



NORTH EAST LINK: A PERSPECTIVE

William McDougall

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Transport planner and engineer since 1977

Years in 'big' consulting (Travers Morgan (UK/Oz), SKM)

Freelance since 2014, recently joined *Movement & Place Consulting* (Knowles Tivendale)

Many road and public transport projects, strategic plans, active transport, etc.

Expert witness/advisor for objectors on major projects

- WGT, MMRT, MF, NEL, WH

Recent blogger (www.wmcdougall.com)



An aerial photograph of a complex highway interchange, likely a cloverleaf or similar design, with multiple lanes and ramps. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the image.

NORTH EAST LINK — DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. EES — my role
2. New trends
3. Planning transport in 'the corridor'

NEL EES: MY ROLE

Expert witness on transport for BBW Councils

Reviewed EES/BC docs on:

- Strategic context (Transport Integration Act)
 - NEL doesn't meet objectives and principles of TIA
 - Car dependency is increased
 - Despite bus initiatives, public transport mode share goes down
- Transport modelling (Zenith and the 'single loop')
 - Transport model doesn't meet Aust guidance/best practice
 - Bullish traffic forecasts due to illogical, incorrect calculations
 - Effect of NEL overstated (tolls wrongly discounted in future years)
 - EES Panel didn't care – thought it was OK to 'err on the high side'
- Cost-benefit
 - CBA full of add-ons/double counting, erroneous traffic forecasts
 - Economic return more like 70 cents, not \$1.30

See my NEL & WGT blog posts

- Includes links to evidence

NEL EES: EMISSIONS

Recently looked at NEL emissions 'footprint'

- Construction, operation and maintenance of NEL will produce 3,800 Kt of CO₂-e over 30yrs
- Offset by only 300 Kt CO₂-e saved from 30yrs of traffic (using EES figures)
- Before allowing for tree removal, decarbonized transport and overblown traffic forecasts!
- Cancelling out NEL emissions needs 50,000 (dirty) cars removed from the roads every year, between now and 2050

Megaprojects produce lots of emissions

Need to explore 'light touch' solutions more thoroughly

NEW TRENDS

COVID, WFH and use of PT

- More WFH, less peak travel/congestion/crowding
- Makes NEL traffic forecasts MORE optimistic
- Users nervous about PT crowding, but that might be temporary
- New PT projects in the wings (MM1, MM2, SLR)

New technologies changing the landscape

- EVs, AVs, driverless trains, trackless trams
- Shared mobility offerings – could blur public/ private nexus

Emissions reduction/elimination: the new imperative

- Decarbonising transport – will change behaviour AND vehicles
- 2030-2050 will be really interesting

Post-rationale for NEL assumes no change!!

PLANNING TRANSPORT IN 'THE CORRIDOR'

Need new strategic plans for Oz/Vic/Melb first

Climate emergency the main imperative

IV's recent 30-year plan is nowhere near enough

- Incomplete, disjointed and contradictory
- See my blog post/submission

Needs a coordinated approach to implement:

- Zero-emission vehicles
- New transport offerings and technologies
- Transport pricing reforms
- Low-cost traffic flow, safety and accessibility measures

Scenario analysis and real options need testing

Singling out one corridor is wrong

- What IS 'the corridor'?
- Respond to actual demands as well as manage them

HOW TO STOP NEL?

Is it too late?

NEL never did 'stack up' (like WGT before it)

Councils bought off (and cheaply!)

Project is overblown, huge implementation risks

- Bidders dropped out, Govt going it alone on tolls
- Secrecy over real cost, plans, timing
- 2020/21 Budget omits all reference to Big Build funding

Doesn't suit post-COVID, climate emergency era

- Won't aid legislated 'zero by 2050' target
- Contravenes TIA (but it's not alone there)

Recruit planning groups, concerned professionals

- Some think it's too late and have moved on to other things
- Look at EES expert witness list for names

Network with fellow protest groups

- WH, WGT, WestConnex, RAMF

Lift debate above NIMBYism