

# **Australian Institute of Landscape Architects Position statement on East West Link – Stage One**

---

Draft - 31st July 2013



## Introduction

AILA is the professional body for landscape architects and we have considered the impacts of East West Link Stage 1 on the ecological, cultural and heritage values of its currently proposed alignment. Our professional code of conduct requires members to recognise and protect these values when working on any design or planning proposal.

The current design for East West Link Stage 1 has substantial and unjustified impact on Royal Park and will also severely compromise the future development and enhancement of Moonee Ponds Creek.

We believe the inappropriate route and intersection designs of East West Link Stage 1 make the project as it is currently presented irreparably flawed. No amount of landscape architectural work would be able to adequately offset or rectify the project's impacts.

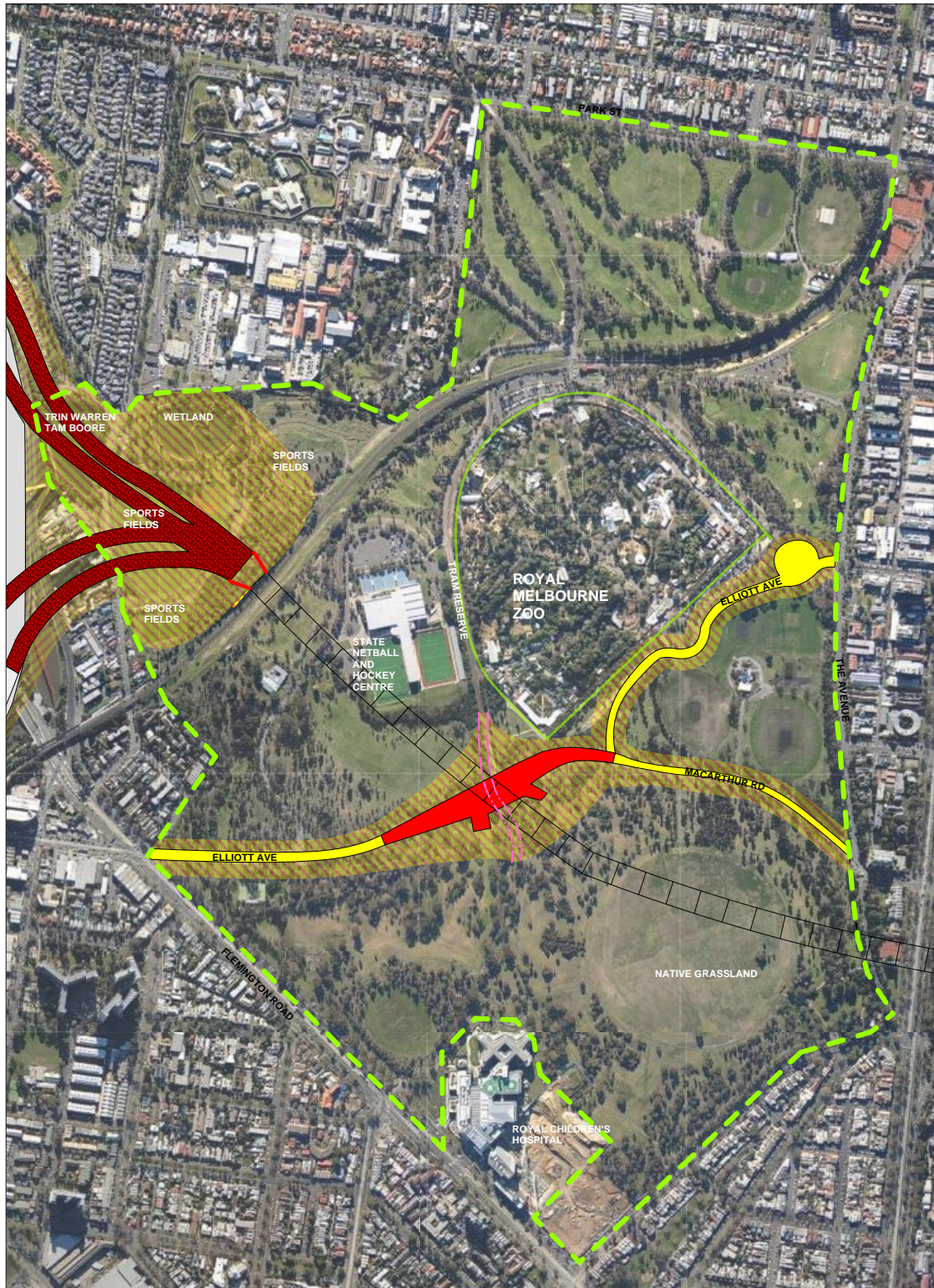


**Analysis of Proposed East West Link Landscape Impacts  
ROYAL PARK AND MOONEE PONDS CREEK**

### KEY

- Royal Park - 188 ha
- East West link surface connection
- East West link tunnel
- East West link flyovers
- MacArthur Road and Elliott Ave
- Area of severe impact
- Realigned tram route





## Analysis of Proposed East West Link Landscape Impacts ROYAL PARK

### KEY

- Royal Park - 188 ha
- East West link surface connection
- East West link tunnel
- East West link flyovers
- MacArthur Road and Elliott Ave
- Area of severe impact on parkland - **39.48 Ha (21% the park)**
- Realigned tram route



## The history and significance of Royal Park

Royal Park was created as part of the earliest planning of Melbourne in the 1840s and, while reduced from its extent at that time, today it is still Melbourne's largest inner city park. The City of Melbourne became manager of the crown reserve in 1933 and has protected and overseen improvements to the park for the last 80 years.

Our profession has had a close association with this park for around forty years. Landscape architects working within Council and as consultants have developed master plans and designed many improvements to the park as it has developed and adapted to the changing needs of the community.

Unlike other significant City of Melbourne parks, Royal Park is still not fully formed. The combination of a large site and limited investment by Council means it still has room to mature, and in doing so perform an increasingly important role supporting the planned expansion of higher density development to the north and west of the CBD.

The potential of Royal Park to become Melbourne's greatest park has attracted extensive discussion within our profession through design competitions, student work, and critique over the last thirty years. Because of its history, size and location, Royal Park can grow to become one of the truly great city parks of the world, the equivalent of London's new Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park or the older Hampstead Heath, or New York's Central Park. Severely compromising the future of such a significant space with above ground traffic infrastructure would be a short-sighted planning decision that would forever be regretted.

Master plans for the park since the 1970s have consistently raised the need to remove east-west through-traffic along Elliott Avenue/MacArthur Road, which now effectively divides the park in two. Council, encouraged by residents, has managed to restrain through-traffic along this route for many decades by maintaining MacArthur Road as one narrow carriageway in each direction.





## The proposed Elliott Avenue interchange

An East West Link Stage 1 tunnel could have provided the opportunity to reunite the north and south sectors of the park, but instead the Authority, showing its ignorance or disdain for park planning issues, has decided to locate the only tunnel exit between Hoddle Street and Tullamarine Freeway right in the centre of Royal Park at Elliott Avenue. This will result in substantially increased traffic radiating from the heart of Royal Park to the east, west and north on duplicated roads. This interchange will substantially damage the park and severely limit the park's potential for the foreseeable future.



*Link Melbourne Authority view of tunnel exit and realigned tram line.*



*Elliott Ave to be widened and median removed to accommodate tunnel access lanes and increased traffic.*



*Passive parkland will be sacrificed for construction of the tunnel exit. Pathways will be severed and increased traffic at park level will compromise amenity.*



## The proposed interchange with Tullamarine Freeway

The East West Link Stage 1 proposal for this section of the park is also immensely damaging. The design proposes a tunnel exit to the west of the rail line and elevated road flyovers which will occupy the entire western section of the park.

This Manningham Reserve section of the park is home to well-used sports fields and the new and stunning Trin Warren Tamboore, a secluded bird habitat and state of the art system of stormwater treatment ponds and wetlands. The notes on the drawings state that Ross Straw Field will be 'occupied for construction' but the plan indicates that most of this area will be permanently lost, with no usable area for sports remaining in this part of the park. Much of the wetlands west of Manningham Street will be lost or overshadowed (and hence permanently compromised) by elevated freeway structures.

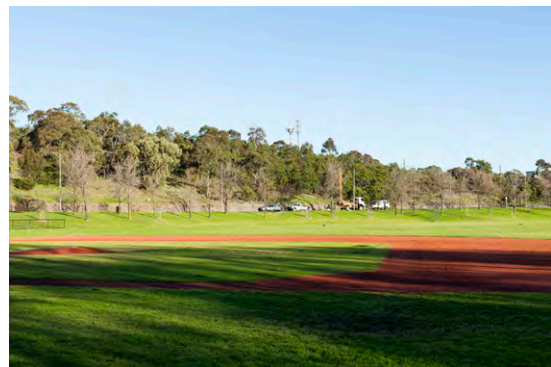
Needless to say the tranquillity, natural qualities and amenity of this large western segment of Royal Park will be diminished beyond recognition forever by the proposed road design even if some of its existing features are retained or rebuilt.



*Link Melbourne Authority view of City Link exit and elevated road connection to the freeway through Western Royal Park*



*The setting of Trin Warren Tamboore wetlands will be severely compromised by adjoining freeway access ramps.*



*Manningham Reserve sports fields and natural hillside will be sacrificed to become a freeway portal and interchange.*

## **The design evaluation and consultation process**

As a profession which often plays an important role in the planning and design of large road infrastructure projects we are disappointed by the lack of consultation on, and public evaluation of, options for the design of this project. Even a small rural freeway requires an extended public process including consideration by an expert panel of the cost and impact of several alignment options.

East West Link Stage 1 is one of Victoria's largest ever road infrastructure projects and the Linking Melbourne Authority is proposing to build it through the most sensitive historic heart of our city. The Authority is rushing the process to suit a political agenda. To date it has delivered a vague and unacceptable design with no certainty about how it will be delivered by a yet to be selected public/private partner.

## **AILA's position on East West Link Stage 1**

Victorian landscape architects have carefully considered all available information and believe this project should not proceed in its current form because of the severe ecological, cultural and heritage impacts on Royal Park and Moonee Ponds Creek.

AILA encourages its fellow design organisations AIA and PIA, and engineering professional bodies, to carefully consider their position on this project. We also encourage the Office of the Government Architect to proactively engage with this project.

We recommend that the City of Melbourne, as custodians of Royal Park, request the Linking Melbourne Authority to develop an alternative alignment option that avoids any impact on Royal Park and Moonee Ponds Creek, or to otherwise abandon the project.

We believe this advice on the project is in the best interests of the future development of our city, and its environment.