stages from the scope of the project for assessment:

The scope of the Project has been prepared on the basis that the following works and activities are excluded from this referral:

- works associated with investigating, testing or surveying land;
- minor tree pruning that may be required along construction haulage routes and would be the subject of separate approvals (if required);
- minor road works along construction haulage routes including but not limited to:
 - Existing road repair and maintenance;
 - Works including widening or strengthening of shoulders/roads on existing road reserves, re-asphalting, intersection modifications, kerb works
- temporary cycling path and modifications including:
 - New lanes on existing roads and associated line markings;
 - Traffic and safety management on existing roads and paths; and
 - Traffic signalling work.
- temporary modifications for pedestrian movements;
- construction, protection, modification, removal or relocation of utility services, rail signalling, overheads and associated infrastructure;
- temporary car parking for site staff, commuters, businesses and/or residents affected by the Project;
- replacement bus stops, shelters or other minor ancillary works to support passengers of all abilities during rail occupations;
- undertaking cultural heritage surveys including archaeological investigations, excavations and preliminary salvage and relocation works; and
- other temporary or ancillary works that are minor in nature.

These works and activities have been excluded from this referral as they are yet to be planned in detail but are expected to be minor in nature or comparable in scope to renewal and maintenance activities and are unlikely to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. All works and activities of this nature would be undertaken in accordance with applicable planning, environmental and heritage approval requirements.

Additional laydown areas not currently included within the RPA may be required to provide additional storage of materials and facilitate construction. While any use of other sites outside of the RPA for laydown purposes will be subject to a separate assessment and approval (as necessary), VIDA Rail proposes to apply the following principles when assessing the suitability of any potential additional laydown area to minimise the potential for adverse impact as reasonably practicable.

The additional laydown area selection principles are:

- Where possible, any additional laydown area should be located in an industrial or commercial area.
- Where possible, sites, or parts of sites, with the following environmental and social characteristics should be avoided:
 - Sites, or parts of sites assessed as having recognised ecological values (i.e. subject to council environment overlay or containing native vegetation) or containing recognised heritage values such as places on the VHR, Victorian Heritage Inventory (VHI), or subject to a council HO.

- Sites, or parts of sites that directly abut properties with sensitive land uses, including an occupied dwelling, childcare centre, school, hospital or place of worship.
- Sporting fields and sites used for organised recreational activities by sporting clubs.
- Use of public open space for any significant period unless there is a reasonably suitable alternative public open space available for use in the area.

6. Project implementation

Implementing organisation (ultimately responsible for project, i.e.. Not contractor):

The Project is being undertaken by VIDA Rail, a division of VIDA, which is an administrative office established under the *Public Administration Act 2004* in relation to DTP. VIDA Rail is responsible for the planning and delivery of the Project on behalf of the Victorian Government.

Implementation timeframe

Note: *All timeframes listed below are indicative and may be subject to change in response to the statutory approvals process and other Victorian Government decisions.*

Overall, the construction period for the Project is anticipated to be across two to three years, delivered in stages as follows:

- **Utility enabling works and early works**, which are expected to start in late **2028**.
- **Main rail occupation works**, which are expected to start in mid to late **2030** with the level crossings to be removed by the end of **2030**.
- **Finishing works**, which will continue into **2031**.

Proposed staging

- **Utility enabling works:** for a period of approximately six months, VIDA Rail will be working with utility providers such as Jemena, CitiPower and Telstra to undertake utility enabling works. These works will facilitate the early works and main rail occupation stages and will include the relocation of existing utilities, construction of new utilities and service connections.
- **Early works:** for a period of approximately 10 to 12 months, VIDA Rail will be undertaking activities such as:
 - Mobilisation to site including the establishment of site offices, cribbing sheds, staff facilities, workforce car parking, construction laydown areas and hardstands.
 - Establishment of no-go zones to avoid or minimise potential impacts to protected flora, fauna, native vegetation, heritage assets or other sensitive values requiring protection.
 - The establishment of temporary fencing and hoarding.
 - Utility protection and relocation (ongoing).
 - Minor road works to enable heavy haulage deliveries and to enable any temporary bus diversions or rail replacement buses to support the main rail occupation.
 - Relocation or removal and temporary storage (as needed) of some heritage infrastructure.
 - Removing, pruning and lopping trees and vegetation.
 - Demolition of properties acquired by compulsory acquisition
 - Offline construction works on the rail line with weekend and nighttime After Last Before First (ALBF) rail occupations. ALBF works are undertaken over night while trains are not running, or trains are lower in frequency and occupancy.
 - Establishment of Upfield Bike Path detours, particularly to support the main rail occupation.
 - Construction of rail systems infrastructure in the combined services route (CSR) including traction/train power, communications, and signalling.
 - Early ground and preparatory works for the structure and stations where outside the active rail corridor may also be undertaken during this time. As there is limited area outside of the active rail corridor that can be safely accessed without disrupting trains this will be

significantly reduced compared to the main rail occupation works. These works could include:

- piling and footing works
 - earthworks
 - trenching
 - station precinct works.
- **Rail occupation works:** for a period of approximately 90 days, VIDA Rail will be undertaking activities such as:
 - closure of the Upfield Line rail corridor
 - level crossings removal works (dismantlement of existing level crossing services)
 - removal of ground surface level rail infrastructure (tracks, sleepers etc.)
 - demolition works
 - major utility works
 - earthworks and piling
 - construction of the elevated rail bridge
 - construction of new stations
 - a suite of rail systems upgrades
 - upgrade the Upfield Bike Path to deliver separated cycling and pedestrian paths
 - removing, pruning and lopping trees and vegetation
 - significant hard and soft landscaping works
 - Major roadworks and upgrades (including lowering Park Street, Parkville)
 - Major drainage and ancillary works.
 - **Finishing works:** for a period of approximately 10 to 12 months, VIDA Rail will be undertaking finishing activities such as:
 - upgrade the Upfield Bike Path to deliver separated cycling and pedestrian paths
 - hard and soft landscaping
 - reinstating heritage infrastructure (if relocated)
 - heritage conservation and interpretation works
 - finalising new undercroft and adjacent public open space
 - integration of urban design and adjacent precincts
 - demobilisation from site
 - returning temporarily occupied spaces back to the existing conditions, or as agreed with the relevant landowner.

The most significant disruption to the local community, rail passengers and road users will be during the main rail occupation when the rail line and stations will be closed, and no trains will pass through the area. During this time there will be a higher volume of construction work occurring along the corridor.

Cycling path diversion routes will be set up early in the Project during the early works phase, to enable alternative routes through Brunswick. Where possible the existing Upfield Bike Path will be maintained and open for as long as possible or closed in stages, if the ultimate construction sequence allows. Rail replacement bussing is to be provided during the rail occupation works that will include a series of measures to assist passengers with accessibility needs access during the disruption. This includes the provision of low

floor buses where possible. For passengers who are unable to utilise low floor buses, wheelchair accessible taxi services will be provided (at no cost to the passenger).

This approach has been successfully utilised on other VIDA Rail projects and will continue to be used on this Project.

7. Description of proposed site or area of investigation

Has a preferred site for the project been selected?

No Yes If no, please describe area for investigation.

If yes, please describe the preferred site in the next items (if practicable).

General description of preferred site, (including aspects such as topography/landform, soil types/degradation, drainage/ waterways, native/exotic vegetation cover, physical features, built structures, road frontages; attach ground-level photographs of site, as well as A4/A3 aerial/satellite image(s) and/or map(s) of site & surrounds, showing project footprint):

Referral Project Area (RPA) location

The RPA covers the main and ancillary works related to the construction and operation of the Project, with the majority of the works occurring in the existing rail corridor. The RPA extends from the LGA of the City of Merri-bek (Brunswick) in the north to the City of Melbourne in the south (Parkville), as shown in *Attachment 1*. The RPA is predominantly located within the existing Upfield Line rail corridor and within an established urbanised area that is undergoing urban intensification and renewal.

The southern extent of the RPA in Parkville occurs predominantly in the rail corridor located within Royal Park with some areas of open space and public recreation in Royal Park also required for access. The majority of the Project to the north of Park Street is within Brunswick. Specifically, the area is characterised by:

- residential areas
- education centres, including the RMIT University (Brunswick Campus), Dawson Street, Brunswick
- civic and recreational facilities east of the Upfield Line at Dawson Street
- light industrial and commercial properties east and west of the Upfield Line.

The Upfield Line is part of the Sydney Road area of the Brunswick Major Activity Centre (BMAC). The BMAC is undergoing substantial change, with many multi-storey mixed-use developments recently constructed or in the process of seeking planning approval, superseding the older industrial developments which were traditionally found in the area.

Most of the RPA is within the existing VicTrack Upfield Line rail corridor between Royal Park and Moreland Road. The RPA contains:

- VicTrack land with existing leases
- road reserves at the level crossings with utility connections
- nearby private parcels of land that will be used for both construction and operation of the Project, and temporarily used for laydown, site office or car park areas.

Landform, geology and topography

The RPA is comprised of a ground profile of overlaying interbedded siltstone and sandstone of the Melbourne formation or basalt of the Newer Volcanics Formation. The RPA is underlain by four geological units, including Quaternary-aged Newer Volcanics basalt (Neo), Tertiary-aged Sandringham Sandstone (Nbr), Tertiary-aged Tullamarine Basalt (Nuu) and Silurian-aged Melbourne Formation (Sxm).

The topography in the RPA and the surrounding area generally slopes downwards from the north to the south and south-west. Within Royal Park, there are localised elevated hills west of the rail corridor and geological landform features surrounding the rail corridor. The existing rail cutting dissects through Royal Park as it moves south towards Royal Park Station.

Based on Commonwealth Scientific Industrial and Research Organisation (CSIRO) Australian Soil Research Information System (ASRIS) mapping, there is extremely low probability of potential acid sulphate soils in the northern portion of the RPA and low probability in the southern portion of the RPA.

Hydrology, drainage and groundwater

Waterways

The Project does not traverse any major natural waterways. There are two waterways near the RPA:

- Moonee Ponds Creek – approximately 1.2 kilometres west
- Merri Creek – approximately 1.7 kilometres east

Both creeks are tributaries of the Yarra River, which is approximately 3.5 kilometres south-west at its closest point.

There are two wetlands located within 400 metres of the RPA:

- Trin Warren Tam-Boore Bellbird Waterhole in Royal Park (located 200 metres west of the RPA)
- Storage Wetland Park (located 400 metres west of the RPA).

The RPA is directly adjacent to a drain that flows into the man-made Trin Warren Tam-Boore Wetland in Royal Park.

Groundwater

Preliminary site investigations have indicated groundwater levels to be measured at depths between approximately 6.04 and 11.83 metres below ground level (mbgl), and the closest well to Brunswick Road was measured at 6.71 mbgl.

Vegetation cover

There is vegetation present throughout the RPA with varying values and qualities. There is high value vegetation present in the RPA at Royal Park including remnant native vegetation and significant mature trees.

Generally, the vegetation quality diminishes from south to north in the RPA. Noxious weeds are present throughout the RPA including along the Upfield Line.

There are also isolated mature trees, community plantings and other unauthorised plantings in rail corridor and public spaces throughout the RPA.

Additional information on vegetation in the RPA is provided in Section 12 of this referral and in *Attachment 4*.

Site area (if known): 27.3 hectares (273000m²)

Route length (for linear infrastructure): 3.75 kilometres and **width**: variable.

Current land use and development:

Current land use and development

A breakdown of land use within the RPA is provided below in Table 2.

Table 2 - Land uses within the RPA

Land use	Area within RPA (m ²)	Percentage (%) of RPA	Predominant works proposed
Rail Corridor	118477.24	43.4	Main works
Public Land	35.58	Less than 0.05	Ancillary works
Public Open Space	63348.95	23.2	Ancillary works
Industrial Land	21982.15	8.0	Main works

Commercial Land	36620.73	13.4	Main works
Residential Land	32410.90	11.9	Main works

Description of local setting (e.g. Adjoining land uses, road access, infrastructure, proximity to residences & urban centres):

Transport

The existing transport provisions in Brunswick includes the following:

- Regular train services along the Upfield Line to and from the Melbourne CBD and Upfield, from Jewell, Brunswick and Anstey stations
- Tram Route 19 along Sydney Road, and tram Route 58 along Grantham Street and Melville Road
- Multiple east-west bus routes intersecting the tram line and the Upfield Line.

Brunswick Road and Sydney Road are the main arterial roads in the area, supporting important movement function and catering for trips both to and through the area. Other main arterial roads intersecting the Project include Albion Street, Victoria Street and Dawson Street. Hope Street, Albert Street and Union Street are east-west local roads.

Active transport options include pedestrian footpaths along most roads as well as the existing Upfield Bike Path running parallel to the Upfield Line. The current Upfield Bike Path is narrow and is congested during peak use times with pedestrians and bike riders. There are additional bike riding routes east-west along Victoria Street which are part of the Strategic Cycling Corridor network, and lower-order bike routes are also provided along other roads.

Currently the rail corridor restricts east-west vehicular and pedestrian access at each level crossing, with disruptions and congestion causing delays when the booms gates are down.

Residential

The RPA, specifically around the Brunswick area, is adjacent to a broad range of housing types, including detached housing, small workers’ cottages, rear dwellings behind commercial buildings and an increasing number of medium-high density apartment buildings and townhouses. Brunswick has housing density typical for inner-city Melbourne.

The amount of high-density housing in Brunswick is increasing, in response to metropolitan population growth and Merri-bek City Council’s housing strategy, which aims to increase the supply of affordable homes within the LGA. The housing strategy also aims to direct most of the housing growth in the Merri-bek City Council within the BMAC. This suburb is undergoing rapid urban renewal, with many industrial sites being converted into mixed-use developments. The area surrounding Anstey Station is within the BMAC where brownfield sites are being consolidated and redeveloped at a rapid pace.

From Park Street to Union Street, and adjacent to Jewell Station, the west side of the rail corridor is predominantly low-rise residential properties, with some two storey townhouses in areas adjacent to the rail corridor which have been redeveloped. To the east of this area, between Sydney Road and the rail corridor, the land use is a mix of older industrial properties zoned as commercial and mixed-use, and newer multi-storey residential properties centred around the Jewell Station precinct and on Union Street. There are also gardens and other public facilities integrated with the existing train station.

To the west of the rail corridor at Anstey Station the built form is detached, single storey residential properties which are zoned residential. Recent developments adjacent to Anstey Station on the east side of the station have included new apartments, retail spaces, and open spaces for residents and the local community. To the east of Anstey Station, between Sydney Road and the rail corridor, newer high-rise mixed-use developments are progressing to complement the recent developments which have occurred in this area.

Commercial and mixed use

Brunswick has been shaped by its history as an industrial hub close to the centre of Melbourne, along with continuous migration and economic restructuring over time. Currently, there is a large stock of vacant or underperforming industrial spaces within the BMAC, generally located between Sydney Road and the rail corridor.

The Brunswick Structure Plan and the Moreland Industrial Land Strategy are two key strategic documents that guide the redevelopment of industrial land within the BMAC. The demand for industrial-zoned land has declined over the last 30 years due to the availability of more economical industrial land in the outer metropolitan areas. However, the projection of local industrial jobs suggests that inner city industrial precincts will still be required in the long term, albeit in a revised form.

The existing Brunswick Station precinct has a mix of low-density residential properties and single to double storey industrial properties on smaller blocks to the west of the precinct, backing onto the rail corridor. To the east of the station, the BMAC is a mix of detached low rise residential properties, interspaced between industrial and commercial properties. A supermarket and large format hardware store are also located in proximity of the station. This area has undergone substantial redevelopment, with several apartment buildings recently constructed on sites to the east of the station precinct.

Overall, the BMAC offers a comprehensive variety of services, including numerous banks, grocers, health services, hospitality, homewares, clothing and specialty stores.

Community and Educational facilities

In the RPA and nearby surrounds, there are a significant number of community facilities including:

- religious worship, such as the Brunswick Uniting Church, the St Ambrose Catholic Parish and the St Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church
- medical clinics, social clubs and childcare facilities
- the Brunswick Baths, Brunswick Town Hall, Brunswick Library, Brunswick Mechanics Institute, Saxon Street cultural and community hub, Balam Balam Place, and the Merri-bek City Council buildings
- The RMIT University Brunswick Campus.

Open space and recreation

Although Brunswick has 80.3 hectares of public open space, a significant proportion of public open space is delivered along the Merri Creek Linear Reserve, and by Gilpin Park and Jones Reserve.

Adjacent to the rail corridor, public open space is limited to Jewell Reserve, Bulleke-bek Park and Garrong Park to the north-east of Tinning Street. East of the corridor, open spaces are sparse and of reduced proportions, such as the Outdoor Family Space, Foletta Park, Randazzo Park and Warr Park. Barkly Street Park provides a larger area of open space near the shopping centre. North of the RPA, two MCG's worth of linear open space have been delivered as part of the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project.

The Merri-bek Open Space Strategy identifies the area between Sydney Road and the rail corridor as not adequately served by open space areas and is noted as a priority area for parks and improved linkages to open space.

The RPA runs through the northern boundary of Royal Park and its extensive open space and recreational areas from Royal Park Station. Royal Park is a 155-hectare public open space area of passive and informal recreation spaces, areas of native and indigenous vegetation including grassland, open woodland and wetland

habitats, historic buildings and monuments, and sporting facilities. Royal Park was established in the 1840s and continues to provide an oasis on the edge of the city for residents and visitors. The Park accommodates the State Netball Hockey Centre and the Melbourne Zoo, Royal Park Golf Course and Royal Park Tennis Club. There are also several valuable natural/conservation areas within the Park along with numerous sporting fields and pavilions, which support a large volume of formal recreation.

Planning context (e.g. strategic planning, zoning & overlays, management plans):

The RPA for the Project is subject to the Melbourne Planning Scheme and Merri-bek Planning Scheme.

As summarised below, the Project is consistent with and supports the implementation of State and local government planning policies in relation to transport, housing, open space and activity centres, in addition to strategic directions for the locality.

Attachment 5 provides a detailed overview of the relevant State and Local planning policies, the planning permit requirements within the RPA and the proposed planning approval pathway.

Strategic Overview

A significant objective that underpins sustainable land use and development policy is the provision of an efficient, reliable, accessible, and safe public transport network (as noted in the *State Policies* listed below).

Supported by planning policy, Brunswick and surrounds are undergoing rapid change, significant housing densification and urban renewal which requires a reliable and efficient transport network to support its growth and renewal.

The Project will support the development of Merri-bek City Council, by unlocking rail corridor land for new public open space removing obstructions to the area's connectivity. The Project will provide a modern, accessible, attractive, and upgraded rail experience along the Upfield Line that will support the economic growth within the Brunswick and Coburg activity centres and the industrial precincts surrounding the Upfield Line.

The Project will deliver benefits consistent with the City of Melbourne's policies to conserve and protect Royal Park. Policies surrounding heritage, landscape and open space have been carefully considered throughout the preliminary design phase of the Project to safeguard the Park's unique heritage, landscape, and open space principles. Through this approach, the Project's design will be integrated with consideration of the Park's key principles and qualities. This will ensure that changes to the landscape will complement and preserve as much of the natural and heritage significance as possible.

These positive outcomes of the Project are in line with the key objectives, strategies and aims in both State and Local planning policy.

The following sections provide further details of the planning policy and legislation relevant to the Project.

State Policy

The objectives of the Project are consistent with key State planning policy and legislation, including:

- *Plan for Victoria 2025*;
- *Transport Integration Act 2010*;
- *Growing Our Rail Network 2018 – 2025*; and
- *Victoria's Housing Statement 2024 – 2034*.

The Project supports the overall strategic objectives for Melbourne across all these state strategic plans to deliver a city with well-connected activity centres that provide an array of residential, commercial and open space uses, that are serviced by a reliable and integrated transport network.

The Project implements these State planning policies through:

- Removing level crossings to create an integrated transport system connecting people to jobs and services and improving the efficiency of rail and road networks no down time at crossings (consistent with *Plan for Victoria 2025*, *Transport Integration Act 2010* and *Growing Our Rail Network 2018 – 2025*).
- Improving access and connectivity to and throughout the BMAC and implementing urban renewal (consistent with *Plan for Victoria 2025* and *Transport Integration Act 2010*).
- Implementing urban renewal within the BMAC (consistent with *Victoria's Housing Statement 2024 – 2034* and *Plan for Victoria 2025*).
- Creating new public open space, infrastructure for active transport and integrating public spaces within and surrounding the rail network (consistent with *Victoria's Housing Statement 2024 – 2034*, *Transport Integration Act 2010* and *Plan for Victoria 2025*).

Planning Policy Framework (PPF) and Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS)

The Project is consistent with the objectives of the following policies of the PPF and MPS.

Victorian PPF

The following State planning policies are relevant to the Project:

- Clause 15.01-1S – Urban Design;
- Clause 15.03-1S – Heritage Conservation;
- Clause 15.03-2S – Aboriginal Cultural Heritage;
- Clause 18.01-1S – Land Use and Transport Integration;
- Clause 18.01-2S – Transport System;
- Clause 18.02-1S – Walking;
- Clause 18.02-2S – Cycling; and
- Clause 18.02-3S – Public Transport.

Through the delivery of the Project, VIDA Rail will support and implement these policies by:

- Enhancing the transport efficiency and integration across the Upfield Line, particularly through the removal of the eight level crossings and an elevated rail bridge.
- Vastly improving active transport through the construction of the elevated rail bridge. This will allow for new east-west connections for bike riders and pedestrians, create connected and integrated new open space, grade separation between the roads and railway and separation of bike riders and pedestrians on the upgraded Upfield Bike Path. This will create safer and more convenient access, as well as new access where none currently exists.
- Improving community access to public transport with fully accessible modern stations.
- Retaining key aspects of the heritage fabric of the area. VIDA Rail has undertaken extensive consultation with Heritage Victoria in relation to this Project and will continue to work in partnership for the best possible heritage outcomes for the Project and community.
- Working closely with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation (WWCHAC) as the Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) to ensure the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage values, including by the preparation of a voluntary Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP).

Melbourne Planning Scheme

The following local planning policies are relevant to the Project:

- Clause 2.03-2 – Environmental and Landscape Values;
- Clause 2.03-4 – Built Environment and Heritage;
- Clause 02.03-7 – Transport;
- Clause 11.03-6L-11 – Parkville;
- Clause 15.03-1L-02 – Heritage; and
- Clause 18.01-1L – Land Use and Transport.

VIDA Rail supports and implements these policies by:

- Avoiding and minimising impacts to vegetation where possible throughout the RPA, and particularly within Royal Park, without undermining the key objectives of the Project. The majority of works will be undertaken in the established rail corridor to avoid more substantial impacts. In Royal Park, the works will take up a small portion of the park as a whole (less than 1per cent). The aesthetic and rarity landscape character values of Royal Park will remain highly intact.
- Delivering overall improvements to the public transport system and benefits to the wider community, in particular through the improvement in mobility and promoting sustainable modes of transport.

Merri-bek Planning Scheme

The following local planning policies are relevant to the Project:

- Clause 2.03-1 – Settlement;
- Clause 2.03-2 – Environmental and Landscape Values;
- Clause 2.03-4 – Built environment and heritage;
- Clause 2.03-7 – Transport;
- Clause 2.03-8 – Infrastructure;
- Clause 12.01-1L – Biodiversity in Merri-bek;
- Clause 15.03-1L – Heritage in Merri-bek;
- Clause 18.02-2L – Cycling in Merri-bek; and
- Clause 19.02-6L – Open Space in Merri-bek.

VIDA Rail supports and implements these policies by:

- Prioritising improvements to transport efficiency and safety through the removal of level crossings and construction of an elevated rail bridge, thereby enhancing the overall transport network and connectivity throughout Brunswick and Parkville. The new public open space will be integrated into the existing urban fabric and will support the urban renewal that is occurring along the Upfield corridor.
- Prioritising bike rider and pedestrian access and safety, through the delivery of separated cycling and pedestrian paths, crossings and amenities to encourage active transport. This will support the 20-minute neighbourhood initiative and promote walkability in the Brunswick and Parkville area and along the Upfield Line.
- Where possible, avoiding and minimising impacts to vegetation throughout the RPA by implementing measures to enhance local biodiversity, such as protecting impacts to vegetation and landscaping with native vegetation species.
- Supporting and increasing the diversity of public open space, improving the liveability of the local area by unlocking two MCGs worth of new public open space and creating engaging active and passive public open spaces to meet community needs.

Local Policy

The Project is consistent with key strategic plans and frameworks prepared by both LGAs. This includes:

- Royal Park Master Plan (Melbourne, *currently being revised*);
- Brunswick Structure Plan (Merri-bek);
- Sydney Road and Upfield Corridor Strategic Framework Plan (Merri-bek);
- Moreland Industrial Land Strategy 2015-2030 (Merri-bek); and
- Vibrant Brunswick - Brunswick Activity Centre Structure Plan (Merri-bek).

In particular, the Project will:

- Support the BMAC focus for the municipality's housing growth directed towards areas close to public transport, shops and services.
- Minimise impact to Royal Park and improve the landscape and urban design values along the corridor.
- Enhance movement, improve cross-corridor bike rider and pedestrian connections and provide safer and convenient access at multiple locations.
- Increase the diversity of public open space and improve the liveability of the local area through the creation of two MCGs worth of new open spaces and providing connections to the east and west side of the rail corridor.
- Support the urban renewal of the BMAC and the provision of high quality and well-integrated transport and movement networks.

Zones and Overlays

The RPA is largely within the existing rail corridor, station precincts (Transport Zone 1 (TRZ1)) and road reserves (with various zones, including Transport Zone 2 (TRZ2), Neighbourhood Residential Zone 1 (NRZ1), Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), Industrial 1 Zone (IN1Z) and Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z)). The RPA also includes land outside of the existing rail corridor and road reserves, including land that is not zoned for, or currently used for public transport. This includes land zoned residential, industrial, commercial and for public use.

The most prevalent and commonly occurring overlays within the RPA are Heritage Overlays (HO) reflecting the significant number of historic heritage places present. Design and Development Overlays (DDO), a Special Building Overlay (SBO), Public Acquisition Overlays (PAO), an Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO), Development Contributions Plan Overlays (DCPO), a Parking Overlay (PO) and a Specific Controls Overlay (SCO) are also present.

Proposed Planning Approval Pathway

VIDA Rail is proposing to utilise Clause 52.03 (Level Crossing Removal Project) to obtain the planning approval for the Project. This Clause was introduced to facilitate Level Crossing Removal Projects that have been declared under section 10(1)(b) of the *Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009* (MTPF Act). Clause 52.03 will exempt the Project from planning scheme requirements that would otherwise require a planning permit or planning scheme amendment, or prohibit certain use and development types, subject to the conditions of the Clause being met to satisfaction of the Minister for Planning. Refer to *Attachment 5* for further detail of the conditions of this Clause.

Clause 52.03 provides a comprehensive, fit for purpose and transparent planning framework. It ensures key planning and environmental considerations are addressed to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning with consideration to council and community views, heritage, environmental management, built form, landscape and native vegetation.

VIDA Rail has an established history of successfully delivering projects under this provision, having sought and obtained approval for over 40 projects under Clause 52.03 to date, including 23 projects that were delivered via an elevated rail bridge solution.

Local government area(s):

The Project is within the LGA of the City of Melbourne and the City of Merri-bek.

8. Existing environment

Overview of key environmental assets/sensitivities in project area and vicinity

(cf. general description of project site/study area under Section 7):

Key environmental assets identified in the RPA and vicinity (and discussed further below) encompass the following aspects:

- historic heritage
- flora and fauna
- geology.

Historic heritage

Located within the RPA there are four listed places on the VHR, three places on the VHI and 13 places listed in a HO.

VHR

- Royal Park (VHR H2337) – Royal Park is significant as one of the largest and oldest parks in Melbourne. It has historical and cultural importance with diverse landscape and recreational areas that reflect the Victorian-era design and development;
- Former Coburg Railway Line (VHR H0952) – The Former Coburg Railway Line is historically significant as one of the most intact surviving examples of a nineteenth century railway line in Victoria, and for its historical contribution to Melbourne's public transportation network and the development of the northern suburbs. It reflects the expansion of rail infrastructure in the late 1800's and early 1900's, with distinctive engineering and heritage features and structures along the railway line;
- Royal Parade (VHR H2198) – Royal Parade is historically significant as 'the road to Sydney' from the mid-nineteenth century, extending north from Melbourne's CBD. The avenues demonstrate developments in urban planning and is aesthetically significant for its grand tree-lined boulevard.
- Former Cable Tram Engine House & Tram substation (VHR H2332) – the Former Cable Tram Engine House & Tram substation holds significance as a remnant of Melbourne's early cable tram system, which was one of the largest and most complex in the world during its time. The building represents the technological and engineering achievements of the late 19th Century.

VHI

- Royal Park (VHI H7822-2311);
- Upfield Railway Infrastructure: Brunswick to Coburg (VHI H7822-2386); and
- Former Dwelling at 13 Orient Grove (VHI H7822-2441).

Further details on the heritage significance of the VHR and VHI places are provided in Section 15 and *Attachment 6*.

The following local HOs are located within the RPA.

Melbourne Planning Scheme

- HO4 (Parkville Precinct);
- HO977 (Royal Parade, Parkville and Carlton North, and Elizabeth Street, Melbourne) (also under VHR H2198);
- HO1093 (Royal Park, Flemington Road and Royal Parade and Gatehouse Street and The Avenue and Elliot Avenue and Park Street and Poplar Road and Macarthur Road and Oak Street and Brens Drive, Parkville) (also under VHR H2337); and

- HO1301 (Former Coburg Railway Line, Park Street, Parkville) (also under VHR H0952).

Merri-bek Planning Scheme

- HO41 (253-263 Brunswick Road – Former Cable Tram Engine House & Tram Substation) (also under VHR H2332);
- HO61 (10 Dawson Street – Brunswick Baths);
- HO77 (Frederick Street Precinct, Brunswick);
- HO130 (Park Street Precinct, Brunswick);
- HO139 (Phillipstown Precinct – Barkly Street / Union Street);
- HO142 (33 Saxon Street, Brunswick – House);
- HO149 (Sydney Road Precinct, Brunswick) – multiple locations;
- HO180 (Upfield Railway Line Precinct) – multiple locations; and
- HO601 (Former Coburg Railway Line (also known as Upfield Railway Line Precinct) (also under VHR H0952).

Further details on the local heritage places under a HO are provided in the Planning Assessment within *Attachment 5*.

Historic heritage immediately adjacent to the RPA

Immediately adjacent to the RPA, five additional places listed on the VHR and two additional places listed on the VHI have been identified.

VHR

- Women's Dressing Pavilion (VHR H1585);
- Former Ferry Terra Cotta and Enamelled Brickworks Office (VHR H1285);
- Craig & Seeley Offices and Showroom (VHR H2026);
- Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House (VHR H2027); and
- Former Melville's Grain Store (VHR H0705).

VHI

- Former Brunswick Road Cable Tram Engine House Track Precinct (VHI H7822-2217); and
- Former Brunswick Cable Tram Depot Precinct (VHI H7822-2230).

There are numerous places covered by a HO adjacent to the RPA.

Flora and fauna

Desktop and field assessments were conducted to identify key ecological values in the RPA.

The majority of the RPA is within an urban environment context, with only the southern portion within Royal Park providing areas of high-quality vegetation and habitat.

The RPA occurs across the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Gippsland Plain Bioregions. Key findings from the Project's flora and fauna assessments include:

- In the RPA, there is approximately 1.76 hectares of native vegetation, comprising 26 patches of native vegetation and 19 native scattered trees. The patches are predominantly Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) 175 Grassy Woodland, across both the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Gippsland Plain Bioregion.
- The area between Moreland Road and Park Street contains no patches of native vegetation and nine scattered trees, including seven River Red Gum and two Yellow Box trees. The arterial roads and residential streets are dominated by planted indigenous, native and exotic trees predominately for amenity purposes.
- Most scattered trees, and all the patches of native vegetation have been recorded within Royal Park. In Royal Park the native vegetation including the scattered trees are overall in very good condition, consisting predominantly of planted indigenous vegetation for biodiversity purposes.
- Potential habitat for *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) listed Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater and Gang-gang Cockatoo was recorded within the RPA.
- Targeted surveys for Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater and Gang-gang Cockatoo were undertaken in 2022 and 2023.
- Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater were not observed.
- Gang-gang Cockatoo individuals were observed on four occasions during the targeted surveys in 2023;
- Critical habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo is considered to be present. Critical habitat for Gang-gang Cockatoo is broad ranging and considered to be "*all foraging habitat during both the breeding and non-breeding season...this does not include exotic feeding grounds such as ornamental trees, shrubs, and hedges within urban and suburban areas*" (Conservation Advice for *Callocephalon fimbriatum* Gang-gang Cockatoo, Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment, 2022).
- Targeted surveys for the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* (FFG Act) listed Powerful Owl were also carried out in 2022 and 2023. No individuals were observed within the RPA.
- Black Wattle and Golden Wattle, both protected Restricted Use under the FFG Act, have been recorded in the RPA. A permit is not required under the FFG Act to remove these individuals (as they have been planted from nursery stock).

Further information on flora and fauna can be found in Section 12 and *Attachment 4*.

Geology

For general geology and soils information, see Section 7 *Landform, Geology and Topography* of this referral.

The RPA includes one site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance: The Royal Park Railway Station cutting (ML 042).

Located between Royal Park Station and Park Street along the Upfield Line, the site is characterised by Wakelin Associates (2009):

Royal Park Railway Station cutting (ML 042)

'Steeply dipping sandstone and mudstone of the Silurian Dargile Formation are overlain with angular unconformity by coarse grained sandstone of the Tertiary Brighton Group. An iron-stained soil with buckshot gravel has developed on the latter unit.'

Its significance is due to: *'In conjunction with the southern railway cutting (ML 069), this is one of the traditional teaching sites for earth science in Melbourne. At this site the nature and relationship of Palaeozoic and Tertiary sediments in Victoria are clearly displayed.'*

The nearby site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance: the Southern Railway cutting, Royal Park (ML 069) is located behind the Ross Straw Field. This site is not within the RPA and is visible/accessible via the Upfield Bike Path. These two sites are linked in their significance as described in Wakelin Associates (2009):

Southern railway cutting, Royal Park (ML 069)

'Tertiary sands unconformably overlies very weathered Miocene basalt of the Older Volcanics. The clayey sands immediately above the basalt contain Middle Miocene bivalves and gastropods. These Middle Miocene sediments are overlain disconformably by cross-bedded coarse sandstone containing occasional Late Miocene -Early Pliocene bivalves and gastropods as well as leaves and fruit.'

Its significance is due to: *'In conjunction with the Royal Park Railway Station cutting (ML 042) this is one of the traditional teaching sites for geology in Melbourne. The site displays palaeo-land surfaces, weathering, fossils, an unconformity and a disconformity.'*



Southern railway cutting, Royal Park: a site of Regional significance ML 069
(Photo: Susan White)

Figure 1 – Site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance at Royal Park, from Wakelin Associates' VEAC Melbourne Metropolitan Investigation: Geological Sites (May 2009)

Further details in relation to geology, soils and the Site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance within the RPA are provided in Section 14 of this referral.

9. Land availability and control

Is the proposal on, or partly on, Crown land?

No Yes If yes, please provide details.

All land in the Upfield rail corridor is held by VicTrack on behalf of the Victorian Government. This land is a combination of freehold and Crown land.

In addition to the rail corridor and road reserves, the Project will also permanently and temporarily impact a small amount of land managed by Melbourne City Council at Royal Park.

Current land tenure (provide plan, if practicable):

The Project will predominantly be undertaken within the rail corridor and on road reserves. The rail corridor is managed by a combination of Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) and VicTrack. The roads are managed by either Head Transport for Victoria (TfV) or local councils.

However, private residential and commercial land will be required to deliver the Project. VIDA Rail requires the compulsory acquisition of five whole commercial properties and 13 whole residential properties. One property on Barkly Street, Brunswick has been fully acquired ahead of schedule. Two residential properties, one on Barkly Street, Brunswick and one on Orient Grove, Brunswick, have also progressed with acquisition ahead of schedule (due to the preference of the landowners). Table 3 below provides an overview of the properties requiring compulsory acquisition.

VIDA Rail have a dedicated specialist team Land and Property Engagement Team who support discussions with those who are impacted by Projects. The Land and Property Engagement Team contacted all impacted parties regarding compulsory acquisition.

Divestment of council land will also be required, the exact extent is subject to ongoing design. However, the extent is expected to be minor and only required where new infrastructure encroaches or overhangs land that is currently controlled by councils.

Table 3 - Properties requiring compulsory acquisition

Address	Property type	Ownership
Barkly Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Barkly Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Barkly Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Barkly Street, Brunswick	Residential	Tenanted
Barkly Street, Brunswick	Residential	Tenanted
Bryant Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Bryant Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Bryant Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Bryant Street, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Orient Grove, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Orient Grove, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied
Orient Grove, Brunswick	Residential	Tenanted
Orient Grove, Brunswick	Residential	Owner occupied

Victoria Street, Brunswick	Commercial	Owner occupied
Hope Street, Brunswick	Commercial	Owner occupied
Hope Street, Brunswick	Commercial	Tenanted
Hope Street, Brunswick	Commercial	Owner occupied
Albion Street, Brunswick	Commercial	Tenanted

The Project will temporarily impact some council owned land during construction and will permanently impact approximately six VicTrack lots leased to third parties. At the time of preparation, one of the impacted VicTrack lots has been vacated by the tenant (due to the preference of the tenant).

Refer to *Attachment 1* for a map of existing land tenure.

Intended land tenure (tenure over or access to project land):

The RPA interfaces with the following infrastructure:

- MTM operational rail lines
- existing roads
- water and drainage infrastructure
- utilities.

The Project is predominantly within the existing rail corridor of the Upfield Line. Additional land is required outside the rail corridor for the new station locations, for permanent and temporary combined services route, and to facilitate construction. Land required for construction includes road reserves on either side of the Upfield Line and at the level crossings, open space, car parks for laydown, storage or office space.

VicTrack will retain its ownership of the rail reserve.

Land acquired for permanent infrastructure will be transferred to public land managers (e.g. VicTrack, council or Head TfV) as appropriate and agreed between the parties.

Any land required temporarily for construction would be reinstated to the same pre-occupation condition and returned to the control of the original owners and/or managers (so far as reasonably practicable).

Other interests in affected land (e.g. easements, native title claims):

The RPA does not intersect with any known native title claims.

Properties identified for acquisition within the RPA are commonly subject to encumbrances, including easements, caveats and covenants. Any impacts on these interests will be considered and managed through the design process and, where appropriate, addressed in accordance with the MTPF Act and the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986* (LAC Act).

10. Required approvals

State and Commonwealth approvals required for project components (if known):		
The following approvals outlined in Table 4 are required for the Project.		
Table 4 – Summary of relevant legislation and approval requirements		
Legislation	Assessment and findings	Required approvals
Commonwealth		
<i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC Act) (Commonwealth)	<p>A Significant Impact Assessment (SIA) for the EPBC Act listed Gang-gang Cockatoo was undertaken as part of the Flora and Fauna Assessment (see <i>Attachment 4</i>).</p> <p>The SIA concluded that the Project is not expected to constitute a significant impact under the EPBC Act and as such a referral under the EPBC Act is not required.</p> <p>This was determined as the Project's impacts to critical habitat is limited to lower quality habitat and are not expected to be important, notable or of consequence to the Gang-gang Cockatoo.</p>	<p>✗ Referral under the EPBC Act is not required for the Project.</p>
State		
<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> (Vic) (P&E Act)	<p>The Project will require planning approval under both the Melbourne and Merri-bek Planning Schemes.</p> <p>The proposed planning approvals pathway for the Project is Clause 52.03 – Level Crossing Removal Project. This Clause applies to the use and development of land for level crossing removal projects declared under section 10(1)(b) of the MTPF Act. An overview of the MTPF Act declaration is provided below. Refer to Section 7 and <i>Attachment 5</i> for further detail on the Clause 52.03 approvals pathway.</p>	<p>✓ Planning approval is required under the P&E Act. Approval will be sought via Clause 52.03 which exempts the Project from Planning Scheme requirements that would otherwise trigger a planning permit. Clause 52.03 approval will be subject to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.</p>
<i>Major Transport Projects Facilitation Act 2009</i> (Vic) (MTPF Act) (Vic)	<p>The Project was declared under Section 10(1)(b) of the MTPF Act with the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure (now Transport Infrastructure) appointed as the Project Minister on 25 May 2023.</p> <p>Declaration of the Project under the MTPF Act activates the delivery power afforded under the MTPF Act</p>	<p>✓ The Project has been declared under the MTPF Act. This declaration allows VIDA Rail to utilise Clause 52.03 of the Planning Scheme.</p>

	<p>and supports a standardised and transparent process for land acquisition and road works.</p> <p>Upon the designation of the MTPF Act Project area (this has not yet occurred), the Project will become an approved project under the MTPF Act. An approved project has access to powers such as certain land acquisition, temporary access to certain land, and road powers such as discontinuance and closing of roads and conducting works on roads.</p>	
<i>Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 (Vic) (AH Act)</i>	<p>Under the AH Act, a mandatory CHMP is not required as the works are not located within an area of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance.</p>	<p>✗ A mandatory CHMP is not required. However, a voluntary CHMP will be prepared for the Project.</p>
<i>Heritage Act 2017 (Vic)</i>	<p>Four sites listed on the VHR and three sites listed on the VHI are located within the RPA.</p>	<p>✓ Permits and consents for these sites will be sought under the <i>Heritage Act 2017</i> as required.</p>
<i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 (FFG Act) (Vic)</i>	<p>The FFG Act provides protection for threatened Victorian plants, animals and communities.</p> <p>Black Wattle and Golden Wattle, both protected under the FFG Act, have been recorded in the RPA.</p>	<p>✗ A permit to take protected flora under the FFG Act is not expected to be required. The species recorded are classified as 'restricted use', believed to be planted from nursery stock or will be avoided.</p>
<i>Wildlife Act 1975 (Vic)</i>	<p>The <i>Wildlife Act 1975</i> provides a framework for management of wildlife throughout Victoria. This includes the management of State Wildlife Reserves and Nature Reserves and provisions for licenses to handle wildlife. The definition of wildlife under this legislation includes, but is not limited to, any animal indigenous to Australia or its territories.</p> <p>A wildlife licence must be issued to take wildlife for the purposes of the management, conservation, protection, or control of wildlife. For the purposes of project delivery, where tree removal is required, a wildlife handler possessing a wildlife licence should be engaged for a preclearance check to look for, handle, capture and release any wildlife found prior to and during vegetation clearance.</p>	<p>✓ A wildlife license may be required (if handling wildlife).</p>

<p><i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 (Vic) (CLR Act)</i></p>	<p>The CLR Act is the key legislation for governing Crown land reserves in Victoria. The CLR Act provides the appointments and powers of committees of management of Crown land reserves.</p> <p>If reserved Crown Land is required for use for the purposes of the Project, approval may be obtained either by way of a s17B licence under the CLR Act or via the use of project delivery powers under the MTPF Act.</p>	<p>✓ As Royal Park is reserved Crown Land, approval will be required to access the land to undertake works. Such approval could be obtained either by way of a s17B licence or via use of the project delivery powers under the MTPF Act once the Project becomes an approved project for the purposes of the MTPF Act.</p>
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Have any applications for approval been lodged?

No Yes If yes, please provide details.

As listed in Table 4, the Project has been declared under the MTPF Act and the Minister for Transport Infrastructure has been appointed as the Project Minister.

Approval agency consultation (agencies with whom the proposal has been discussed):

Consultation has been undertaken with the following approval agencies:

- Heritage Victoria;
- Melbourne Water;
- DTP (Planning, Network, Stations, Rolling Stock, Road, Land and Public Transport);
- Merri-bek City Council;
- Melbourne City Council; and
- Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria.

Other agencies consulted

Consultation has been undertaken with the following agencies:

- Office of the Victorian Government Architect;
- VicTrack; and
- WWCHAC (RAP).

Further details are provided in Section 20.

PART 2 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

11. Potentially significant environmental effects

Overview of potentially significant environmental effects (identify key potential effects and comment on their significance and likelihood, as well as key uncertainties):

VIDA Rail undertook a wide range of preliminary due diligence assessments of a broader investigation area to determine the existing conditions and inform an assessment of the potential impacts of the Project.

These assessments informed if the Project had potential for significant adverse effects on the environment and should be referred to the Minister for Planning for a decision as to whether an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required.

Based on the assessments conducted, none of the individual criteria were met, however, two of the combined criteria had the potential to be met. These criteria are:

- **Potential for significant effects on the amenity of a substantial number of residents, due to extensive or major, long-term changes in visual, noise and traffic conditions.**
 - The elevated rail structure, without mitigation, has the potential to result in visual impacts to residents due to the height of the structure in proximity to adjacent properties and potential privacy issues.
- **Potential for extensive or major effects on cultural heritage places and sites listed on the VHR or the VHI under the *Heritage Act 2017*.**
 - The Project, without mitigation, has the potential to have significant impacts to the Former Coburg Railway Line (VHR H0952), Royal Park (VHR H2337 and VHI 7822-2311) and Upfield Railway Infrastructure: Brunswick to Coburg (VHI H7822-2386).

Management of potentially significant environment effects

VIDA Rail has a proven track record of successfully delivering large-scale rail and road major projects in Melbourne and has delivered several projects similar to the Project. VIDA Rail will leverage internal policies, procedures, and management frameworks to ensure appropriate responses to all potential environmental effects, including heritage, visual amenity and privacy.

Impacts to cultural heritage places are well understood and are being further investigated and managed through existing statutory frameworks under the *Heritage Act 2017* and through considered consultation and engagement with Heritage Victoria.

Changes in visual amenity will be managed in accordance with VIDA Rail's well established [urban design processes](#) and overlooking assessment process.

These impacts are outlined in further detail in Part 2 of this referral and in *Attachment 7* and *Attachment 8*. Whilst the Project is in the preliminary design phase, VIDA Rail's previous experience and robust internal policies, reduces the uncertainty of potentially significant effects.

The Project will also deliver improved revitalised urban spaces to enhance the visual conditions and conserve the heritage values.

Cultural heritage places

Potential for extensive or major effects on cultural heritage places and sites listed on the Victorian Heritage Register or the under the Heritage Act 2017.

Former Coburg Railway Line (VHR H0952)

Project works will impact the following collection of buildings and infrastructure that contribute to the remaining heritage fabric of VHR H0952 - the Former Coburg Railway Line:

- semaphore signals (eight)
- gate Keepers Cabins and Signal boxes (six)
- railway stations (Jewell and Brunswick)
- gate posts (one)
- gates (four)
- timber buffer (one)
- siding (one).

In consultation with Heritage Victoria, VIDA Rail is proposing to either retain in situ or conserve and reinstate all buildings and infrastructure listed above.

This will involve a program of careful dismantling, restoration offsite and reinstatement into the Project's new public open space and public realm. Brunswick and Jewell stations will be retained in situ (as it is not feasible to relocate them). Efforts to support the adaptive reuse and ongoing management of relevant buildings will be a priority.

Additionally, archival photography and heritage interpretation will be undertaken to communicate the historical significance of the Former Coburg Railway Line and then incorporate into the new public realm.

Whilst impacts to the Former Coburg Railway Line, could be considered extensive or major without mitigation, the proposed mitigation measures would ensure that the historic, rarity and representative values of the heritage place remain legible.

Royal Park (VHR H2337 and VHI 7822-2311)

A key impact of the proposed works is the construction of the new railway abutment and bridge within the existing railway cutting and rail corridor south of Park Street which will introduce new built form into the landscape of the northern area of Royal Park.

The existing topography of the railway corridor in this area is largely set within a deep cutting and will, for the majority, screen and conceal views within the extent of registration across the park until the northern-most end of the park. The last section of the rail line, around 200 metres, will rise onto retained earth abutments, and joining with the bridge to traverse Park Street at height. The visual presence of the new structure can be minimised through appropriate colour and material selection, screen design and articulation, and adjacent landscape treatments. City of Melbourne (in addition to Heritage Victoria) have been consulted regarding this section of the rail corridor. The Royal Park Tennis Club and the Royal Park Substation currently provide built form at a similar height to the proposed elevated rail bridge and, as a result, there are currently no expansive views across the park that will be interrupted through the introduction of the structure.

Another key impact of the proposed works is the potential removal of trees along the railway corridor and Park Street to facilitate the construction of the rail bridge.

The potential loss of trees represents a possible adverse impact on this portion of Royal Park. Notwithstanding this impact, the works are confined to a small portion of the Park as a whole, and the vast majority of established trees within the balance of Royal Park, along with their associated landscape value, will not be impacted. The stands of tall mature trees between the railway corridor and McAlister Oval will continue to dominate the views through this location, above the new rail bridge from viewing points such as the Royal Park Tennis Club.

The aesthetic and rarity values associated with the landscape character of Royal Park as a whole will remain highly intact.

Upfield Railway Infrastructure: Brunswick to Coburg (VHI H7822-2386)

The Project works have the potential to damage or disturb archaeological features or deposits related to:

- earlier railway infrastructure at Anstey Station, including an early signal box and gatehouse at Albion Street
- an early gatehouse at Tinning Street.

It is noted that archaeological features or deposits associated with the 19th century development of the Former Coburg Railway Line, as well as above-ground infrastructure, have the potential to remain undisturbed in other areas of the railway corridor.

All VHR and VHI Sites

The permit and consent process under the *Heritage Act 2017* is considered adequate to manage impacts from the Project. Section 15 of this form addresses impacts to historic heritage in further detail.

Visual amenity

Potential for significant effects on the amenity of a substantial number of residents, due to extensive or major, long-term changes in visual, noise and traffic conditions.

The Project and elevated rail bridge will impact visual amenity, including in:

- Royal Park: The elevated structure will impact some east-west views in a small section of the northernmost section of the Park
- Residential areas: Some residents in nearby apartments or abutting properties along the rail corridor will have views of the elevated rail line and stations instead of the current at grade rail line and stations.

Section 15 addresses visual amenity, including mitigation measures in significant detail below.

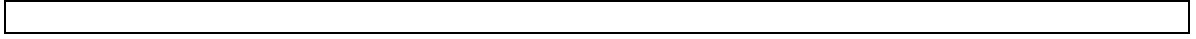
Other localised potential environmental effects

Other localised environmental effects may arise from the Project. Impacts will be minimised and mitigated with the adoption of a range of environmental management measures, many of which are standard measures for VIDA Rail and have been successfully managed on similar projects. VIDA Rail is committed to ensuring that all potential environmental effects, even those deemed not Significant, are managed appropriately.

Assessment of these effects, and suitable management measures, have been provided in the relevant sections below. Section 18 also provides further information on the overarching environmental strategies and controls being implemented to avoid, minimise and manage environmental impacts.

Other localised potential environmental effects include (but are not limited to):

- **Construction effects:** Effects associated with a Project of this type include noise, vibration, dust, traffic congestion, spillage, erosion. These impacts can be avoided, minimised or managed through the implementation of appropriate controls and standard VIDA Rail/industry practices, including compliance with the EPA publications 1820.1 *Construction – guide to preventing harm to people and the environment* and 1834.1: *Civil construction, building and demolition guide*.
- **Operational noise:** Effects associated with the noise of the operational railway and stations. These effects will be mitigated through the Project's design in accordance with the Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy and *Environment Protection Act 2017* (Vic) (EP Act).
- **Flora and fauna:** A total of 1.76 hectares of native vegetation, comprising 26 patches of native vegetation and 19 native scattered trees were identified within the RPA. Potential habitat for EPBC Act and FFG Act bird species was observed, however targeted surveys did not detect any species, except Gang-gang Cockatoo. A SIA was undertaken, and the assessment concluded that the Project would not have a significant impact on the Gang-gang Cockatoo.
- **Aboriginal cultural heritage:** Investigations of cultural heritage did not identify any known sites or places within the RPA. To allow for contingency of unexpected finds, unknown heritage values will be protected through the implementation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) under the AH Act.
- **Business:** Potential business impacts from land acquisition, temporary land occupation and termination of leases on VicTrack land. Eight businesses are anticipated to be displaced by land acquisition or termination of their VicTrack lease. VIDA Rail has advised the business owners regarding the Project and its implications for them and the VIDA Rail Land and Property Engagement Team is working closed to assist them through the process. Due diligence has since identified one additional business that will be impacted. This additional business was established recently on land required for the project.



12. Native vegetation, flora and fauna

Native vegetation

Is any native vegetation likely to be cleared or otherwise affected by the project?

NYD No Yes If yes, answer the following questions and attach details.

What investigation of native vegetation in the project area has been done? (briefly describe)

A Flora and Fauna Assessment of the RPA was undertaken (refer to *Attachment 4*). The investigations conducted as part of this assessment relevant to native vegetation include:

- Desktop assessment, including a review of online databases (Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA) and Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST) searches), previous reports and relevant legislation and policy.
- Vegetation and habitat field assessments, which included the purpose of identifying native vegetation patches and scattered trees. This was conducted on the following dates and locations:
 - Most of the sections within Royal Park were assessed in May 2022;
 - The remaining publicly accessed areas were assessed in October 2022;
 - The rail corridor between Park Street and Flemington Bridge Station was assessed in November 2022; and
 - The Brunswick Central Parklands, located between Dawson Street and Hope Street (Brunswick) were assessed in December 2022.
- Native vegetation mapping and Vegetation Quality Assessment (VQA).
- Offset requirements were calculated with the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) EnSym Native Vegetation Regulations tool.

What is the maximum area of native vegetation that may need to be cleared?

NYD

Approximately 1.76 hectares of native vegetation, comprising 26 patches and 19 native scattered trees are within the RPA. This is the maximum impact the Project could have on native vegetation. Avoid and minimise measures will be implemented to reduce the overall amount of native vegetation removal.

Further details of this vegetation are provided in response to the subsequent questions.

How much of this clearing would be authorised under a Forest Management Plan or Fire Protection Plan?

N/A approx. percent (if applicable)

Which Ecological Vegetation Classes may be affected? (if not authorised as above)

NYD Preliminary/detailed assessment completed. If assessed, please list.

As stated above, the RPA contains 1.76 hectares of native vegetation comprised of 26 patches of native vegetation and 19 native scattered trees.

The native vegetation patches are all consistent with EVC Grassy Woodland (EVC 175) which occurs across the Victorian Volcanic Plain and the Gippsland Plain Bioregions. Most of the scattered trees and all patches of native vegetation are within Royal Park. The majority of patches of native vegetation and scattered trees were considered to have been planted for biodiversity purposes. In Royal Park, 10 of the native scattered trees proposed to be impacted were planted for biodiversity purposes.

The area located between Park Street and Moreland Road does not consist of patches of native vegetation, and is primarily dominated by indigenous, native, and exotic trees planted for amenity purposes.

The main species recorded are River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), Yellow Box (*E. melliodora*), Yellow Gum (*E. leucoxylon*), Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Lightwood (*Acacia implexa*), Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), Sweet Bursaria (*Bursaria spinosa*), Hop Bush (*Dodonea viscosa*), Rosemary Grevillea (*Grevillea rosmarinifolia*), Rock Correa (*Correa glabra*), Black Anther Flax-lily (*Dianella revoluta*), Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*), Austral Indigo (*Indigofera australis*), Fragrant Saltbush (*Rhagodia parabolica*), Common Tussock-grass (*Poa labillardieri*), Spiny-head Mat-rush (*Lomandra longifolia*) and Pigface (*Carpobrotus glaucescens*).

Additionally, planted trees consisting predominately of River Red Gum were observed along the rail corridor between Park Street and Hope Street. The area around Jewell Station contains several scattered trees, and native exotic vegetation. A total of nine scattered trees, including seven River Red Gum and two Yellow Box were recorded within this section of the RPA. These trees are either remnant trees or were planted for biodiversity purposes.

Have potential vegetation offsets been identified as yet?

NYD Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Native vegetation offsets will be sought where the removal of native vegetation cannot be avoided in accordance with relevant policy and guidelines.

Native vegetation offsets are required to be secured by the Project under the P&E Act and provisions of Clause 52.03-7 of the Melbourne and Merri-bek Planning Schemes. Native vegetation offsets will be secured, and the offsets will be calculated once final native vegetation impacts are confirmed.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

The accuracy of information and the methodology used to identify native vegetation is outlined throughout this referral and in *Attachment 4*.

NYD = not yet determined

Flora and fauna

What investigations of flora and fauna in the project area have been done?

(provide overview here and attach details of method and results of any surveys for the project & describe their accuracy)

The Flora and Fauna Assessment (refer to *Attachment 4*) involved:

- A desktop review of online databases including:
 - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) EPBC Act Protected Matters Search Tool (PMST), within 5 kilometres to identify occurrence of listed Matters of National Environmental Significance (MNES).
 - DEECA Victorian Biodiversity Atlas (VBA), within five kilometres of the RPA.
- DEECA EnSym Native Vegetation Regulations Tool for native vegetation databases and offset requirements.
- DEECA NatureKit bioregion location, modelled EVC distribution and bioregional conservation status.
- A desktop assessment, including a review of previous reports and relevant legislation and policy.
- Vegetation and habitat field assessments (undertaken in 2022) to identify native vegetation patches and scattered trees, as well as threatened flora, fauna and/or ecological communities (refer to section above for further detail).
- Threatened bird targeted surveys (undertaken in 2022 and 2023) following the identification of suitable habitat areas for Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater, Powerful Owl and Gang-gang Cockatoo. An overview of the survey methodologies is provided below:
 - The survey methodology for Swift Parrot and Regent Honeyeater has been designed in accordance with *Survey guidelines for Australia's threatened birds – Guidelines for*

detecting birds listed as threatened under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (DAWE 2010).

- The survey methodology for Gang-gang Cockatoo involved a desktop assessment including modelling the distribution of Gang-gang Cockatoo habitat using the NatureKit 2.0 habitat distribution model (DEECA 2023).
- The survey methodology for Powerful Owl has been designed in accordance with *The Department of Sustainability and Environment Approved Survey Standards: Powerful Owl, Ninox Strenua* (the Standards) (DSE 2011). This involved call playback surveys targeted at areas with suitable habitat, including spotlighting searches.
- A VQA was undertaken in accordance with the *Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation* (the Guidelines) (DELWP, 2017) and habitat hectare method (DSE, 2004) to identify patches of native vegetation, scattered trees and other items of biodiversity significance.
- Gang-gang Cockatoo SIA to understand the local occurrence of the species within or adjacent to RPA.

Have any threatened or migratory species or listed communities been recorded from the local area?

- NYD No Yes If yes, please:
- List species/communities recorded in recent surveys and/or past observations.
 - Indicate which of these have been recorded from the project site or nearby.

A likelihood of occurrence was undertaken which found that the majority of threatened flora and fauna species, and migratory species were considered to be unlikely within the RPA, due to the modified and urban setting of the area. The RPA, particularly within Royal Park, was considered to potentially provide habitat for seven fauna species and five flora species (Table 5). These species are discussed below and further detail on the results is provided in *Attachment 4*.

Table 5 – Summary of results of Threatened Species Likelihood of Occurrence Assessment

	Known to occur	Likely	Possible	Unlikely
Flora	<u>Planted specimens</u> Fragrant Saltbush, Giant Honey Myrtle, Melbourne Yellow Gum, Southern Blue Gum and Spotted Gum	None	None	23
Fauna	Gang-gang Cockatoo, Grey-headed Flying Fox, and Little Eagle	Powerful Owl and Swift Parrot	Square-tailed Kite and Tussock Skink	43

Flora

Site investigations identified five flora species listed as threatened under the FFG Act (see Table 5). However, individuals of each of these species only occur as planted specimens. No other threatened flora were observed during site investigations or are considered likely to occur.

Fauna

Gang-gang Cockatoo

This highly mobile species is listed as Endangered under the EPBC Act and FFG Act, it was identified by both the PMST and VBA (9 records, last recorded 2020). Gang-gang Cockatoo are mostly found at higher

elevations near the Great Dividing Range, where they breed in tree-hollows. During the autumn and winter months, they generally undertake a seasonal migration to lower altitudes to feed, mainly on seeds of native and introduced species with a preference for Eucalyptus, Acacia and introduced Crataegus species (Birdlife Australia, 2022). The presence of some of these flora species within the RPA indicates that there may be suitable habitat for the species within the RPA.

Targeted survey was undertaken for this species over two seasons. No individuals were observed in the first season (2022). Gang-gang Cockatoo were observed on four occasions in the second season (2023). No breeding habitat was observed within the RPA and use of the RPA by Gang-gang Cockatoo is expected to be limited to foraging during their seasonal migration.

The NatureKit 2.0 Habitat Distribution Model (HDM) for the Gang-gang Cockatoo, showed no suitable habitat within the RPA north of Park Street, and low suitability within the RPA south of Park Street. The majority of the foraging habitat observed is planted and represents 1.95 per cent of the surrounding suitable habitat (based on 2 kilometres x 2 kilometres cell) equating to 0.63 hectares.

Grey-headed Flying-fox

Grey-headed Flying-fox is listed as Vulnerable under the EPBC Act and FFG Act. Grey-headed Flying Fox is considered a highly mobile species that forages over a large area. This species was observed flying over the RPA during site investigations, however, there is no critical roosting habitat within the RPA. The nearest camp is located at Yarra Bend Park, approximately 5 kilometres east. The RPA is located within a highly urbanised area and is only expected to provide minor foraging opportunities for the species within the broader landscape.

Little Eagle

Little Eagle is listed as vulnerable under the FFG Act. Little Eagle was observed flying over the site on two occasions. This species is generally considered to be absent from urbanised areas, and no observations of roosting or nesting were recorded within the RPA.

Powerful Owl

Powerful Owl is listed as Vulnerable under the FFG Act. The search of the VBA showed 46 records of Powerful Owl within a 5 kilometre buffer over the last 30 years, none of these are located within the RPA. Suitable habitat was also recorded for Powerful Owl in the form of large eucalypts and exotic trees with a dense and compact canopy, which it uses to roost. No trees were observed which contained hollows of a suitable size that Powerful Owl would utilise them for breeding.

Suitable habitat for FFG Act listed Powerful Owl was observed within Royal Park. Targeted surveys undertaken in 2022 and 2023 throughout the RPA did not detect this species. Given the lack of breeding habitat within the RPA any use of the RPA by Powerful Owl is expected to be limited to part of the species broad foraging range.

Swift Parrot

Swift Parrot is listed as Critically Endangered under the EPBC Act and FFG Act. It was identified by both the PMST and VBA (26 records, last recorded 2021), no records are located within the RPA.

Habitat within the RPA does not present suitable breeding habitat, as Swift Parrot breed only in Tasmania. This species utilises flowering eucalypts during the winter months as a food source and disperse to follow this resource. The vegetation within the RPA provides suitable foraging habitat, however this is expected to be of lower quality due to increased competition with other urban birds and the negative effects associated with being located within an urban area. Despite a number of recent VBA records nearby, targeted surveys in 2022 and 2023 did not detect Swift Parrot in the RPA. This suggests that the habitat within the RPA does not represent core foraging habitat and is likely to only be used opportunistically.

Square-tailed Kite

Square-tailed Kite is listed as Vulnerable under the FFG Act. The search of the VBA showed 16 records of Square-tailed Kite within a 5 kilometre buffer over the last 30 years, none of these are located within the RPA.

Square-tailed Kites can be found in a variety of habitat, including woodlands and open forests. Suitable habitat may be located within the RPA; however, this is only expected to be used occasionally. The species is more commonly associated with coastal, sub coastal and forested waterway habitats. Additionally, targeted surveys for threatened birds undertaken in 2022 and 2023 throughout the RPA did not detect this species.

Tussock Skink

Tussock Skink is listed as Endangered under the FFG Act. The species is only known from a single record within 5 kilometres of the RPA from 20 years ago (last recorded on VBA 2005).

Predominantly terrestrial, the Tussock Skink is usually found in grassy, treeless areas, often in association with rocks. The lowland population occurs in grassy ecosystem habitats of the warm temperate zone in the Victorian Volcanic Plain bioregion. All native vegetation patches throughout the RPA are associated with Grassy Woodland EVC and contain a treed canopy; most of the RPA is therefore considered low-quality habitat for Tussock Skinks.

Migratory

The PMST identified 35 migratory species, of which 29 are known or likely to occur or have species habitat present in the RPA. Migratory shorebirds and waders have been ruled out from occurring within the RPA due to a lack of suitable habitat. Two migratory species (White-throated Needletail and Fork-tailed Swift) have the potential to use aerial space in the vicinity of the RPA though are high flying species that rarely roost and are considered unlikely to be impacted by proposed Project works. All other migratory species are unlikely to occur within the RPA.

Communities

The PMST identified the potential for six Threatened Ecological Communities (TEC), four of which are known or likely to occur in the area:

- Grassy Eucalypt Woodland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (Critically Endangered);
- Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain (Critically Endangered);
- White Box-Yellow Box-Blakely's Red Gum Grassy Woodland and Derived Native Grassland (Critical Endangered); and
- Subtropical and Temperate Coastal Saltmarsh (Vulnerable).

The floristic community identified during the field assessment does not align with any of the TEC's listed above. None of the TEC's were identified within the RPA.

If known, what threatening processes affecting these species or communities may be exacerbated by the project? (eg. loss or fragmentation of habitats) Please describe briefly.

With consideration of the threatening processes listed under the FFG Act, the most relevant is *Habitat fragmentation as a threatening process for fauna in Victoria*. North of Park Street the RPA is situated within a highly urban environment dominated by residential and commercial development. South of Park Street the RPA borders the existing rail line. Given the urban context of the RPA, the highly mobile nature of fauna species which may forage within the RPA and the existing levels of fragmentation within the RPA; the proposed works are not expected to result in the exacerbation of existing fragmentation. No other threatening process are considered likely to be relevant to the proposed Project.

Are any threatened or migratory species, other species of conservation significance or listed communities potentially affected by the project?

NYD No Yes If yes, please:

- List these species/communities:
- Indicate which species or communities could be subject to a major or extensive impact (including the loss of a genetically important population of a species listed or nominated for listing) Comment on likelihood of effects and associated uncertainties, if practicable.

Flora

As detailed above, five flora species were observed within the RPA. Each of these species were present only as planted specimens. Removal of planted individual is not expected to result in impacts to these species.

Fauna

Whilst the RPA is expected to provide low quality habitat for a number of fauna species (see Table 5), use of the RPA is expected to be limited primarily to fly overs or represent foraging habitat for highly mobile species.

No species are expected to be subject to major or extensive impact. The loss of genetically important populations is not expected. However, there is the potential for construction works to have minor localised effects including displacement of small numbers of individuals of mobile species and loss of small amounts of habitat that primarily comprise foraging resources.

Migratory

No migratory species are expected to be affected by the proposed Project.

Communities

No listed or threatened communities are considered present within the RPA and will therefore not be affected by the proposed Project.

Is mitigation of potential effects on indigenous flora and fauna proposed?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

VIDA Rail will mitigate impacts to native vegetation and threatened species habitat as much as practicable.

The following mitigation measures are proposed and are standard procedure for VIDA Rail:

- Avoid impacts to native vegetation and mature trees by:
 - Overlaying spatial data from flora and fauna and arborist assessments against the Project's construction footprint and reduce accordingly with a particular focus on areas of high-quality vegetation outside the rail corridor.
 - Reviewing the turning circle requirements for large vehicles/machinery to enter and exit the rail corridor where possible.
 - The use of boring technology to enable service relocation as opposed to more traditional trenching.
 - Holding internal workshops where environment specialists, engineers and design teams come together to determine how significant trees and vegetation can be avoided.
- Where possible, limit the removal of Eucalyptus trees (including Sugar Gums and Spotted Gums) during the migratory period of the Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater and Gang-gang Cockatoo to reduce potential indirect impact.

- Implement no-go zones around patches of native vegetation, scattered trees and habitat trees where they are in close proximity to Project works to prevent any access and accidental damage during construction.
- Prepare a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) that includes weed management control measures.
- Prepare a Biodiversity Management Plan as a sub-plan of the CEMP.
- Obtain appropriate approvals under the FFG Act, and in accordance with the P&E Act including Clause 52.03-7 of Melbourne and Merri-bek Planning Schemes.
- Obtain confirmation that native vegetation offsets (general habitat units) are available through an offset broker.
- Engage a wildlife handler with a Management Authorisation under the *Wildlife Act 1975* to capture and relocate any native fauna during vegetation removal, pruning or lopping and demolition works.
- Develop a replanting schedule that promotes the planting of indigenous species post construction (though consultation with the Melbourne City Council and Merri-bek City Council).

These mitigation measures will ensure potential effects on indigenous flora and fauna are not extensive and will provide the best opportunity to avoid impacts, without undermining the objectives of the Project.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

The accuracy of information and the methodology used to identify flora and fauna in the RPA is outlined throughout this referral and in *Attachment 4*.

13. Water environments

Will the project require significant volumes of fresh water (eg. > 1 GI/yr)?

NYD No Yes If yes, indicate approximate volume and likely source.

The Project will not require a significant volume of fresh water and anticipates a combined volume of approximately 21 megalitres to 23 megalitres of potable and non-potable water.

This estimate is based on the water consumption of similar projects during construction, specifically the Preston Level Crossing Removal Project (Preston LXR). The Preston LXR rail alignment is approximately 34 percent shorter than the proposed Project alignment (2.21 kilometres and 2.99 kilometres, respectively). The Preston LXR consumed 15.83 megalitres during construction.

VIDA Rail requires projects to monitor and demonstrate a reduction in potable water usage as compared to a base case predicted usage. Projects do this by reducing the volume of fresh water required for construction by staging works to minimise the extent of exposed soil requiring dust suppression, usage of non-potable water where feasible and high efficiency site compound facilities. As of March 2024, VIDA Rail projects have collectively reduced 42 per cent of potable water usage during the construction phase which is equivalent to approximately 396,760 kilolitres.

Will the project discharge waste water or runoff to water environments?

NYD No Yes If yes, specify types of discharges and which environments.

It is not expected that the Project will discharge waste water or runoff to water environments.

Construction

A CEMP will outline systems and procedures to manage any waste water and runoff generated by the Project during construction in accordance with:

- The Victorian Government *Environment Reference Standard (2021)* – Part 5; and
- The EPA Publication 1834.1 *Civil construction, building and demolition guide (2023)*, in particular:
 - Erosion, sediment and dust (Chapter 5); and
 - Wastewater (Guidance Sheet 12).

The CEMP will include site specific erosion and sediment control plans to manage runoff from construction sites. Climate change risks (i.e. higher temperatures and rainfall events) will be identified during the Project development phase and adaptation measures will be included during the design and delivery of the Project.

The CEMP forms part of VIDA Rail’s Environmental Management System (EMS), which sets out the framework to manage the environmental effects of the Project. This is required to meet statutory requirements and to undertake the best practice environmental controls.

Further, the CEMP will include a specific plan for the management of soil and waters, as described further in Section 18 below.

Operation

Any waste water or runoff to be discharged from the Project once completed will be determined during the ongoing design phases. The Project will complete hydrological assessments and drainage modelling to inform the development and refinement of the drainage design in accordance with EPA Victoria, water authority and council standards and guidelines. The drainage design will ensure that there will be no unacceptable increases to flood levels.

Are any waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments likely to be affected?

NYD No Yes If yes, specify which water environments, answer the following questions and attach any relevant details.

No wetlands, estuaries or marine environments will be affected.

The RPA does not directly intersect any major natural waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments. It is directly adjacent to a drain that flows into the man-made Trin-Warren Boore Wetland in Royal Park. The RPA does intersect the Merri Creek, Moonee Ponds Creek and Yarra River catchments.

Although the proposed RPA does not intersect with any watercourses or major natural drainage lines, the Project will seek to improve the stormwater and track drainage network in areas managed by VicTrack, Merri-bek City Council and Melbourne City Council where possible.

Project construction is not anticipated to have any detrimental effect on waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments. Any potential impacts during construction will be managed under the CEMP, which will be developed in accordance with the EP Act, relevant State guidelines and the EMF approved under Clause 52.03 in consultation with the relevant council, see mitigation section below for further detail.

Are any of these water environments likely to support threatened or migratory species?

NYD No Yes If yes, specify which water environments.

The Project does not directly intersect any major natural waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments and therefore threatened and migratory species supported by these water environments will not be affected.

Are any potentially affected wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention or in 'A Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia'?

NYD No Yes If yes, please specify.

The closest Ramsar wetland is the Port Phillip Bay (Western Shoreline) and Bellarine Peninsula Ramsar site, which is approximately 19 kilometres from the RPA. The Project will not directly impact this wetland, nor will drainage from the RPA enter the wetland.

Could the project affect streamflows?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe implications for streamflows.

The Project will not intersect any major natural waterways and therefore streamflows will not be affected.

Could regional groundwater resources be affected by the project?

NYD No Yes If yes, describe in what way.

Regional groundwater resources are not expected to be affected by the Project.

During preliminary site investigations for the Project, groundwater was measured at depths between 6.04 and 11.83 metres below ground level (mbgl) in installed standpipes. VIDA Rail has minimised interactions with groundwater by proposing an elevated rail alignment.

The main activity that will encounter groundwater is piling, which typically requires localised dewatering prior to, and during, the concrete pouring for the pile.

Dewatering will be monitored and managed in accordance with the CEMP, which will be developed in accordance with:

- *The Victorian Government Environment Reference Standard (2021) – Part 5*
- *The EPA Publication 1834.1 Civil construction, building and demolition guide (2023), in particular:*
 - *Wastewater (Guidance Sheet 12).*

Any dewatering will be temporary and localised, with any changes to groundwater quality and long term flows considered unlikely and therefore will not affect regional groundwater resources.

<p>Disposal of any dewatered groundwater will typically be via a water quality treatment system with sedimentation tanks and chemical dosing (where required) under a Trade Waste Agreement (TWA) or carted to an offsite licensed facility. If groundwater control, like dewatering wells, are required, a groundwater extraction licence would likely be required.</p> <p>Following construction completion, the Project will not interact with regional groundwater resources.</p>
<p>Could environmental values (beneficial uses) of water environments be affected? <input type="checkbox"/> NYD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, identify waterways/water bodies and beneficial uses (as recognised by State Environment Protection Policies)</p> <p>The Project does not directly intersect any major natural waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments and the environmental values supported by these water environments will not be affected.</p>
<p>Could aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems be affected by the project? <input type="checkbox"/> NYD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, describe in what way.</p> <p>The Project does not directly intersect any aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems, as it is not located amongst any major natural waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments.</p>
<p>Is there a potential for extensive or major effects on the health or biodiversity of aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems over the long-term? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please describe. Comment on likelihood of effects and associated uncertainties, if practicable.</p> <p>The Project does not directly intersect any aquatic, estuarine or marine ecosystems, as it is not located amongst any major natural waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments.</p>
<p>Is mitigation of potential effects on water environments proposed? <input type="checkbox"/> NYD <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please briefly describe.</p> <p>The Project does not directly intersect any waterways, wetlands, estuaries or marine environments, as such no extensive or major effects on water environments are anticipated for the Project. However, controls to manage minor effects will be implemented so far as reasonably practicable under the Project's EMS described in Section 18. The EMS mandates development of the CEMP and Environmental Control Plans (ECPs) that will include controls for both groundwater and surface water. These measures have been successfully implemented across past VIDA Rail projects.</p> <p>Groundwater</p> <p>Groundwater interaction is only likely to occur during piling activities. Any effects would be temporary and localised, with extraction only occurring whilst excavations are open. Groundwater would be managed in accordance with the CEMP (and groundwater subplans), and would likely include controls such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation of a groundwater report by the Project contamination consultant with inputs from the geotechnical consultant following detailed site investigations • development of a dewatering strategy • obtaining relevant regulatory permissions, including a TWA and extraction licence. <p>Surface water</p> <p>The RPA does not intersect with any watercourses or major natural drainage lines, and the Project will make improvements to the stormwater and rail track drainage network (e.g. around Anstey Station area). Surface water will be managed in accordance with the CEMP (and site-specific ECP) and would likely include controls such as:</p>

- development of site-specific Erosion and Sediment Control Plan by an erosion and sediment control specialist
- dewatering permits and water quality testing prior to discharge as required.

VIDA Rail will also prioritise the application of WSUD principles to effectively manage hydrological changes and reduce the impact of stormwater pollutants on the catchment.

To support the environmental and ecological aspirations of the Project, the detention, retention and reuse of stormwater runoff is a critical element. WSUD measures, spanning from large scale ephemeral wet zones through to passive infiltration into garden beds and tree pits serve to maximise the use of this water, to provide more activated spaces, increase habitat for flora and fauna, and respond to the environmental expectations of the surrounding community. For example, at the Preston LXP, WSUD and social outcomes were combined by designing an amphitheatre that can also act as a retention basin.

VIDA Rail will aim to detain and treat stormwater from the rail infrastructure and public realm areas through implementing a series of landscaped spaces which utilise integrated stormwater treatment through swales and detention basins along the corridor. A lesson learnt from previous projects has been to strike an appropriate balance between the use of WSUD where space allows and allowing for the appropriate level of open space to be usable and not dominated by the drainage infrastructure. The creation of high-quality open spaces to add to the biodiversity of the surrounding neighbourhood will be a project opportunity, whilst providing passive recreation opportunities for residents and opportunities to increase the wildlife in this highly urban area. During ongoing design phases, the Project team will work closely with local stakeholders to develop an appropriate balance of WSUD.. Community consultation on the open space will start from 2027 when concept designs are released

The combination of landscaped spaces and WSUD elements will combine to form an integrated approach to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff and increase the greening of the local area.

Other information/comments? (eg. Accuracy of information)

Calculations pertaining to volumes of fresh water are based on data collected on previous VIDA Rail projects including on the recently delivered Preston LXP, which finished construction in 2022.

Groundwater depths are based off preliminary measurements undertaken in April 2023 by qualified geotechnical specialists. Standpipes were installed and used to establish groundwater levels.

14. Landscape and soils

Landscape

Has a preliminary landscape assessment been prepared?

No Yes If yes, please attach.

A Landscape and Visual Values (LVV) assessment forms part of the preliminary Brunswick Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) (see Attachment 8). The LVV assessment analyses the landscape character units (LCU) of the existing urban fabric and open spaces within the context of the Project and their sensitivity to change, whilst noting that the urban context of Brunswick is also undergoing considerable and rapid change itself.

The LVV section of the UDG describes the landscape character and visual values within the RPA, including detailed descriptions of the key character areas being residential, commercial, industrial, community and educational facilities, reserves and public open spaces and transport corridors.

The LVV notes the following LCU:

- Heritage LCU - high landscape and visual value;
- Residential LCU - sensitive with a high landscape visual value;
- Commercial LCU - low landscape quality with few sensitive interfaces;
- Industrial LCU - low landscape visual value with many inactive interfaces at the corridor;
- Community and Educational Facilities LCU - low landscape visual value with sensitive interfaces;
- Parks and Reserves LCU - high visual value with sensitive interfaces; and
- Transport Corridors LCU - low landscape and visual value.

The elevated rail infrastructure has the potential to visually impact multi-storey developments adjacent to the rail corridor. However, due to the changing nature of the urban fabric and context in Brunswick, higher density developments have the capacity to visually accommodate elevated rail structures more than low-density low-rise developments. The rail infrastructure will be viewed against the backdrop of a highly built-up environment, lessening the visual sensitivity and impact. There are some long-range cross-suburb views, typically east-west across major arterial roads, which are already impacted by road and rail infrastructure due to the existing level crossings.

Further details of the urban design process for VIDA Rail projects are detailed in the Brunswick Urban Design Process report (see Attachment 7), which has been prepared for the Project and responds to the UDG. The purpose of the UDG is to illustrate and describe the urban design objectives and outcomes that are sought for the Project, in line with the [LXRP Urban Design Framework](#) (UDF). The UDF guides the design and delivery of high quality, context sensitive urban design outcomes, which enhance urban amenity and minimise adverse impacts.

The UDG provides a detailed context analysis for the Project including surrounding land use and built form, transport networks and access, environmental attributes and LVV. Through ongoing design phases, VIDA Rail will apply the UDG guidelines to mitigate negative visual amenity issues, which may be experienced by local residents, and strengthen the local identity and visual amenity of the rail infrastructure to positively influence the local urban fabric.

Is the project to be located either within or near an area that is:

- **Subject to a Landscape Significance Overlay or Environmental Significance Overlay?**

NYD No Yes If yes, provide plan showing footprint relative to overlay.

No part of the RPA is subject to a Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) or Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO).

However, the section of the RPA in Royal Park is near Environmental Significance Overlay 2 (ESO2), overlaying the extent of Melbourne Zoo within the City of Melbourne. ESO2 relates to Exceptional Trees that 'contribute to the character and culture of local areas and collectively, to the valuable ecosystems of the City of Melbourne's Urban Forest.' (Melbourne Planning Scheme). No impact to ESO2 or the trees within it will occur.

Please refer to planning overlay map in *Attachment 1*.

- **Identified as of regional or State significance in a reputable study of landscape values?** NYD No Yes If yes, please specify.

Royal Park is listed on the VHR under H2337 and is a significant and large public park. The Heritage Victoria Statement of Cultural Heritage Significance for Royal Park states that the park is significant in part due to it satisfying Criterion E *Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics*.

The statement under Criterion E nominates the aesthetic significance of the park to be at a State level due to it being 'an outstanding example of a large metropolitan park, particularly notable for its remnant indigenous vegetation and important views to the city. It is the only example of an inner Melbourne park which retains stands of remnant indigenous vegetation and clearly demonstrates an ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous plants over a period of 150 years. The Park landscape provides significant internal and external vistas, including the native grassland 'hilltop' circle where a 360- degree panorama provides a dramatic and sensory appreciation of the city skyline and surrounding landscape. An appreciation of the aesthetic value of the park is evident in the numerous contemporary descriptions of the place from the nineteenth century onwards, and in the numerous paintings, sketches and photographs of the Royal Park landscape. The most recent layer of development associated with the 1984 Master Plan is significant for its design philosophy and natural landscape aesthetic. The existing endorsed masterplan for Royal Park is the 1998 Masterplan which built upon the 1984 masterplan and the 1987 Landscape Development Plan. In 2010, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects awarded the City of Melbourne the "ALIA national award for sustainable settlement, green infrastructure and landscape principles" for "its stewardship of Royal Park as a nationally significant landscape".

Melbourne City Council is currently revising the Royal Park Masterplan and is expected to release the revised masterplan in 2025. The masterplan has been consulted with stakeholders through 2023, technical studies completed for the masterplan through 2022/2023 and community consultation in 2023 and further consultation from November 2024 to February 2025.

- **Within or adjoining land reserved under the National Parks Act 1975?** NYD No Yes If yes, please specify.

- **Within or adjoining other public land used for conservation or recreational purposes?** NYD No Yes If yes, please specify.

The RPA is located within and adjoining the following public land used for recreation (zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)):

- Royal Park, Parkville
- Jewell Park, Brunswick
- Bulleke-bek Park, Brunswick
- Clifton Park, Brunswick

The Upfield Bike Path (zoned TRZ1) and the Brunswick Baths (zoned Public Use Zone 6 (PUZ6)) are also recreational spaces within or adjoining the RPA.

Related to the Upfield Bike Path, the RPA also extends to Moreland Road, where the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project created public open space used for public recreation (zoned TRZ1). The Project would tie into this existing public recreation area.

The RPA is not located within or adjoining conservation land.

Is any clearing vegetation or alteration of landforms likely to affect landscape values?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

As noted above, Royal Park has aesthetic landscape value as a highly intact example of a public park set aside in the 1840s. Royal Park’s landscape values arise from its natural landscape aesthetic, including retained stands of trees of indigenous remnant vegetation (rather than single specimens), and from the ongoing commitment of the park’s management to native plantings.

The “stands of remnant indigenous vegetation” identified in the VHR Statement of Significance for Royal Park are not well defined. However, the Project is not expected to significantly impact on any stands of remnant indigenous vegetation. The Project will potentially impact some mature native trees planted during the early 20th century, including *Corymbia maculata*, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, *Eucalyptus cladocalyx*, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*, *Eucalyptus melliodora*, *Acacia* sp. and *Bursaria* sp. (among others), located adjacent to the railway corridor and along Park Street in the northern-most section of the park. Any trees impacted will be to enable the safe construction and functional requirements for the operation of rail, roads and associated critical infrastructure associated with the Project.

While the stands are not remnant indigenous vegetation, they do reflect the “ongoing dedication to planting native and indigenous plants” and have aesthetic landscape value as established stands of native trees. The potential loss of trees within these stands would represent an adverse effect on this portion of Royal Park as they provide screening between the Park and Park Street (e.g. changed views when looking south into the Park from Park Street, or north from the Park toward Park Street).

Impacts to these trees will be avoided to the maximum extent possible. VIDA Rail has past experience constructing elevated rail structures directly adjacent to retained stands of mature Eucalypt trees (for example the Rosanna LXP and the Pakenham LXP). Through the ongoing design phases of the Project, feedback will be sought from Melbourne City Council on the landscape design and screening measures, which will be developed to integrate the rail infrastructure into the Park Street precinct.

Overall, the works are confined to a small portion of the Park as a whole, and the vast majority of established trees within the balance of Royal Park, along with their associated landscape value, will not be impacted. The aesthetic and rarity values associated with the landscape character of Royal Park as a whole will remain highly intact. Any vegetation removed within Royal Park will be replaced to support and reinstate the character of Royal Park.

Is there a potential for effects on landscape values of regional or State importance?

NYD No Yes Please briefly explain response.

Landscape values of regional or State importance are areas that are recognised under State regulations, usually considered under the SLO of the planning scheme. As noted in the above, there are no SLOs or ESOs located within the RPA, therefore there are no potential effects on landscape values that are of regional or State importance within the RPA. However, it is acknowledged that there are potential effects to landscape values resulting from the Project, particularly around Royal Park (as listed above).

Although there is the potential for localised effects on landscape values due to the removal or trimming of trees within Royal Park, and the new embankment structure for the elevated rail, the Project will endeavour to minimise its effect on the landscape values in the finalisation of the design, as detailed further below.

Is mitigation of potential landscape effects proposed?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Whilst the effects on landscape values as a result of the Project are not considered to be significant, the design of the Project will respond to the landscape values and local context of each precinct as set out in the UDG. The UDG require the design of the elevated rail in this area of Park Street and Royal Park to be sensitive to the amenity of users of the park. Measures to be implemented to minimise landscape effects during the design, construction and operation phases include the following measures below.

Design

The design will be guided by the UDF and UDG.

The UDG, informed by the UDF, is based on a thorough understanding of the local context, and establishes key design criteria and expectations. The UDG builds upon the principles, objectives, measures and qualitative benchmarks of the UDF. The UDG identifies site specific guidelines that the Project design is to achieve by:

- identifying key issues and opportunities for improving connectivity, safety and amenity, functionality and sustainability for the site, surrounding precinct and broader corridor
- articulating the vision and design intent for the site
- setting out site specific guidelines for the Project.

The site-specific guidelines outlined for Brunswick in the UDG include minimising minor landscape effects by:

- proposing high quality landscape public open space in the undercroft areas of the elevated rail bridge
- proposing active or passive recreation in areas which are appropriate to that functionality
- screening adjacent properties where possible with vegetation and improve the amenity of the area.

The design will minimise embankments south of Park Street to address *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED), enable key functional cyclist and pedestrian connections, and allow for east-west views to improve visual amenity in the immediate area for Royal Park users. This will allow landscape views along Park Street to be less obstructed by the bridge, as well as improved pedestrian connectivity east west along Park Street to Royal Park. The undercroft area of the bridge will also be used for cyclist and pedestrian connections through to Royal Park, if appropriate, which will enable an improved CPTED outcome in the area. A retaining wall will most likely be proposed on the east side of the rail alignment adjacent to the Royal Park Tennis Club due to limited space (approximately 10 metres between the Tennis Club and rail track). The size and visual bulk of the retaining wall could be minimised and softened with design features such as the use of textured surfaces, lighting techniques or colour choice. City of Melbourne have requested a planted embankment to retain the amenity of views from Royal Park. This will be factored into the ongoing design phases and balanced with minimising impacts to mature trees.

The proposed use of multiple bridge sections south of Park Street will allow for a lighter and less visually obtrusive backdrop to the screening trees from McAlister Reserve on the west of the rail line, and increased CPTED opportunities for users of the Upfield Bike Path on the east of the rail line. Budget will be allocated to tree replacement in Royal Park for any trees impacted or removed by the Project. VIDA Rail has well established landscape design, delivery and maintenance processes in place which includes:

- coordination of landscape design specialists
- involvement of councils and Heritage Victoria through VIDA Rail Urban Design Advisory Panel (UDAP) on preferred species and landscape planting schedule
- engagement and management of nurseries and stock supplies
- coordination of Landscape Maintenance Plans
- defect rectification periods.

Construction

The UDF and UDG include strategies to address landscape effects during construction. These strategies will be implemented through specific measures detailed within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be prepared by the contractor.

As in Section 12, and throughout this referral, impacts to existing vegetation and landscape values will be avoided to the maximum extent possible.

As stated above, any vegetation removed within Royal Park will be replaced to support and reinstate the landscape character of Royal Park.

Operation

Ongoing maintenance and repair of constructed elements will occur in accordance with the MTM lease agreement with the Victorian Government.

Long term maintenance and replacement of tree planting and landscaping to soften the built form of the proposed infrastructure will be undertaken.

Merri-bek City Council have previously entered into maintenance agreements with MTM for ongoing maintenance of the public open space between Coburg and Moreland station precincts. This operations model would also be proposed for the Project to ensure that the local government authority has 'ownership' of the public open space which is used by residents and visitors.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

Further information on how the Landscape and Visual Values assessment was undertaken is outlined in *Attachment 8*.

As stated in Section 8, there is one site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance within the RPA. Site ML 042 Royal Park Railway Station cutting (and other linked site ML 069 Southern railway cutting) is not identified or described in the VHR Statement of Significance for Royal Park; however, it is indirectly linked to the landscape character of the place, which contributes to its aesthetic significance. The significance of these sites is linked to them being, in conjunction, a teaching site of geology in Melbourne and the Project may impact on one site (ML 042) being able to be viewed by teachers and students of geology.

Due to changes to the rail alignment, it is anticipated that the existing rail cutting adjacent to Poplar Oval will require earthworks and retaining walls at the base of the existing embankment. This will impact a small section of Royal Park Railway Station cutting (ML 042). This feature is located within the rail corridor in an area inaccessible to the public, unlike feature ML 069 to the south-west, which is located along a shared use path. The potential effects of the Project on geological site ML 042 (by interrupting a current teaching viewpoint) would be mitigated by retaining at least one publicly accessible view of the geological feature to ensure it continues to contribute to the understanding of the place's landscape character. The scope of work in this area is still relatively undefined, and consultation with the relevant stakeholders will still need to take place during the ongoing design to allow for the final spatial arrangement and effects on the cutting to be ascertained.

Existing interpretive signage relating to the site of Regional Geological and Geomorphological Significance is present at Royal Park. There is opportunity for the Project to provide further interpretive signage in consultation with City of Melbourne.

Note: A preliminary landscape assessment is a specific requirement for a referral of a wind energy facility. This should provide a description of:

- The landscape character of the site and surrounding areas including landform, vegetation types and coverage, water features, any other notable features and current land use;
- The location of nearby dwellings, townships, recreation areas, major roads, above-ground utilities, tourist routes and walking tracks;
- Views to the site and to the proposed location of wind turbines from key vantage points (including views showing existing nearby dwellings and views from major roads, walking tracks and tourist routes) sufficient to give a sense of the overall site in its setting.

Soils

Is there a potential for effects on land stability, acid sulphate soils or highly erodible soils?
 NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

It is not expected that the Project would have effects on land stability, acid sulphate soils, or highly erodible soils.

There are unlikely to be any extensive or major effects on land stability or highly erodible soils and any effects would be managed through the Project design and construction methodology. Erosion risks would be managed through the CEMP, and the associated site-specific erosion and sediment control plans.

The findings of initial geotechnical investigations will inform the earthworks, deep foundations (e.g. piling) and drainage designs, ensuring potential impacts to land stability of adjacent properties are controlled. No significant issues related to ground conditions have been identified to date.

Based on preliminary investigations, no acid sulphate soils were identified in the RPA, and there is an extremely low to low probability of occurrence. If acid sulphate soils are identified during detailed site investigations, this will be managed through the implementation of an Acid Sulphate Soils Management Plan, as part of the CEMP.

VIDA Rail will conduct further environmental site assessments for the Project, including a waste classification (soil), and a groundwater assessment, to accurately quantify potential contamination and assess land suitability against the design, which will inform the CEMP and material reuse strategy.

These further assessments, management plans and strategies will be undertaken in-line with the relevant EPA (Vic) guidelines including:

- *Civil construction, building and demolition guide* (EPA Publication 1834.1);
- *Liquid Storage and Handling Guidelines* (EPA Publication 1698);
- *Construction – Guide to preventing harm to people and the environment* (EPA Publication 1820.1);
- *Waste classification assessment protocol* (EPA Publication 1827.2);
- *Contaminated Land Policy* (EPA Publication 1915);
- *Guide to classifying industrial waste* (EPA Publication 1968.1);
- *Waste disposal categories-characteristics and thresholds* (EPA Publication 1828.3);
- *Acid Sulfate Soil and Rock* (EPA Publication 655.1); and
- *Managing Stockpiles* (EPA Publication 1895).

Are there geotechnical hazards that may either affect the project or be affected by it?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

The likelihood of affecting land stability or encountering acid sulphate soils or highly erodible soils is based on preliminary contamination and geotechnical investigations undertaken by qualified specialists. This included:

- site investigations, borehole drilling, laboratory testing of samples collected and rock mapping in April 2023
- reviews of the Australian Soil Resource Information System (ASRIS), National Acid Sulphate Soil Atlas (CSIRO 2013).

Preliminary site investigations also identified specific potential sources of contamination related to the historic industrial use and the typical contamination associated with rail infrastructure (see *Attachment 9*).

Risks identified include the likely presence of contaminants such as nitrate, heavy metals, herbicides, and petroleum hydrocarbons in the soils and groundwater. Risks are considered to be low-moderate for groundwater and soil vapour given the nature of the Project (elevated rail bridge) and limited excavation required. Risks posed by soil contamination in the northern portion of the RPA are considered to be

moderate-high given historic industrial land uses and proposals for new open space. These risks will be carefully managed in-line with VIDA Rail's EMS which considers the statutory requirements under the EP Act and site-specific plans for the management of soils (described further in Section 18 below).

15. Social environments

Is the project likely to generate significant volumes of road traffic, during construction or operation?

NYD No Yes If yes, provide estimate of traffic volume(s) if practicable.

Construction

The Project will create some additional traffic volumes and effects during the construction phase, particularly in the vicinity of the eight level crossings. These traffic effects will be temporary and are not considered to be significant. The Project construction effects will include temporary:

- road closures
- upfield Bike Path closures
- traffic detours (including bus, bike rider, and pedestrian detours)
- train station and Upfield Line closures
- car parking closures.

The temporary disruption to passenger train services will also in turn generate additional road traffic.

Construction works are anticipated to occur over a two to three year period. However, closure of the Upfield Line where the most disruptive works will occur will only form a small part of this period, see Section 6 Project Implementation for further detail.

The construction methodology for the Project is yet to be fully developed and the durations of road closures, for example, are indicative.

To avoid peak hour congestion and limit impacts, the closures of roads with high traffic volumes (such as Brunswick Road, Dawson Street and Park Street) will be minimised and where possible, full closures will be restricted to weekends and nighttime.

Simultaneous road closures will occur with less trafficked roads, however, to minimise overall impacts to road users, closures will be avoided on immediately adjacent roads where possible so that detour routes will not cross over.

Preliminary options for detour routes, including for cars, buses, bike riders, and pedestrians, have been developed to provide passengers and road users with the most optimal route available and to minimise the overall network impacts. These detours are subject to change after further consultation with key stakeholders, such as councils, Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and community interest groups.

When train services do not run due to construction works, mitigation such as rail replacement bus services will be used. Rail replacement bus stops will be implemented on Sydney Road where existing rail replacement stops are located, and will travel north-south, rather than across local roads, to reduce further delay to passengers. Through consultation with Yarra Trams, the project would seek support for the provision of additional tram services throughout the rail occupation. Further information on road traffic effects during construction is provided in *Attachment 10*.

More detailed assessments, reports and strategies will be developed once the design phase is further progressed to determine how the Project will be delivered (including appropriate haulage routes) and to confirm effects during the construction stage. This will be achieved through the preparation of detailed Construction Traffic Management Plans and associated Traffic Guidance Schemes, as per the requirements of the Project Environmental Management Framework (EMF), and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. This is a business-as-usual procedure and activity that occurs with all VIDA Rail projects.

Operation

The Project is not expected to generate significant volumes of traffic. In operation, the Project will reduce road congestion and improve the operation, efficiency and safety of the roads at the previous level crossings. The current level crossings disrupt the flow of traffic, causing delays and congestion during peak hours. The level crossing removal and reinstatement of the roads with a grade-separated bridge will allow for a smoother and efficient movement of traffic, as well as safer conditions for drivers, bike riders and pedestrians. Further information is provided in *Attachment 10*.

Is there a potential for significant effects on the amenity of residents, due to emissions of dust or odours or changes in visual, noise or traffic conditions?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe the nature of the changes in amenity conditions and the possible areas affected.

As stated in Section 11, the Project without mitigation, has the potential for significant effects on the amenity of residents due to changes in visual conditions. This is due to the elevated rail structure's height, proximity to adjacent properties and potential privacy issues. This criterion (along with potential effects on heritage places) has resulted in the Project being referred under the EE Act.

Effects due to the emission of dust or odours and changes in noise or traffic conditions are not expected to be significant but have also been addressed in this section.

Air quality (dust or odours)

Air discharges associated with the Project are expected to occur during construction, with the key air pollutant being particulate matter and dust. As the Project is surrounded by residential areas, dust due to construction activities may affect the amenity of these areas.

Dust from earthmoving activities during construction will be managed by applying standard practices used throughout the construction industry and on previous VIDA Rail projects. Measures will include containment and wind sheltering at construction sites and the wetting down of works areas. These measures, along with a monitoring regime and a process for managing any unacceptable emissions to air, would be implemented via a CEMP.

Odours from the operation of construction equipment or diesel generators could also have localised effects on air quality. Efforts to reduce the use of diesel-powered equipment are discussed further in Section 16 below. However, the amenity effects to residences are expected to be very minor (if any).

There are not expected to be significant air quality effects from the operation of the Project as train services are electrified on the Upfield Line.

Visual amenity

The Project's new elevated rail bridge will result in visual effects to residential properties:

- with windows or balconies directly facing the rail corridor
- in the general vicinity of the Project with view lines to the rail corridor.

The majority of residential properties are aligned parallel to the rail corridor with views to the north and south (not facing the rail corridor). However, a small portion of detached houses located along Orient Grove, some newer multi-story apartment developments along the rail corridor and the Hope Aged Care Facility, have some windows and balconies directly facing the rail corridor.

The elevated rail bridge will be visible from residences from a distance, predominantly to the west, due to the low nature of existing dwellings. Residents in these properties will experience a change in outlook from their current urban built form interface (apartments and commercial properties) to views of the elevated rail infrastructure.

Screening will be a key privacy mitigation measure for properties adjacent to the elevated rail bridge. The Project will install screening on the rail bridge and at stations in accordance with VIDA Rail's Overlooking Assessment Process.

Adjacent properties and privacy mitigation

VIDA Rail has established robust processes to ensure all new elevated rail projects are thoroughly assessed for any potential overlooking from the train and at elevated stations.

Screening will be a key privacy mitigation measure for properties adjacent to the elevated rail bridge. The level of screening used in the Project will be in accordance with VIDA Rail's internal Overlooking Assessment Process.

There is currently no legislative requirement to mitigate overlooking from elevated railway structures, however VIDA Rail applies the Victorian Residential Development Standard (ResCode) as a basis to consider overlooking impacts where an elevated rail bridge comes within close proximity of residential habitable room windows or private open space.

ResCode Standards A15 and B22 relate to overlooking and provide objectives and standards for new residential development where there is overlooking of existing residential land use. The objective of these standards is to "limit views into existing secluded private open space and habitable room windows". The standards relate to views from habitable room windows, balconies, terraces, decks or patios or secluded private open space.

VIDA Rail considers that the ResCode standards and objectives provide an appropriate basis for assessing potential overlooking from a window of a train travelling on the new elevated structure within 9 metres of existing habitable room windows or secluded private open space. For the elevated station platforms, as passengers may be waiting for services, they may have time to view surrounding properties, as such an assessment of existing habitable room windows, balconies, terraces, decks or patios or secluded private open space within 50 metres of a viewing point will be undertaken.

The VIDA Rail overlooking assessment for the Project will include:

- analysis of adjacent land use types and built form
- assessment against ResCode for properties within nine metres (no platform) or 50 metres (at platform) of a viewing point
- reviewing line of sight from elevated railway (including platform where relevant)
- determination whether a privacy screen is required and if so, the height, design and treatment of privacy screening based on the assessment.

In addition to the above, where a station is positioned in a new location, VIDA Rail will assess the eligibility of habitable room windows, facing new elevated platforms for a visual amenity package. A visual amenity package may include consideration of treatments such as window privacy tinting, secondary glazing and window furnishings as appropriate.

Further, some residential properties along the alignment may be eligible for the [Voluntary Purchase Scheme](#) (VPS) if they meet the VPS Guiding Principles (eligibility criteria) relative to the final Project design. The VIDA Rail VPS allows eligible homeowners affected by VIDA Rail projects to voluntarily sell their properties to the State Government at market value (the market values assume the Project does not exist). Through VPS, homeowners may choose to sell their properties if they meet certain eligibility criteria, such as being directly impacted by visual intrusion or other relevant factors. Eligibility will not be confirmed until 2028, when detailed design work is complete and key measurements are known. VIDA Rail will proactively contact eligible property owners once the design has been confirmed.

Further information on the VIDA Rail Overlooking Assessment Process and VPS is provided in *Attachment 7*.

Visual character

The amenity of residents is currently being impacted by the low-quality visual character of the existing rail corridor. Whilst the elevated rail bridge will be visually prominent, VIDA Rail has extensive in-house experience delivering infrastructure, which is both striking, yet harmonious with the character of the area.

The UDF is a core document that establishes clear expectations for the design and delivery of projects, aligned with the Australian National Urban Design Protocol. The UDF also informs the site-specific UDG. The Project's preliminary UDG (see *Attachment 8*) articulates the vision and design intent for the site based on a detailed context analysis of the RPA and surrounding areas.

VIDA Rail will also carefully consider the built form of the elevated rail bridge through UDAP who oversee the application and implementation of the UDF and UDG through an integrated decision-making process throughout the Project's lifecycle. The UDAP provides high quality, transparent and independent advice to design teams on the best possible urban design outcomes, informed by lessons learnt and prior benchmarks.

The Office of the Victorian Government Architect will chair UDAP, and both City of Melbourne and Merri-bek City Council will be invited to participate and sit on the panel. UDAP is also able to expand the membership on an ad-hoc basis, to allow for additional expertise if required (for example, heritage). Heritage Victoria have been invited to sit on the Project's UDAP.

Furthermore, the WWCHAC will be engaged through an indigenous co-design process and community design feedback surveys will be undertaken on key aspects of the Project's visual character (such as planting and landscape preferences, and station precincts). The community will also have input into the design and visual character of sections of the open space created by the Project. The transformation of the current conditions of the inaccessible rail corridor into communal landscaped public open spaces will provide a positive improvement to the visual and landscape character of the area. This will also provide a public open space corridor in the heart of Brunswick, where currently there is none.

The landscape treatments and tree plantings provided as part of the Project will assist to visually screen the rail bridge to further support integration into the landscape. The elevated rail bridge will be most visually prominent on 'day one' and will be softened over time once landscaping establishes.

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project, directly adjacent to the Project, has won multiple urban design and architecture awards since its completion. This project has won both the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (Victoria) Infrastructure Award of Excellence and the Planning Institute of Australia (Victoria) Awards for Planning Excellence Great Place category. It is envisaged that through utilising a similar process on this Project, a similar high quality public open space corridor will ensure visual character on balance is impacted positively.

Attachment 7 provides a summary of the VIDA Rail urban design process which will ensure the delivery of a high-quality project outcome.

Light spill

VIDA Rail will produce a carefully considered lighting strategy (in accordance with relevant guidelines) to ensure the amenity of adjacent properties is not compromised. The lighting strategy will aim to balance passive surveillance and safety requirements whilst ensuring light spill and glare does not adversely impact properties.

The lighting strategy will consider a range of factors including (but not limited to):

- key opportunities to improve passive surveillance at the new stations, on the Upfield Bike Path and in areas with new public open space (especially during winter when natural light is scarce)
- light spill and glare into habitable rooms in residential properties
- existing lighting levels
- product choice and fixtures (timers and sensors, dimmers, diffusers, glare shields, louvres, etc)
- placement of lighting (location, orientation, etc)
- ongoing maintenance requirements.

Overshadowing and shading

As outlined in the preliminary UDG (see *Attachment 8*), the elevated rail bridge has the potential to overshadow some residential properties adjacent to the elevated rail at certain times of the day.

VIDA Rail will consider strategies throughout the ongoing design to reduce overshadowing and allow light to pass through (where possible). These could include:

- the use of transparent materials in stations (in locations where overlooking does not also need to be addressed)
- opportunities to reduce building mass such as the refinement of the rail bridge design and piers, or minimising station infrastructure and cladding on platforms.

Overshadowing is a key consideration on VIDA Rail Projects. The VIDA Rail ([Urban Design Framework](#)) has an objective in relation to overshadowing, which will therefore be a priority for the Project to respond to and a focus for the UDAP. Similarly to the Overlooking Assessment Process, VIDA Rail will undertake an overshadowing assessment using the standards of the Victorian Planning Provisions (sections 54 and 55) to determine whether a residential property will be materially impacted by overshadowing. Standards A14 and B21 of Clauses 54 and 55 require at least 75 per cent or 40 square metres with a minimum dimension of 3 metres (whichever is the lesser area) of secluded private open space to receive a minimum of five hours sunlight between 9am and 3pm on 22 September.

If this cannot be achieved by the Project, then the property becomes eligible for the [Voluntary Purchase Scheme](#) (if all primary criteria are also met). Further information on the Voluntary Purchase Scheme is provided in *Attachment 7*.

Noise and vibration

VIDA Rail has considered and assessed both operational and construction noise and vibration effects on the amenity of the surround area.

VIDA Rail has considered both construction and operational noise and vibration effects on the amenity of residents. Construction and Operational Noise and Vibration Assessments are provided in *Attachment 11* and *Attachment 12* respectively.

Construction

Sensitive receivers were identified as those within the noise catchment areas associated with the Project and who may be sensitive to construction noise. The sensitive receivers consist of:

- single storey residential buildings (single dwellings)
- multistorey residential buildings (townhouses, apartment buildings)
- aged care and accommodation facilities (including Hope Aged Care Brunswick)
- places of worship
- John Fawkner Private Hospital
- educational places (including RMIT University Brunswick Campus)
- Melbourne Zoo.

The Project will result in temporary noise and vibration effects for sensitive receivers. Based on similar projects, construction activities will include high impact works such as earthworks and demolition, piling, superstructure construction, asphaltting and rail systems. High impact works will not take place for the entire construction period and will predominantly be limited to the rail occupation works construction period (as described in Section 6 above).

VIDA Rail has delivered numerous construction projects using similar construction methodologies prior to this project. Mitigation measures to manage noise and vibration effects in accordance with the requirements of the EPA Act including the General Environmental Duty (GED) will be implemented throughout the construction of the project.

Examples of mitigation measures include (but are not limited to):

- scheduling (undertaking works in 'normal working hours', simultaneous operation of noisy plant to expedite construction processes, restricting delivery hours, etc.)
- plant and equipment selection (quietest available equipment, mufflers/silencers, regular maintenance of machinery, shutting down plant and equipment between uses, fitting machinery with straps rather than chains, etc)
- siting (distance between works and sensitive receivers, selecting access points away from sensitive receivers, restricting construction traffic speed to 20km/h, etc.)
- barriers (utilising noise blankets, walls, hoarding etc)
- building condition surveys (for buildings with potential to be vibration sensitive)
- worker behaviour (no sound systems or unnecessary shouting on site, no dropping materials from height, etc.).

The Project will manage noise and vibration effects in accordance with the Project's CEMP and Noise and Vibration Management Plan (a sub plan of the CEMP). The Noise and Vibration Management Plan will describe the process to manage impacts during construction. This will include the unique sensitive receptors of Melbourne Zoo and RMIT University (Brunswick Campus). Preliminary consultation has been undertaken with both stakeholders to understand their sensitivities in more detail. The Lion Gorge enclosure at Melbourne Zoo and RMIT University (Brunswick Campus) design labs (focused on fashion, textiles, and industrial design) have been noted to be sensitive to noise and vibration. VIDA Rail will undertake further consultation with both stakeholders to understand appropriate mitigation measures. Further information is available in *Attachment 11*.

VIDA Rail has significant in-house experience managing construction works in close proximity to sensitive receivers and works closely with the EPA Victoria on all projects.

A Respite and Relocation plan will be developed once detailed construction methodologies are known. Where prolonged noisy or vibration intensive works cannot be avoided, sensitive receivers will be notified, and respite options will be proactively offered. This can include options such as cinema vouchers, noise cancelling headphones or white noise machines. In certain circumstances, relocation will be proactively offered to provide a reasonable standard of comfort at an alternative location for sleep during periods of extended nightworks.

Relocation options will always consider all occupants of the household and seek to offer appropriate facilities. Relocation is voluntary and provides residents with the option to leave their home anytime during disruptive works.

The [Victorian Big Build Contact Centre](#) is also available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for residents or those impacted by project works. A dedicated engagement team will also be in place for the duration of the Project and will proactively notify impacted residents of upcoming works.

Operation

Sensitive receivers were identified as those within the noise catchment areas associated with the Project, and who may be sensitive to operational noise. The sensitive receivers consist of:

- single storey residential buildings (single dwellings)
- multistorey residential buildings (townhouses, apartment buildings)

- aged care and accommodation facilities (including Hope Aged Care Brunswick)
- places of worship
- educational places (including RMIT University, Brunswick Campus).

The existing noise environment is typical of a noise environment observed in inner suburban Melbourne and is generally dominated by rail operations on the Upfield Line, road traffic on roads adjacent to the receivers, along with commercial activities within the vicinity. Considering that there are eight existing level crossings within the Project section of the Upfield Line, along with other pedestrian crossings and three train stations, numerous receivers within the vicinity currently experience noise effects including noise effects related to rail operations, level crossing bells and train horns.

Noise modelling was undertaken using a 3-D noise modelling software and best-practice rail modelling algorithm and assessed in accordance with the:

- the Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy (PRINP 2013)
- the EP Act (including General Environmental Duty and subordinate legislation – the *Environment Protection Regulations 2021 (Vic)*, *Environment Reference Standard 2021 (Vic)* and the Noise Protocol).

Conservative modelling inputs and assumptions were applied where possible to predict results for the proposed elevated rail scenario.

The outcome of the rail operational noise assessment indicates that predicted noise levels at all receiver locations are below the PRINP investigation thresholds, and hence no exceedances of the PRINP thresholds are identified. A reduction in noise levels to most of the properties adjacent to the corridor is predicted due to the elevated design of the Project alignment.

Based on the noise modelling outcomes and with consideration to the existing environment, it is predicted that there are no significant adverse effects on substantial numbers of residents, due to extensive or major, long-term changes in noise conditions.

The Project is also generally not foreseen to introduce any extensive or major adverse effects on the health or wellbeing of a human community. The existing level crossing bells, and the need for train horns at road crossings will be removed as part of the Project, and hence the sensitive receivers adjacent to existing crossings are expected to benefit from the Project.

The vibration screening assessment indicates that any vibration and ground-borne noise impacts (if any) are expected to be improved compared to the existing scenario from further dissipation of vibration energy due to the elevated design of the Project.

The Project proposes to replace three existing stations with two new stations in different locations. This would result in the noise environment associated with stations altered in certain locations along the corridor. Whilst there would be a net reduction in station-related noise across the corridor, as the Project's detailed design phase progresses, noise emissions from station infrastructure are expected to be considered carefully via detailed acoustic modelling. Key design principles to be considered to minimise station noise emissions, including noise spill from public address system are provided in this report for further consideration. It is envisaged that adequate noise control measures, when implemented in line with GED requirements, would result in compliance with the established station noise criteria.

The project is in the preliminary design phase and VIDA Rail will undertake further design work. It is expected that further acoustic assessments will be undertaken during the detailed design stage to ensure compliance with the Project acoustic requirements and targets. VIDA Rail have designed and delivered similar elevated rail level crossing removal solutions in the recent past, and this assessment and recommendations are in line with previous work by VIDA Rail on comparable projects.

Further information is available in *Attachment 12*.

Traffic

Effects on the amenity of residents due to changes in traffic conditions are not expected to be significant. As noted below, the Project is expected to improve traffic conditions once operational.

Construction

Traffic effects for the construction of the Project are addressed above in Section 15 Social Environments.

Operation

Permanent road works will be required at each level crossing proposed to be removed. Road works are expected to be minor in nature. Park Street, Parkville will have the most substantial road works and changes in traffic conditions, however these are still expected to be minor in nature.

Park Street will be lowered slightly so the elevated rail bridge can meet clearance requirements for road traffic. Currently at Park Street, there is a two-lane carriageway for vehicles passing through the area, and a one lane service road for residential access which includes on street car parking. Only the two-lane carriageway will be lowered, and the service road will remain at current ground level. There will be a minor loss of car parking for the service road. The effects on traffic conditions at Park Street are not expected to be significant or substantially change residential amenity.

Once completed, the Project will have a positive impact on residential amenity in the wider Brunswick and Parkville area. The Project will improve cross-corridor connections for local residents and provide more convenient and safer access across the rail line. The Project will also improve traffic conditions once the asset is operational. The traffic flow at each level crossings will be enhanced and allow for smoother movement of vehicles without delays from passing trains. This will lead to reduced congestion levels and improved traffic flow.

Bike riders will also experience a positive effect from the changes in traffic conditions by the creation of a separated bike path. The existing Upfield Bike Path, which forms part of the Principal Bike Network, is used by both bike riders and pedestrians in a confined space with limited access points. The separation of bike riders and pedestrians will improve safety and the quality of the journey along the rail corridor.

Is there a potential for exposure of a human community to health or safety hazards, due to emissions to air or water or noise or chemical hazards or associated transport?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe the hazards and possible implications.

Is there a potential for displacement of residences or severance of residential access to community resources due to the proposed development?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe potential effects.

Whilst there will be some displacement of residences and potential severance of access to community resources, it is not expected to be significant.

The existing rail corridor currently acts as a physical barrier creating difficulties for people to move east-west throughout the RPA. This limits local community access and prohibits fluid movement across the length of the rail corridor. The existing rail line can disrupt social interactions, access to amenities and community facilities, and overall connectivity. The current rail corridor also poses safety risks, especially for pedestrians attempting to cross the tracks, which can further increase the division between the two halves of the community.

The following impacts for the Project will occur within this existing context.

Displacement of residents

As presented in Section 9 of this Referral, the Project requires the compulsory acquisition and subsequent displacement of 12 residential properties. Due to the linear nature of the Project, the acquisitions will be distributed along the alignment, with minor clustering near the proposed station locations. The residential acquisitions would not undermine the functioning of neighbourhoods located adjacent to the Project. This is due to the distribution of the properties and the relatively small overall number of dwellings affected. It is noted that these properties make up a small proportion of the Project's overall footprint, and the vast majority of the Project is limited to the existing rail corridor.

Compulsory acquisition and relocation are common outcomes for major transport infrastructure projects in existing urban areas. VIDA Rail will manage the acquisition through the statutory process to acquire land under the MTPF Act and the LAC Act. This legislation provides compensation for affected landowners and residents. Furthermore, VIDA Rail has a dedicated Land and Property Engagement Team who work closely with all residential landowners and tenants affected by land acquisition.

It is considered that this statutory process will appropriately compensate for displacement of landowners, residents and businesses.

Severance of residential access to transport options during construction

Prior to the commencement of construction, road closures, key access points, and detour routes will be confirmed. Access points across the rail corridor will change throughout the construction period to match project staging and works.

A series of full and partial road closures will be required during construction for all the roads where level crossings are being removed. A Traffic and Transport Management Plan would be developed to guide the construction process and minimise disruption to transport networks near the Project, and access to all locations via the road network would be maintained. Notwithstanding, the closures would increase travel times for drivers during these periods and necessitate temporary minor diversions of bus routes 503, 504, 506, 508, 509 and 951.

During periods of rail occupation, rail services would be replaced with bus services. While access via public transport to all locations would be maintained, travel times would be temporarily increased during construction. Wherever possible, low floor buses will be utilised to provide an accessible solution.

For passengers who are unable to utilise low floor buses, wheelchair accessible taxis services will be provided (at no cost to the passenger). Passengers can access these services through:

- speaking to replacement bus staff at stations
- calling PTV (1800 800 007) or contacting the [Big Build Contact Centre](#) to arrange taxi services in advance
- calling the closest premium train stations to arrange a taxi service in advance or at the time of travel.

This approach has been successfully utilised on other LXRPs and will continue to be used on this Project.

The existing tram services in the area (including tram route 19 along Sydney Road and tram route 58 along Grantham Street/Melville Road) will remain unaffected.

The Upfield Bike Path would be diverted between Moreland Road and Park Street adding travel time for bike riders between the two points, compared to the current travel time. There are two alternative bike routes proposed (one east and one west of the rail corridor). The final routes are subject to further consultation with key stakeholders. However, LXRPs will seek to utilise other [existing bike routes](#) including the Brunswick East Shimmy to provide bike access to locations such as RMIT University (Brunswick Campus), the Brunswick Baths, Woolworths Brunswick and various key locations along Sydney Road.

During construction, pedestrians will be provided access points to cross the rail corridor. Pedestrians may also be able to cross at any of the level crossings, but during L-Beam installation and stitch pours, access will be restricted for safety and detoured via the closest east-west crossing points across the rail corridor.

Barkly Street and Tinning Street pedestrian crossings will be temporarily closed to facilitate construction activities, and the pedestrian footbridge at Phoenix Street will need to be demolished to allow construction of the rail bridges and piers along the rail corridor.

Severance of residential access to community facilities during construction

There are numerous locally orientated businesses, facilities and public open spaces located in proximity to the rail corridor. Most of these address the needs of the local community and represent just one of many businesses, facilities, and areas of public open space within a network serving the Brunswick area. This includes Bulleke-bek Park, Brunswick Baths, Clifton Park, eight local businesses, and Big Umbrella Foundation. Disruption to these places is an unavoidable outcome of a major construction project in a densely populated urban area with a highly constrained rail corridor.

Access to businesses

The displacement of local businesses, and road and Upfield Bike Path closures, will likely interrupt access to local businesses. However, given the number (small) and range of business types (diverse) affected by the Project, more serious impacts, such as loss of access to services for the community, are not anticipated.

The Project will have dedicated staff from the LXP stakeholder relations and communications team to keep businesses up to date about the Project and timing of potential impacts, conduct marketing campaigns to encourage the community and Project workers to shop locally during works and procure goods and services locally, where possible.

Access to Royal Park

The accessibility of locations within Royal Park via the rail network, such as the Melbourne Zoo, would be temporarily affected during the construction periods where buses replace train services. While bus services would be provided to enable access, travel times would increase for users. However, tram services also operate through Royal Park and extensive car parking is provided at Melbourne Zoo. The tram line that travels through Royal Park will remain unaffected by the Project.

Access to Bulleke-bek Park

During construction the Project will require the temporary partial closure of Bulleke-bek Park to safely construct the rail bridge and the northern station in the rail corridor. The park is highly utilised by the local community.

The nearest comparable parks are approximately 350 metres to the north-east (Warr Park) and 325 metres to the north-west (Gorong Park).

The Project will minimise use and impacts to the park as much as possible. Any areas of the Bulleke-Bek Park impacted by construction will be rectified and the park reinstated upon completion of works.

Once the elevated rail bridge is constructed the barrier of the rail line will be removed, improving east and west connections in this precinct. The area will also experience an increase in open space with new open space beneath and adjacent to the rail bridge.

Consultation with Merri-bek City Council will be undertaken before construction starts. Community consultation on the northern station precinct and open space will start from 2027 when concept designs are released..

Access to Clifton Park

To facilitate construction of the Project, occupation of Clifton Park for storage and laydown of the large L-beams will be required. This occupation will be temporary and limited to the construction phase. Only the

western portion (Clifton West Oval and Clifton Park Central Pitch and off lead dog park) of Clifton Park is proposed to be utilised as a laydown area, with the rest of the park (Clifton Park Synthetic Soccer Pitch and Brunswick Skatepark) remaining accessible to public.

Open space supply in Brunswick is concentrated in the vicinity of Clifton Park, so passive recreation temporarily displaced during construction from parts of Clifton Park could be accommodated in the remainder of the reserve and also to the north in Brunswick Park, in Raeburn Reserve and A G Gillon Oval, and to the south in Gilpin Park.

Sporting uses accommodated at Clifton Park West Oval (Yarra Junior Football League matches) would be temporarily displaced. LXP will facilitate the identification of a suitable alternate venue(s), in consultation with Merri-bek City Council, for the displaced activity and will include mitigation to avoid damage to recreational infrastructure, and where this cannot be avoided, any impacts to the Park will be rectified and the park reinstated upon works completion.

Utilising Clifton Park for storage and laydown also supports efforts to avoid impacts to Royal Park, which is listed on the VHR.

Improved residential access to community resources

The removal of the level crossings and creation of an elevated rail bridge will effectively mitigate the physical severance and barrier the rail corridor currently creates within the community. By replacing the existing rail corridor and level crossings with an elevated rail bridge, continuous separated cycling and pedestrian pathways will be created below the proposed rail infrastructure. This facilitates uninterrupted movement between the two sides of the community, allowing pedestrians, bike riders, and vehicles to cross, providing improved access to shops, public transport and community facilities along Sydney Road. Furthermore, the Project will deliver a significant amount (two MCGs worth – approximately 4 hectares) of new public open space for residential communities to access.

Are non-residential land use activities likely to be displaced as a result of the project?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe the likely effects.

The Project will result in the displacement of non-residential land use activities, including private commercial properties, council land, and leases on VicTrack land adjacent to the rail corridor. These impacts will occur both during the construction and operational phases of the Project. A summary of the non-residential land use activities likely to be displaced because of the Project is provided in Table 6 below.

VIDA Rail have a dedicated specialist team Land and Property Engagement Team who support discussions with those who are impacted by Projects. The Land and Property Engagement Team contacted all impacted parties regarding compulsory acquisition.

Table 6 - Overview of non-residential land use displacement

Address	Ownership and current use	Permanent acquisition?	Reason for impact	
			Construction phase?	Operational phase?
<i>Privately owned commercial properties</i>				
Victoria Street, Brunswick	Owner occupied business	✓ Yes	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure

Hope Street, Brunswick	Owner occupied businesses	✓ Yes	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure
Hope Street, Brunswick	Tenanted businesses	✓ Yes	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure
Hope Street, Brunswick	Owner occupied business	✓ Yes	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure, precinct infrastructure, and station access
Albion Street, Brunswick	Owner occupied businesses	✓ Yes	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure
<i>Council land</i>				
Hope Street, Brunswick	Owned by Merri-bek City Council - Current Upfield Bike Path	✓ Potential for divestment.	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure and precinct infrastructure
West Street, Brunswick	Owned by Merri-bek City Council— Current Bullekebek Park which will be operational upon completion of the Project	✓ Potential for partial divestment (due to a small amount of overhanging/e ncroachment)	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure and precinct infrastructure.
Clifton Park located between Albert Street and Victoria Street, Brunswick	Council owned Park	✗ No	✓ Yes required for storage of L-beams and construction material	✗ No will only be used for storage during construction
Royal Park	Council managed Park	✗ No	✓ Yes required for constructability	✗ No will only be required during construction
<i>VicTrack land</i>				
Albert Street, Brunswick	VicTrack owned. Tenanted business	N/A – VicTrack ownership	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure.
Dawson Street, Brunswick	VicTrack owned. Tenanted business	N/A – VicTrack ownership	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure and precinct infrastructure.
Dawson Street, Brunswick	VicTrack owned Used as car park.	N/A – VicTrack ownership	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail

				infrastructure and precinct infrastructure.
Merrifield Street, Brunswick	VicTrack owned Tenanted business	N/A – VicTrack ownership	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure.
Ballarat Street, Brunswick	VicTrack owned Used as car park	N/A – VicTrack ownership	✓ Yes required for constructability	✓ Yes required for permanent rail infrastructure.

Do any expected changes in non-residential land use activities have a potential to cause adverse effects on local residents/communities, social groups or industries?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe the potential effects.

The changes in non-residential land use activities may adversely affect some groups both directly and indirectly. The Project will result in:

- **Direct impacts:** Displacement as a result of land acquisition or occupation (as listed above in Table 6)
- **Indirect impacts:** Construction noise, traffic or road, rail and shared use path closures impacting the way local stakeholders use the area.

Direct impacts on non-residential land use

As listed in Table 6 above, non-residential land uses will be directly displaced as a result of the Project.

Some commercial properties directly impacted by the Project will need to relocate their businesses. These include:

- An embroidery manufacturing business (Victoria Street, Brunswick);
- A panel beating business (Hope Street, Brunswick);
- A martial arts studio (Hope Street, Brunswick);
- A Pilates studio (Hope Street, Brunswick);
- A property management business (Hope Street, Brunswick);
- A fishing tackle shop (Albion Street, Brunswick);
- An automotive mechanic (Hope Street, Brunswick)
- Car detailing (Hope Street, Brunswick)
- A café and studios (Dawson Street, Brunswick).

One commercial business (a butcher) is using VicTrack owned land on Merrifield Street, Brunswick. The Project will only impact the portion of their business located on VicTrack land. This business may be able to continue operating from their own building and shop front (located next door at Victoria Street, Brunswick). This will be determined in consultation with the business.

One food production garden associated with a non-for profit (Albert Street, Brunswick) will also need to relocate from VicTrack owned land.

Two VicTrack owned lots currently used for car parking will be impacted (Dawson and Ballarat Street, Brunswick).

At the time of preparation, one tenant of a VicTrack lot has vacated the lot (due to their preference).

Given the size and lack of available land in the area (particularly industrial land), some businesses may have difficulty relocating whilst retaining their existing customer base. In the context of the broader BMAC which consists of approximately 880 businesses, an extensive or major effect on the economic wellbeing of the BMAC is not considered likely.

Access to some Council land (as listed in Table 6 and discussed in the section above) will also be disrupted.

Non-residential land uses within Royal Park (predominantly sporting groups) are not expected to be disrupted significantly.

Management of direct impacts on non-residential land use

Similarly to residential land acquisition, the MTPF Act empowers specific government authorities to acquire non-residential land by compulsory means. When land is acquired in this manner, the LAC Act provides a statutory framework for the assessment of appropriate financial compensation.

Additionally, commercial businesses and landowners will also receive significant support from VIDA Rail. Support will be provided through the Land and Property Engagement Team, a dedicated DTP case manager and relocation support (where appropriate).

VIDA Rail has provided early engagement with affected properties and will respond to their individual needs throughout the Project lifecycle. Affected properties will likely be provided the following services:

- door knocks, phone calls and information packs
- answers to queries through a compulsory acquisition hotline and email address
- regular check ins
- access to psychologist services
- access to interpreter services.

With the implementation of management protocols and mitigation strategies and the appropriate use of the MTPF Act, LAC Act, and suitable stakeholder communication, it is considered likely that these impacts can be contained to an acceptable level.

Indirect impacts on non-residential land use

As stated above, other non-residential land use will be indirectly affected by the Project through construction noise, traffic or road, rail and Upfield Bike Path closures. These are addressed in detail in other sections throughout this referral.

Is mitigation of potential social effects proposed?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Substantial mitigation measures will be implemented to reduce the potential social effects of the Project. VIDA Rail has significant expertise in managing the social impacts of major construction projects.

Mitigation measures have been discussed throughout Section 15 Social environments. A summary of mitigation measures proposed to mitigate social impacts includes (but is not limited to):

- The development of a project specific CEMP and sub-plans to ensure construction noise, vibration, traffic and air quality impacts are managed appropriately.
- The U-trough design selected for the rail bridge where the side walls act as in-built noise barriers.
- A Respite and Relocation plan for noisy overnight works.
- Architectural screening, where appropriate, of the elevated rail bridge to avoid overlooking into habitable windows and open space.

- Visual amenity package specific to station structures for residential windows facing any new elevated platforms including but not limited to window privacy tinting, secondary glazing and window furnishings.
- The well-established VIDA Rail urban design process, including the development of UDG, the UDAP, an indigenous design strategy, landscaping and incorporating feedback from the local community, to provide a positive visual outcome.
- Financial compensation through the MTPF Act and LAC Act for those affected by compulsory land acquisition.
- Potential access to the [Voluntary Purchase Scheme](#) for residents living directly next to the rail line (and meet all criteria).
- For properties or businesses impacted by acquisition, support through the VIDA Rail Land and Property Engagement Team, a dedicated DTP case manager and relocation strategies for businesses and residences to be provided.
- Alternative access arrangements for all passengers, pedestrians and bike riders via alternative bike riding and pedestrian routes, rail replacement buses, additional tram services, taxi services and road diversions.
- A proactive communications and engagement strategy with the community and all affected stakeholders including a well-established works notification process.
- The Big Build's 24-hour a day, seven days a week [contact centre](#).

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

Traffic

Information pertaining to traffic effects is based on site inspections and audits, transport surveys undertaken in 2023, preliminary design information and relevant legislation, guidelines and standards such as:

- *Road Management Act 2004 (Vic) Code of Practice: Worksite Safety – Traffic Management;*
- *AS 1742.10-2009 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices Part10: Pedestrian Control and Protection*
- *VicRoads Supplement to AS 1742.10:2009 Manual of uniform traffic control devices: Part 10: Pedestrian control and protection – October 2015*
- *Austrroads Guide to Traffic Management Part 6: Intersections, Interchanges and Crossings Management*
- *VicRoads Road Design Note RDN 03-07: Raised Safety Platforms December 2019*
- *Austrroads Pedestrian Facility Selection Tool*
- *Cycle Infrastructure Design, Local Transport Note 1/20, July 2020, Department of Transport (UK).*

Refer to *Attachment 10* for further information.

Visual amenity and character

Further information on how visual amenity and character are assessed can be found in *Attachment 7* and *Attachment 8*.

Construction noise and vibration

Information pertaining to construction noise and vibration effects is based on 3-D noise modelling, typical construction scenarios, an understanding of the existing noise conditions (based on noise monitoring conducted in February 2023) and relevant legislation, guidelines and standards such as:

- The EP Act (including the Project's requirement to discharge its General Environmental Duty and not emit *unreasonable noise*)
- *Environment Reference Standard 2021* (Vic)
- *Civil construction, building and demolition guide*, EPA Publication 1834.1 (Victoria EPA, 2023)
- *Guide to the Environment Reference Standard*, EPA Publication 1992 (Victorian EPA, 2021)
- *Construction – guide to preventing harm to people and the environment*, EPA Publication 1820.1 (Victorian EPA 2021).

Refer to *Attachment 11* for further information.

Operational noise and vibration

Information pertaining to operational noise and vibration effects is based on 3-D noise modelling, conceptual designs, an understanding of the existing noise conditions (based on noise monitoring conducted in February 2023), existing and future train movements, lengths and speeds, existing building terrain and relevant legislation, guidelines and standards such as:

- The EP Act (including the Project's requirement to discharge its General Environmental Duty and not emit *unreasonable noise*)
- *Environment Reference Standard 2021* (Vic)
- The PRINP
- *The Environment Protection Regulations 2021* (Vic)
- EPA Publication 1826.4: *The Noise Limit and Assessment Protocol for the Control of Noise From Commercial, Industrial and Trade Premises and Entertainment Venues* (The Noise Protocol, May 2021)
- EPA Publication 1996: *Assessing low frequency noise* (June 2021).

Refer to *Attachment 12* for further information.

Other

Other mitigation measures referenced throughout this section are standard on VIDA Rail projects and have been implemented in over 80 level crossing removal projects since 2015.

Cultural heritage

Have relevant Indigenous organisations been consulted on the occurrence of Aboriginal cultural heritage within the project area?

- No If no, list any organisations that it is proposed to consult.
 Yes If yes, list the organisations so far consulted.

Consultation has commenced with the WWCHAC as the RAP in relation to indigenous design and cultural values. Additional consultation will occur with the RAP as part of the preparation and implementation of a CHMP.

CHMP

There are no areas of Cultural Heritage Sensitivity within the RPA therefore no statutory triggers to prepare a mandatory CHMP. However, the Project will prepare a voluntary CHMP under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006* (Vic). The purpose of the CHMP is to assess if Aboriginal cultural heritage is present in the RPA, and determine appropriate management conditions before, during and after works.

RAP representatives will be consulted throughout the preparation of the CHMP including at:

- meetings (project introduction, at each stage of investigation to determine methodology, and to develop management conditions)
- fieldwork (at each stage of investigation to interpret findings)
- CHMP evaluation.

Indigenous design

RAP representatives are consulted throughout design development including:

- workshops (project induction, at each stage of design to explore indigenous design opportunities and design outcomes)
- walk on Country (a project kick off to share values)
- the RAP will endorse Indigenous design outcomes during design documentation.

The [LXRP Indigenous Design Guidelines](#) sets out the expectations for indigenous design on VIDA Rail projects, and shares cultural, economic, social, and political opportunities that can result from indigenous design. In May 2023, Extent Heritage was engaged to prepare an Aboriginal Heritage Assessment to provide contextual information for the Project and engaged the RAP to share cultural values and collaborate as to how this information can influence the built environment. A Walk on Country with RAP Elders was undertaken on the 30 May 2023, where the Elders shared more information on the cultural values of the area. When the Project commences the development stage, VIDA Rail will work with the RAP to develop a strategy for indigenous design of the Project, based upon previous project precedents.

What investigations of cultural heritage in the project area have been done?
(attach details of method and results of any surveys for the project & describe their accuracy)

VIDA Rail has engaged a qualified heritage advisor to prepare Aboriginal cultural heritage assessments for the Project which have included searches of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System (ACHRIS). The Merri-bek Post-Contact Aboriginal Heritage Study also lists and describes important Aboriginal sites within the LGA. These include the Murray family home in Glenroy, the Ballerit Mooroop College in Glenroy, the Ronal Bull Mural in Pentridge Prison, and the Aboriginal Community Elders Services in Brunswick. These sites are outside the RPA.

The Aboriginal cultural heritage memorandum prepared for the RPA by Andrew Long and Associates is provided to support regulator assessment only in *Attachment 13*.

The assessment:

- Evaluated the likelihood of Aboriginal cultural heritage to be impacted by the Project
- Reviewed project details provided by VIDA Rail in order to determine potential impacts and identify management measures to Aboriginal cultural heritage (places, areas of sensitivity, areas of archaeological potential)
- Examined statutory triggers to preparing a CHMP.

This assessment concluded that a mandatory CHMP is not required, however a voluntary CHMP would further reduce any potential risk to the Project impacting Aboriginal cultural heritage. VIDA Rail has made the decision to prepare a CHMP for the Project in accordance with the AH Act.

Is any Aboriginal cultural heritage known from the project area?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe:

- Any sites listed on the AAV Site Register
- Sites or areas of sensitivity recorded in recent surveys from the project site or nearby
- Sites or areas of sensitivity identified by representatives of Indigenous organisations

There are no Aboriginal places known in the RPA. Background research determined that Aboriginal cultural heritage was unlikely to be present due to the high level of urban development, noting that while it is low, there is potential for Aboriginal cultural heritage remaining in less disturbed sections of Royal Park.

One Aboriginal place (VAHR 7822-4644-10), as of 27 November 2023, is located within 50 metres of the RPA. It is a Low-Density Artefact Distribution component (a silcrete whole flake), which was recorded in 2022 as an opportunistic surface find.

Are there any cultural heritage places listed on the Heritage Register or the Archaeological Inventory under the *Heritage Act 1995* within the project area?

NYD No Yes If yes, please list.

Within the RPA:

- four places are listed on the VHR
- three places listed on the VHI
- one place is proposed to be listed on the VHI.

A Historic Heritage Impact Assessment (GJM 2024) prepared for the RPA is provided in *Attachment 6*.

VHR places within the RPA

Former Coburg Railway Line (VHR H0952)

The Former Coburg Railway Line is a collection of non-contiguous sites included on the VHR for its State-level historical significance. It is one of the most intact surviving examples of a nineteenth century railway line in Victoria. Its collection of non-contiguous nineteenth century buildings and infrastructure contribute to the understanding of Victoria's nineteenth century railway network and particularly its growth in the 1880s and 1890s. The nineteenth century structures associated with the site such as gates, gatekeepers' cabins, signals and signal boxes are now rare in Victoria and are a notable example of nineteenth century railway infrastructure and evidence of activities and functions which are no longer common.

Royal Park (VHR H2337)

Royal Park is included on the VHR for its historical and aesthetic significance. It is a site of importance:

- Aesthetically:
 - As an outstanding and largely intact example of the public park set aside by Lieutenant-Governor Charles La Trobe from the mid-1840s as part of his vision for the City of Melbourne and includes uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history, significant remnant vegetation and long-term native plantings.
- Historically:
 - As the site of departure of Burke and Wills expedition and as a major military camp during World War II
 - As the site of important scientific institutions important to the development of the colony, such as an Experimental Farm and Zoological garden, part of which became the Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens (VHR H1074)
 - For its long-term association with recreational activities.

The railway corridor and associated infrastructure within the extent of VHR H2337 do not relate to the State-level heritage values of Royal Park. Royal Park is also included in the VHI as H7822-2311.

Royal Parade (VHR H2198)

Royal Parade is of historic, aesthetic and social significance as a major boulevard extending north of Melbourne, from the Haymarket roundabout (near Flemington Road) to Park Street. The carriageway and footpaths, comprising three road sections separated by four plantations with wide footpaths on either side. Historically, Royal Parade is significant as "the road to Sydney" from the mid-nineteenth century and as Melbourne's traditional entrance from the north, re-emphasised in the early twentieth century by the

introduction of the multiple elm avenues. The avenues demonstrate developments in the planning movement world-wide that led to the separation of fast and slow traffic, and different traffic types (motor vehicles and trams) by plantations that were both functional and beautiful.

Royal Parade is also aesthetically significant as one of Victoria's finest boulevards.

Former Cable Tramway Engine House and Tram Substation (VHR H2332)

The Former Cable Tramway Engine House is historically significant for its association with the development of Melbourne's transport system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building demonstrates two of the major stages in the development of Melbourne's tram system, being the cable tram system developed from the 1880s and the electric tram system which began to replace it from the 1920s. The cable tram system played an important role in the development of Melbourne and its suburbs and was one of the largest and most complex in the world.

The place comprises the 1887 Cable Tram Engine House on the corner of Brunswick Road and Black Street, and the 1925 Tram Substation on Black Street, including subsurface elements and all original rectification and associated equipment. The site is significant for its potential to contain significant nineteenth century archaeological remains and artefacts relating to the cable tram system, including deep brick-lined pits and cable races (tunnels) that span the length of the building.

The former Cable Tramway Engine House is also included on the VHI (H7822-2242).

VHI sites within the RPA

Royal Park (VHI H7822-2311)

Royal Park is archaeologically significant for its potential to contain archaeological features and or deposits related to the mid to late 19th century use as a recreational park, to the late 19th century railway infrastructure, and the late 19th to mid-20th century Australian and American military forces.

Upfield Railway Infrastructure: Brunswick to Coburg (VHI H7822-2386)

The VHI listing notes that the Upfield Railway Infrastructure is a collection of seven non-contiguous sites which represent a range of railway activities from the early 1880s. Two of the non-contiguous sites are included within the RPA:

- A site at the northeast corner of the Tinning Street level crossing may contain archaeological remains associated with the Tinning Street Gatekeeper's Cabin (also part of the Former Coburg Railway Line VHR H0952).
- The other site is located at the southeast corner of the Albion Street level crossing and is largely occupied by the existing Anstey Station building.

These sites were included on the VHI for their potential to provide evidence of the operation of the Upfield Railway Line.

Orient Grove Dwelling (VHI H7822-2441)

This dwelling has potential for revealing new information about people, places, processes, or practices about Brunswick. A small weatherboard dwelling is evident on the site in a 1906 Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works plan (MMBW Detail Plan 104), since demolished (between 1945 and 1988) and replaced with the existing dwelling.

VHR place adjacent to the RPA

The following Heritage Register place is located immediately adjacent to the RPA, and has the potential to be impacted by the Project:

Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House (VHR H2027)

The Former Brunswick Gas & Coke Company Retort House is located on the south side of Hope Street, near the Hope Street level crossing. The place is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria:

- As a rare building type due to it being the last retort house to remain from several gas-making works built in the nineteenth century around Melbourne.
- For its association with the gas industry – the site has a long history of association with the industry, first as a gasworks where gas was manufactured, then as a foundry where cast iron stoves were made and more recently as a modern plant for manufacturing gas appliances.

Is mitigation of potential cultural heritage effects proposed?

NYD No Yes If yes, please briefly describe.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

Where possible the Project has avoided areas of relatively undisturbed sections of parkland, including immediately west of the rail corridor from Royal Park Station up to Park Street, Parkville.

A voluntary CHMP will be prepared for the Project in accordance with the iAH Act and *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Regulations 2018*. Consultation with the RAP WWCHAC will occur during the preparation and implementation of the CHMP. This CHMP will likely include conditions such as:

- Cultural heritage inductions; and
- Inspections to ensure CHMP compliance.

The CHMP will also include contingencies developed in conjunction with the RAP.

The contingencies include an unexpected finds protocol to manage the discovery, management and repatriation of unexpected Aboriginal cultural heritage and human remains. The contingencies will also include processes for managing non-compliance and disputes.

VIDA Rail has successfully managed Aboriginal cultural heritage across many of its projects, working with the RAP to develop and implement CHMPs. A recent complex example is the Diggers Rest (Old Calder Highway) Level Crossing Removal Project that contains several significant Aboriginal cultural areas where avoidance, minimisation and mitigation measures in collaboration with the RAP have been successfully developed and implemented under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Historic Heritage

A number of mitigations have been proposed in the Historic Heritage Impact Assessment (GJM 2024) for consideration for the Project, which are provided below. Most are standard Business As Usual' mitigation practices implemented across all VIDA Rail projects for the protection of heritage. However, the ultimate mitigation measures and subsequent approvals for the Project will be determined by Heritage Victoria under the *Heritage Act 2017*. VIDA Rail has and will continue to consult with Heritage Victoria on suitable mitigation measures for the Project.

Proposed mitigation measures include:

- Where practicable, avoid the removal of mature trees, and minimise lopping works to mature native trees to the greatest extent possible.
- Reinstate laydown areas to their former condition and use at the completion of works.
- Where possible, design Project to minimise visual impacts to built form and select materials, colours and screen/retaining wall designs for the bridge structure that are visually recessive and give prominence to the vegetated setting of Royal Park.
- Undertake photographic archival recording of heritage places prior to the commencement of works in accordance with Heritage Victoria Guidance Specification for Submission of Archival Photographic Records.

- Incorporate heritage interpretation devices within the public open space and separated cycling and pedestrian paths to provide information on the history relevant to the area.
- Undertake a suite of conservation works to the retained station buildings and fit out to 'cold shell' standard to facilitate future re-use of the buildings.
- Carefully dismantle and conserve all heritage elements (including all gates, signals, cabins and other heritage elements) and reinstate the elements in as close to their original (or historic) locations as possible. Integrate the reinstated heritage elements within the new public realm.
- Ensure heritage elements that are retained in situ during works (e.g. Jewell and Brunswick up-side station buildings and associated truncated platforms) are physically isolated and protected.
- Complete a dilapidation survey of relevant Heritage Places prior to the commencement of works and a condition survey at the completion of works. If any damage has occurred as a result of the works, rectify the damage in consultation with Heritage Victoria.
- Undertake vibration monitoring of relevant Heritage Places throughout construction.
- Erect protective barriers between heritage places and works for protection as required.
- Undertake historic archaeological investigations and where impacts to archaeological sites are unavoidable, undertake consent applications in accordance with the *Heritage Act 2017*.
- Induction of onsite workers for awareness of potential of archaeological deposits to occur at relevant areas within the RPA.
- Prepare and implement heritage interpretation plans where required by Heritage Victoria.

Details of previous precedents for refurbishment and interpretation of heritage elements on VIDA Rail projects, and notably Coburg to Moreland which has the same HO (HO180) as the Upfield Railway Line Precinct are contained within the Brunswick Urban Design Process report.

Other information/comments? (eg. accuracy of information)

VIDA Rail has maintained strong relationships with the RAP and Heritage Victoria over the last nine years and have a track record in successfully managing heritage impacts under the *Heritage Act 2017* and *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

16. Energy, wastes & greenhouse gas emissions

What are the main sources of energy that the project facility would consume/generate?

- Electricity network. If possible, estimate power requirement/output
- Natural gas network. If possible, estimate gas requirement/output
- Generated on-site. If possible, estimate power capacity/output
- Other. Please describe: Diesel/petroleum, biodiesel

Please add any relevant additional information.

Construction

The main sources of energy that the Project will consume during construction are:

- Electricity from the mains network to power the Project site offices and construction facilities. The estimated power requirement is 679,178 kilowatt hour (kWh) per year of construction.
- Energy generated on-site by diesel generators. The estimated power requirement is 1,536 kL per year of construction. Installation of solar arrays on the construction facilities, like offices and workforce amenity sheds will be investigated.
- Diesel and petroleum to operate plant, machinery, and vehicles. The estimated power requirement is 495 kL per year construction program. The Sustainability Management Plan (SMP) prioritises the use of biodiesel for generators and compatible machinery.

These values are subject to change based on construction method and final design.

Operation

Electricity from the mains network will be used to power station facilities. The estimated power requirement is 652,927 kWh per year. Installation of solar panels on permanent station infrastructure will be investigated.

As train services currently operate on Upfield Line, electricity consumption for traction power will be comparable to the current demand. Rail transport is generally one of the most energy efficient and sustainable forms of transport (when measured per person, per kilometre).

What are the main forms of waste that would be generated by the project facility?

- Wastewater. Describe briefly.
- Solid chemical wastes. Describe briefly.
- Excavated material. Describe briefly.
- Other. Describe briefly.

Please provide relevant further information, including proposed management of wastes.

Excavated materials

Spoil and rock excavated during the construction will be the main form of waste. This waste will be consistent with the excavations from other similar VIDA Rail projects, such as Bell to Moreland and Preston LXRP.

VIDA Rail would seek to reduce excavation extents and spoil disposal by:

- preferencing geotechnical improvements rather than a cut and replace methodology
- using site-won spoil for backfill of retaining wall and embankment structures
- reusing topsoil for landscaping if suitable, in accordance with the EPA Victoria waste management hierarchy.

Nevertheless, spoil reuse may be limited by soil contamination or land use suitability. These matters will be managed through the EMF and CEMP to ensure compliance with EPA Victoria requirements and to continue to strive for best practice.

Other construction waste

Other inert and non-hazardous waste generated during construction may include:

- steel rail tracks
- wooden and/or concrete sleepers
- overhead wiring
- signalling equipment and structures
- ballast
- bricks, concrete, plastics, glass, metals, asphalt.

The reuse of materials (such as rail track or sleepers) is prioritised wherever possible.

Proposed management of waste

VIDA Rail will develop a Waste Management Plan demonstrating application of the waste management hierarchy as referenced by the EPA (avoid creating waste, reduce the amount of waste created, reuse waste, recycle waste, etc.).

Waste monitoring and tracking will be conducted during construction detailing the waste types, quantities, destinations as well as landfill diversion percentages of spoil, inert or non-hazardous waste and office waste. This will be managed by the EMF, prepared under Clause 52.03 to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning, and CEMP to ensure compliance with EPA Victoria requirements and achieving best practice.

What level of greenhouse gas emissions is expected to result directly from operation of the project facility?

- Less than 50,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- Between 50,000 and 100,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- Between 100,000 and 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum
- More than 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per annum

Please add any relevant additional information, including any identified mitigation options.

The expected greenhouse gas emissions (GHG emissions) will be consistent with rail bridges and stations constructed by other VIDA Rail projects.

Construction

The Project is expected to produce approximately 6,000 tonnes carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO₂-e) per year of construction.

Operation

The operation of the stations and station precincts is expected to produce approximately 615 tonnes CO₂-e annually based on benchmarks from completed and comparable projects.

The design and construction of the Project will be guided by VIDA Rail's project sustainability requirements which drive sustainability outcomes. Under this framework, targets and monitoring requirements would be established in relation to:

- energy and carbon
- resource efficiency and management
- water use and reduction strategies

- waste management and diversion from landfill
- climate Change adaptation
- community health and wellbeing
- sustainable procurement
- light pollution.

Refer to Section 18 *Environmental management* for further detail on the above and the overarching sustainability management framework.

Station Sustainability Assessment

VIDA Rail will target a Station Sustainability Building assessment that meets 100 per cent of the [Green Star](#) targeted performance criteria, which focuses on the sustainability performance and amenity of station structures and urban realm for the Project. Key criteria include GHG emissions, potable water use, metering and monitoring systems, light pollution, and tree canopy improvement.

The [Coburg Station](#) constructed by VIDA Rail as part of the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project, has achieved 6-star Green Star As-Built ratings through the implementation of leading sustainability initiatives including station solar arrays, cement reduction, water tanks, active transport and community facilities and improvement in ecological value.

GHG Emission Reduction Targets

VIDA Rail will target a 30 per cent reduction in lifecycle GHG emissions for energy, and 30 per cent reduction in lifecycle GHG emissions for materials for the Project.

In accordance with the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA) Transport Infrastructure Decarbonisation Strategy, the Project will target 28-35 per cent reduction in upfront carbon emissions compared to a 2005 project equivalent.

The Bell to Moreland, Glenroy and Preston LXRP have consistently achieved over 45 per cent reduction in lifecycle GHG emissions for energy. This was achieved through installation of solar arrays, construction methods that minimise plant use, solar powered equipment, and efficient Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. These initiatives will all be considered in this Project, as well as alternative fuels and passive design initiatives.

To achieve reductions in lifecycle GHG emissions for materials, VIDA Rail projects currently eliminate materials use through value engineering solutions, substitutions such as use of supplementary cementitious materials or aluminium replacements and use of recycled options that align with the Recycled First Policy, such as recycled plastic fibres to replace steel reinforcement. VIDA Rail will maintain this approach, continuing to lead the industry in embedding sustainable materials in construction.

The exceptional sustainability outcomes achieved by VIDA Rail projects to date have been recognised through numerous awards including:

- Excellence in Economic Outcomes for Sustainability, Keon Parade, 2024
- ISC Outstanding Project, Preston 2024
- Future Places award, Bell to Moreland, Banksia Sustainability Awards 2022
- Industry Leader Award for Sustainable Places and Destinations, Bell to Moreland The Premier's Sustainability Awards, 2022
- Excellence in Governance Outcomes, NWP, ISC – 2021 and 2023 (Preston LXRP notably for Indigenous Design and Engagement)
- Sustainability Award, Reservoir Station, Australasian Railway Industry Awards 2021
- Achievement in Design Outcome, Edithvale, Chelsea and Bonbeach, ISC 2022

- 6-star As Built Green Star sustainability rating for Union, Coburg and Edithvale stations
- 5-star As Built Green Star sustainability rating for Reservoir, Chelsea and Bonbeach stations.

17. Other environmental issues

Are there any other environmental issues arising from the proposed project?

No Yes If yes, briefly describe.

18. Environmental management

What measures are currently proposed to avoid, minimise or manage the main potential adverse environmental effects? (if not already described above)

Measures proposed to avoid, minimise and manage potential environment effects are described in detail above (from Section 12 onwards). Potentially adverse environmental effects are expected to be manageable under existing legislation, approval processes and VIDA Rail's internal policies, procedures and previous experience. VIDA Rail has successfully utilised these types of measures across 87 level crossing removals (at the time of writing).

Siting: Please describe briefly

The siting of the Project is predominantly within the existing rail corridor to minimise impacts on the adjacent environment. The existing rail corridor currently has low amenity value and a predominantly poor-quality visual interface with surrounding areas. Some Project works will be located outside of the existing corridor; however, this is a small proportion of the overall RPA. The new rail bridge is required to be positioned within the existing rail corridor to ensure it is connected with the remainder of the Upfield Line to the north and south of the RPA, and to minimise disturbance on adjacent environmental values.

Design: Please describe briefly

The design solution (elevated rail bridge within the existing rail alignment) and consolidation of three stations, into two, presented the greatest opportunity to avoid, minimise and manage adverse social and environment effects.

This solution:

- Minimises commercial and residential land acquisition to the greatest extent possible.
- Allows for future proofing for service uplift on the Upfield Line.
- Will deliver new public open spaces and landscaping under and on either side of the rail bridge.
- Improves safety for bike riders and pedestrians by delivering separated cycling and walking paths for the Upfield Bike Path.
- Provides opportunity for improved heritage outcomes at the VHR listed Jewell and Brunswick stations.
- Provides east-west pedestrian and cycling connections for a community that is currently bisected by the Upfield Line.
- Minimises impacts on mature trees in VHR listed Royal Park to the greatest extent possible.
- Minimises the RPA and construction footprint to the maximum extent possible.
- Provide stronger connections to surrounding civic destinations (such as Brunswick Town Hall, Brunswick Library and Brunswick Baths, and Sydney Road) which are currently divided by the at-grade rail line.

As stated previously, the design will be subject to ongoing cross-discipline and technical assessments and will be further informed by stakeholder and community consultation, the UDAP and UDG.

✘ Environmental management: Please describe briefly.

VIDA Rail has a well-established EMS for managing potential adverse environmental effects, which is modelled off *AS/NZS 14001:2016 Environmental management systems*.

The main elements of VIDA Rail's EMS are shown in *Attachment 14*. Within VIDA Rail's EMS is an environmental assurance program consisting of:

- regular compliance inspections of construction activities
- audits (referred to as Systems Health Checks)
- regular reviews of incident data to identify emerging issues and trends
- reviews of documentation at project completion to ensure compliance with all contract requirements including environmental requirements.

Furthermore, VIDA Rail's contract specifications require its Alliance partners (delivery arms of VIDA Rail) to perform works in accordance with their own EMS which must also be established and controlled in accordance with *AS/NZS 14001:2016 Environmental management systems*. The Alliance EMS provides a transparent structure to manage the environmental effects of the Project. It comprises of the Environmental Management Plan (EMP), EMF, CEMP, ECPs and Site Environmental Plans (SEPs). The EMS encompasses objectives, policies, training, inspections and audits, and the EMF provides the framework to meet statutory requirements, protect environmental values, sustain stakeholder confidence, and mandates all other environmental controls.

VIDA Rail's environmental assurance program provides confidence to VIDA Rail that its Alliance partners are managing any potential environmental impacts and are adhering to their own EMS requirements.

The VIDA Rail wide management system documents that will apply to the Project are:

- An overarching EMP, which sets out the broad requirements to be audited regularly.
- A suite of Environmental Aspect Specific ECPs, which set out the objectives of management, the regulatory frameworks. These aspects will include noise, light spill, vibration, air quality, contamination, hazardous materials, waste, cultural heritage, historic heritage, surface and groundwaters, flora and fauna.
- A suite of internal procedures and permits controlling the implementation of high-risk activities; including out of hours works notification permit, dewatering permit, vegetation clearing permit, and ground penetration permit.

The specific management system documents for the Project are:

- An EMF, which is prepared by VIDA Rail under the Clause 52.03 of the Victorian Planning Provisions setting out the expectations of environmental management on the Project. The EMF must be prepared in consultation with the relevant municipal council and to the satisfaction of the Minister for Planning.
- A CEMP, which sets out the specific environmental management requirements unique to the Project (referring back to the ECPs described earlier for business-as-usual controls).
- Project specific sub-plans under the CEMP including (but not limited to) a:
 - Heritage Management Sub-Plan;
 - Biodiversity Management Sub-Plan;
 - Noise and Vibration Management Sub-Plan;
 - Contamination Management Sub-Plan;
 - Spoil and Waste Management Sub-Plan;

- A Site Environmental Plan, which is a map displaying key environmental aspects of the RPA, and the various management controls required in specific locations. This is updated as a live document over the life of the construction of the Project.
- Tracking of monitoring, site inspections, obligations and incidents, which are all managed through the delivery of the Project.

Other: Please describe briefly

VIDA Rail also has strong sustainability frameworks and policies to avoid, minimise and manage potential adverse effects from climate change.

Sustainability Framework

VIDA Rail's sustainability commitments are aligned to key strategic and regulatory drivers, including the Victorian government's net zero emissions target by 2045 under the *Victorian Climate Change Act 2017*.

The [Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority \(VIDA\) Transport Infrastructure Decarbonisation Strategy 2024](#) outlines the overarching strategy for VIDA to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Victorian Governments legislated targets and commitment to being net zero by 2045. The strategy outlines two key streams: Decarbonisation of corporate operations, and Decarbonisation of transport projects in line with the *Climate Change Act 2017* (Vic) and the 2045 net zero targets.

New decarbonisation targets have been set within this strategy to align with Victoria's emission reduction targets, including a 35 per cent reduction of upfront carbon emissions of newly procured projects (based on a 2005 project equivalent baseline). The construction of the Project is anticipated to fall under the 2027 target.

Sustainability Policy

VIDA Rail Alliances (delivery arms of VIDA Rail) also have Sustainability Policies which have been developed to align with the VIDA Rail Sustainability Policy, to manage and undertake works in a way which considers social, environmental, and economic aspects across the asset's whole of life. Further information, including VIDA Rail and Alliance policies, are available on the [Victoria's Big Build website](#).

Sustainability Management Plan (SMP)

The LXP SMP provides an overview of the approach for LXP projects to plan, design and construct to optimise sustainable outcomes across project delivery and operational phases. The SMP is the overarching plan that identifies and manages the sustainability obligations. The SMP outlines the objectives, targets, processes, and procedures for delivering sustainability outcomes.

19. Other activities

Are there any other activities in the vicinity of the proposed project that have a potential for cumulative effects?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe.

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project was delivered in close geographic proximity and by the same proponent delivering the Project. It was delivered in 2021 by LXP and removed four level crossings via the construction of an elevated rail bridge with two new stations.

There are unlikely to be significant cumulative effects as a result of both Projects.

Any cumulative effects due to the Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project combined with this Project, particularly from an historic heritage perspective, have been considered within this referral and in

consultation with Heritage Victoria. Well-established approval pathways exist under the *Heritage Act 2017* to consider and manage the potential effects.

The Bell to Moreland Level Crossing Removal Project is a local example of LXRP's commitment to achieving a renewed and modern rail corridor with sustainable heritage and environmental outcomes.

The combined removal of 12 level crossings along the Upfield Line is ultimately expected to be beneficial and will:

- improve transport safety
- provide more accessible public transport throughout Brunswick and Coburg
- create a significant amount of new public open space
- increase operational capacity for future additional train services on the Upfield Line
- support the urban renewal of the BMAC consistent with State and local planning policy
- create safe cycling and pedestrian connections between Brunswick and Coburg.

20. Investigation program

Study program

Have any environmental studies not referred to above been conducted for the project?

No Yes If yes, please list here and attach if relevant.

Planning and environmental studies relevant to the criterion met have been conducted and are attached:

<i>Attachment 4</i>	Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment
<i>Attachment 5</i>	Planning Assessment (including review of HOs)
<i>Attachment 6</i>	Heritage Impact Assessment
<i>Attachment 7</i>	Urban Design Process
<i>Attachment 8</i>	Brunswick Preliminary Urban Design Guidelines
<i>Attachment 9</i>	Contamination Land Impact Assessment
<i>Attachment 10</i>	Summary of Transport Provisions
<i>Attachment 11</i>	Construction Noise and Vibration Assessment
<i>Attachment 12</i>	Operational Noise Assessment
<i>Attachment 13</i>	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Memorandum
<i>Attachment 14</i>	Planning and Environment Management Systems Flowchart

Has a program for future environmental studies been developed?

No Yes If yes, briefly describe.

It is anticipated that further environmental investigations will be required during the ongoing design phases. The EMF and the contractual arrangements for the delivery of the Project will outline any requirements for additional environmental investigations and/or studies that will be required to support the ongoing design phases.

Several environmental assessments are ongoing as part of the planning and preliminary design phase, including (but are not limited to):

- groundwater monitoring events
- additional contamination testing
- additional noise and vibration monitoring, modelling and assessments
- additional geotechnical assessments
- service proving.

Others may include updates to existing assessments to incorporate changes over time (i.e. review arboriculture assessments if greater than three years old at the time of construction).

Consultation program

Has a consultation program conducted to date for the project?

No Yes If yes, outline the consultation activities and the stakeholder groups or organisations consulted.

Overall, the engagement approach for the Project consists of five phases (as outlined in the next section).

Engagement principles

LXRP is committed to engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the community throughout the lifecycle of the Project. As an organisation, LXRP involves local communities in decision making, guided by the principles of best practice engagement set out by the *International Association of Public Participation*.

This approach will be implemented to guide engagement with stakeholders to:

- build trust
- gather information about community values
- encourage community participation in the development of the level crossing removal projects.

The approach is based on the following principles:

- Establish a clear, fair and inclusive process and ensure communities and stakeholders have multiple opportunities to meaningfully participate in the planning and delivery of each project.
- Support stakeholder participation as a way to assist decision making and draw on local insights, values and knowledge to inform each project.
- Be clear about what is negotiable and what is not.
- Engage with a wide range of local community groups and organisations and adjust the approach where necessary.
- Be conscious of the Project's long-term impacts and leave communities and stakeholders with positive legacies.
- Community and stakeholder consultation and engagement will be undertaken in a phased approach, linked to both the development and construction programs.

Past LXRP consultation and engagement programs have been award winning. In 2021, the LXRP won the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) 2021 Australasia Organisation of the Year Award for its industry-leading approach to stakeholder engagement.

Key stakeholders

The Project has attracted and will continue to attract interest from a broad cross section of the Victorian community, particularly people who live, work, own land and travel through the RPA. The Project will involve ongoing consultation with key stakeholders as the Project develops, building on engagement undertaken to date.

Key stakeholders include (but are not limited to):

- DTP (Planning, Impact Assessment Unit, Victorian Planning Authority, Network, Stations, Rolling Stock, Road, Land and Public Transport);
- DEECA
- VicTrack
- PTV
- MTM
- Heritage Victoria
- Melbourne Water
- Merri-bek City Council
- Melbourne City Council

- EPA Victoria
- WWCHAC
- Office of the Victorian Government Architect
- Utility providers with assets in the RPA
- Nightingale Housing
- Brunswick Baths
- Brunswick Library
- Brunswick Town Hall
- Melbourne Zoo
- Brunswick Mechanics Institute
- RMIT University (Brunswick Campus)
- Groups that use Royal Park facilities (predominantly sporting teams)
- Royal Park Golf Club
- Royal Park Tennis Club
- Victoria Police (depot adjacent to the rail corridor)
- Merri-bek Bicycle User Group
- Upfield Urban Forest
- Bicycle Network
- Local hospitals and medical facilities
- Local churches and places of worship (including Brunswick Uniting Church, St Ambrose Catholic Parish and St Vasilios Greek Orthodox Church)
- Local child care centres
- Local aged care facilities (including Hope Aged Care Facility adjacent to the rail corridor)
- Local schools (including Sydney Road Community School, St Margaret Mary's Primary School, Brunswick Secondary College and Merri-bek Primary School)
- Surrounding residential, industrial, and commercial landowners and occupiers.

Has a program for future consultation been developed?

NYD No Yes If yes, briefly describe.

As noted above, the consultation program consists of five phases. Subject to the outcomes of this referral, the program for future consultation will be as follows.

Phase 1 – September 2022 (Complete): Project announcement and 'Register your Interest'

This phase began with the Minister for Transport Infrastructure publicly announcing the Project and scope. Consultation with key stakeholders includes council Executive and CEO briefings and Heritage Victoria meetings to introduce the Project. Both Melbourne City Council and Merri-bek City Council have published position papers on the Project:

- [City of Melbourne Position Paper](#)
- [Merri-bek City Council Position Paper](#)

Engagement has also taken place with key stakeholders such as RMIT University (Brunswick Campus), Melbourne Zoo, private landowners and members of the community to facilitate initial site investigations.

Stakeholders and the community were encouraged to sign-up to Project email updates and LXR social media platforms to stay informed on Project updates.

Since the Project was announced in 2022, stakeholders and the community have been able to submit questions about the Project via LXR social media platforms, [Victoria's Big Build contact centre](#) as well as contacting LXR directly or via the Minister for Transport Infrastructure's Office.

Phase 2 - Station location announcement, station precinct maps and 'Vision and Values' consultation – Underway (2024-2025)

This phase follows [the announcement](#) from the Minister for Transport Infrastructure on the 19 September 2024 which includes station consolidation information, details of the new station locations (including precinct maps) and design rationale details. This phase also includes Vision and Values consultation which allows the community to provide feedback on how they use the local area and what they would want to see developed as part of the Project.

Engagement activities for this phase include:

- media releases
- community information sessions and pop-ups (online and in person);
- community newsletter and email updates;
- online consultation hub including survey, interactive map and ask questions to the Project team;
- project webpage and social media updates;
- information booklet;
- council briefings;
- special interest and key stakeholder group meetings; and
- resident and trader door knocks.

This phase also included compulsory acquisition, including likely to acquire door knocks and stakeholder engagement for those affected by compulsory acquisition. Further information is provided on this in Section 15 above.

A summary of the Vision and Values consultation findings will be published online and provided to the Project team to assist in shaping the Project concept designs.

Phase 3 – Concept Designs (from 2027)

This phase will introduce concept designs showing station designs, station precincts, the elevated rail bridge and open space examples.

LXR will invite the community to provide feedback on the concept designs and include a combination of consultation and engagement tools (as listed in Phase 2).

Planning consultation pursuant to Clause 52.03-4 of the Melbourne and Merri-bek Planning Schemes will also occur during this phase. This will allow a report to be prepared for the Minister for Planning that summarises the feedback provided and explains how the feedback has been considered. This must be completed before construction begins.

Phase 4 – Refined Designs and Feedback (from 2028)

This phase will release updated project designs incorporating community feedback from Phase 3 and include various forms of engagement, including a combination of engagement tools as listed in Phase 2.

This stage will also include the publication of the Concept Design consultation findings including details of how community feedback was used to help inform the final designs. Additional consultation will also take place as part of the Project's heritage permits under the *Heritage Act 2017* (Vic).

Phase 5 – Construction (2029 – onwards)

The purpose of this phase is to communicate the ongoing construction process to all key stakeholders. Communication and engagement will be both localised to key impacted residents, businesses and stakeholders affected by specific construction activities as well as project wide updates and information.


Key engagement and communication tools include:

- community newsletters and construction updates
- localised works notifications
- resident door knocks and trader check-ins
- email updates
- website updates and online disruption tiles
- LXRP social media
- SMS construction impact updates
- digital media and physical advertising
- community pop-ups and information sessions
- key stakeholder briefings with local councils and key transport operators including MTM, PTV and DTP.

Authorised person for proponent:

I, **Matthew Gualt**, Chief Executive Officer – VIDA Rail,

confirm that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature:  _____

Date: 19 / 01 / 2026

Person who prepared this referral:

I, **Christopher Stewart**, Senior Manager Planning and Environment – VIDA Rail, confirm that the information contained in this form is, to my knowledge, true and not misleading.

Signature:  _____

Date: _16/01/26 _____

List of attachments:

#	Description
Attachment 1	Project Description, Site Context and Map Books
Attachment 2	RPA Coordinates
Attachment 3	Technical Report – Selecting the Best Design for Brunswick and Parkville
Attachment 4	Flora and Fauna Impact Assessment
Attachment 5	Planning Assessment (including review of HOs)
Attachment 6	Heritage Impact Assessment
Attachment 7	Urban Design Process
Attachment 8	Preliminary Urban Design Guidelines
Attachment 9	Contaminated Land Impact Assessment
Attachment 10	Summary of Transport Provisions
Attachment 11	Construction Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment
Attachment 12	Operational Noise Assessment
Attachment 13	Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Memorandum
Attachment 14	Planning and Environment Management Systems Flowchart