

## RESPONSE TO PETITION

**Petition Number:** 516  
**Petition Sponsored by:** Nick McGowan MP  
**Directed to:** Minister for Planning  
**Tabled on:** 30/11/2023

**Petition Grievance:** The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council concerns about the current proposed design of the Northern Package of the North East Link through the Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP). This current design proposes a trench for the North East Link in Watsonia, splitting the community into two. We support the concept of a cover for the Watsonia section of the North East Link.

A proposal for a cover has been put forward by Banyule City Council, which has worked with tunnelling, analytics and modelling experts to identify how the project can improve Banyule and create hectares of open space, facilitate investment, attract services and create jobs. Independent analysis commissioned by Banyule Council estimated \$190 million to \$340 million in potential additional value could be created from opportunities enabled by a covered road, with up to \$20 million in gross value injected into the local economy each year. Through effective community advocacy, 1.9 kilometres of tunnel has already been added through the Macleod portion of the North East Link, a neighbouring suburb of Watsonia. The Watsonia community is seeking a similar opportunity to connect our suburb.

**Petition Action:** The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to change its current design of the Northern Package of North East Link to put a cover on the Watsonia section.

**Reply:**

The community and stakeholders were provided an opportunity to comment on the proposed project design in Watsonia during the public exhibition for the North East Link M80 Ring Road Completion UDLP, which occurred from Monday 9 October to Sunday 29 October 2023.

When the UDLP is submitted to me for consideration, it will be accompanied by a summary of the consultation undertaken, all written comments made during consultation and a response to the issues raised.

The UDLP has not yet been submitted to me, but I will consider all matters raised during consultation as part of my consideration of the UDLP.

Feedback on the proposed design should be directed to the Minister for Transport Infrastructure and the North East Link Program.



**Hon Sonya Kilkenny MP**  
Minister for Planning

17/12/23