

EPA VICTORIA AND EASTLINK

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Victorians have high expectations for our environment. EPA Victoria is committed to working effectively with all parties involved in environmental protection and management to ensure environmental standards are met.

As part of this commitment, EPA is working with the community and industry on the EastLink project to:

- assess the impact of the air, water and noise emissions from the EastLink tunnels through a works approval
- evaluate site environmental performance and ensure that the environmental management practices on the construction sites are optimised.

The EPA works approval process

EPA works approval is required for certain activities before they can commence.

The works approval process enables EPA to independently assess an application. The applicant is required to demonstrate that the proposal, if approved, will not result in unacceptable impacts on the environment.

The works approval application provides information detailing the potential effects of the project, if any, upon the air, land and water environments, including groundwater and noise, and how these wastes and emissions will be managed to prevent any adverse impact.

In the case of EastLink, the expected vehicle emissions from the tunnels dictate that a works approval must be sought prior to constructing and operating tunnel ventilation systems. However, construction of the surface roadways does not require a works approval.

What will the EastLink works approval contain?

EPA expects to receive an application for a works approval later this year.

This application will include the provision of detailed information for assessment by EPA. This information will include, but is not limited to:

- proposed ventilation systems and supporting equipment designs (such as fans, vent stacks and chimneys)
- modelling of the likely impacts of the ventilation systems on surrounding air quality
- air quality measurement instrumentation and safety measures
- water management and drainage schemes.

A summary of the application will be available to the community through EPA's website and other, advertised locations.

The works approval process and you

Public participation is an important part of EPA's works approval process. You can make comments on works approvals, and appeal rights exist to allow aggrieved parties to seek an independent review of EPA's decision making.

When it is received, EPA will advertise the application for the EastLink works approval in state-wide and locally distributed newspapers and on EPA's website.

Any interested person can submit comments on the EastLink works approval application but must do so within 21 days of the application being advertised in the newspapers.

EPA is required to take such comments into account and may hold a conference to consider community

comments. Those making a written submission would be invited to the conference.

Can you appeal against EPA's decision on a works approval application?

Yes. Any person who is unsatisfied with the decision may lodge an appeal, but it must be within 21 days of EPA making its decision and must state the reasons for the appeal.

Grounds under which an appeal may be lodged are defined in section 33B(2) of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and relate to the intended works:

- unreasonably or adversely affecting the interests of a person or party

or

- not being consistent with legislation.

This type of appeal would be settled at an independent tribunal such as the Victorian Civil Appeals Tribunal (VCAT).

EPA after works approval

If granted, a works approval would allow the ventilation systems and associated works to be constructed.

Upon completion of these works, an EPA licence will be required to operate the ventilation system.

EPA's monitoring of construction activities

EPA staff will regularly check and monitor the environmental performance of those building the roads, to check that they are meeting their obligations to protect the environment.

This monitoring will take many forms, including pre-planned and unannounced inspections of construction works by EPA officers, as well as scientific measurement of air, water and noise quality against EPA standards.

EPA will also respond to and investigate concerns reported by the community to EPA's Pollution Watch Line (9695 2777).

EPA and enforcement

If construction of EastLink results in damage to the environment and breach of EPA regulations, EPA will take enforcement action against those responsible.

EPA enforcement includes pollution abatement notices, fines or court prosecution. Penalties of up to \$500,000 for pollution and waste dumping can apply, depending on the nature of the offence.

The community can assist EPA by reporting concerns to:

- EPA's Pollution Watch Line on 9695 2777 or 1800 444 004 (country callers)

or

- TJH directly on its Community Contact Line 1800 173 176.

Who can you speak to?

Queries relating to why EastLink is being built should be directed to the Southern and Eastern Integrated Transport Authority (SEITA) on 9655 2100 or via its website at www.seita.com.au.

Queries relating to the operation of the EastLink roadway should be directed to Connect East on 8541 6000, whilst queries relating to construction may be directed to Connect East or its contractor TJH on the Community Contact Line: 1800 173 176.

Queries relating to EPA's involvement in the EastLink Project or requests for further information from EPA should be directed to:

EPA Victoria Information Centre
Herald & Weekly Times Tower
40 City Road
Southbank Victoria 3001
Ph: (03) 9695 2722
Fax: (03) 9695 2710

or visit EPA's website at www.epa.vic.gov.au.