



Tree planting program

Fact sheet April 2019

An Environment Effects Statement (EES) has been released for the North East Link project and is now open for public submissions.

The EES includes information on how the project could affect the environment during construction and when the project opens, and the approach to manage these impacts.

Arboriculture is the study and management of individual trees, and is one of 18 study areas in the EES. More information about the EES is on the back page.

One of Victoria's largest ever tree planting programs

More than 30,000 trees will be planted for North East Link, one of the largest tree planting programs of any state infrastructure project.

Approximately 16,000 trees are expected to be removed based on the current reference design for the project. For each of these trees removed, two will be planted.

Banyule Flats, Warringal Parklands and the Yarra River will be protected with a six-kilometre tunnel travelling from Simpson Barracks in Yallambie to Bulleen Road near the Eastern Freeway.

North East Link will deliver an ongoing environmental legacy



Planting more than 30,000 trees



Creating a mature, healthy and connected tree canopy



Shading for new and upgraded walking and cycling paths



Supporting habitat and corridors for native wildlife to move through



Providing green buffers between communities, roads and noise walls



Planting trees in ways that increase resilience to future climate conditions



Supporting cleaner air and waterways



Victoria's longest road tunnels will protect Banyule Flats, Warringal Parklands and the Yarra River

Potential tree loss

Approximately 16,000 trees are expected to be removed based on the current reference design for the project. For each of these trees removed, two will be replanted.

About 75 per cent of these trees are in areas already reserved for road upgrades, with approximately 7,000 along the M80 Ring Road in Greensborough and approximately 4,000 on the Eastern Freeway where works will include building Melbourne's first dedicated, high-speed busway to cater for the growing eastern suburbs.

Based on the current reference design for the project, approximately 52 hectares of native vegetation and a further 10,000 trees within the project boundary could also be impacted however the final number will not be known until the detailed designs are complete.

The studies for the EES are conservative and model a 'worst case' scenario. This means that during the detailed design stage of the project, the builders will likely be able to reduce the number of trees identified in the EES as potentially required to build the project.

Once builders are appointed to construct the long-awaited North East Link they will be held to tough requirements to avoid as many trees as possible.

The project has committed to minimising impacts on communities and the environment and for every tree or patch of vegetation to be removed, the builders will need to demonstrate to the Victorian Government why it has to go.

Any loss of native vegetation during project construction will be offset in accordance with the State Government Guidelines for the removal, destruction or lopping of native vegetation.

Where are the 'potentially impacted' trees?

The further 10,000 trees that could be impacted are in the project boundary but separated from proposed construction activities and the risk of removal or damage is considered low.

This includes trees on slopes, behind existing noise walls and in areas separate from works or adjacent to where works would likely stay within existing freeway lanes.

We won't know which of these trees will be affected until the final design is in place - but we are working to ensure the number of impacted trees is kept to a minimum.

Planting will be used to shade new and upgraded walking and cycling paths, improve open spaces and enhance the look and feel of local suburbs.

Growing a healthy, resilient urban forest

The planting program will prioritise replacing trees to provide resilience to future climate conditions and will aim to generate canopy cover along the road corridor to create green buffers between communities and the new North East Link and upgraded Eastern Freeway, particularly near noise walls.

What is tree canopy?

Tree canopy is what you see when you look up, the leaves, branches and stems of the tree. Each individual tree contributes to Melbourne's urban forest.

Trees and the urban forest have a strong influence on community health and wellbeing.

A mature, healthy and connected canopy provides multiple benefits to urban areas including reducing urban heat, providing habitat and corridors for wildlife to move through and supporting cleaner air and waterways.

Canopy is crucial to help cool our city in summer, provide shade from the sun and encourage active transport particularly walking and cycling.

Significant trees

The current reference design requires the removal of a significant River Red Gum, located on busy Bridge Street, Bulleen adjacent to the Caltex Service Station site.

Builders with local and international expertise may find an innovative solution that preserves the tree, estimated to be 300 years old, however, this will be difficult.

For more than 12 months the project team and specialists have investigated ways to preserve the tree, but it is in a challenging location near entry and exit points for the twin tunnels that will pass under the Yarra River and protect sensitive environmental and residential areas.

The tree planting program for North East Link has already started, well before major construction, and seeds have already been collected from this important River Red Gum for future use.

We know this tree has great significance to the community - and we are working to ensure we can grow new trees from its seeds.

Due to the Red River Gum's age and other factors, if it needs to be removed, relocating it would not ensure its survival. The tree will stay as long as possible and is not expected to be removed for a couple of years.

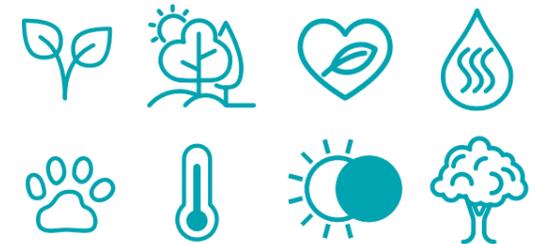
There are also locally significant Studley Park Gum trees, largely located within Simpson Barracks, that are expected to be removed. We're investigating seed collection options to maximise opportunities to plant more of these trees.

Tree planting for North East Link will focus on replacing and improving canopy cover.

Can the removed trees be replanted?

Native and indigenous trees don't tolerate being moved well and this often results in an unhealthy and compromised tree.

We know from experience that the most successful planting programs grow and plant new, healthy trees.





Using technology to make smart planting choices

We are working hard to use this opportunity to invest in smarter, more strategic planting that creates a lasting legacy for communities and a healthier, more resilient urban forest.

A team of specialists is using laser scanning and ground surveys to digitally map trees and their canopy coverage across the project area to identify where trees could be planted to maximise community and environmental benefits.

Once complete, the data set will be one of the largest of its kind ever generated and used by a major infrastructure project in Victoria.

Involving communities

The project will look at ways for local schools, nurseries, social enterprises and interested community groups to be involved in growing replacement trees as well as work closely with Councils on planting strategies.

The project team is looking to other major projects and the community to consider sustainable ways of using timber from removed trees for art, community projects and biodiversity benefits across the project corridor.

Have your say on the Environment Effects Statement

This fact sheet is based on the Arboriculture chapter and technical report in the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for North East Link.

An EES is the state's most rigorous impact assessment process. It gives decision makers such as the Planning Minister and EPA Victoria the information they need to determine whether approvals should be granted and what conditions should apply.

The EES for North East Link includes information on how the project could affect the environment during construction and operation and how adverse impacts would be managed.

The EES will be on public display and open for public comment from 10 April to Friday 7 June 2019. There are seven community information sessions from 27 April where you can learn more and chat to our technical specialists.

See the EES summary report for an overview of tree impacts and benefits for the project or for more details read Chapter 15 – Arboriculture and Technical Report G – Arboriculture.

You can find more details and read the EES on our website or see a hard copy at a display location near you. Visit northeastlink.vic.gov.au/ees or call **1800 105 105** for more information.

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