

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition Number: 749
Petition Sponsored by: Mr Aiv Puglielli MP
Member for: North Eastern Metropolitan Region
Directed to: Minister for Roads and Road Safety
Tabled on: 8/09/2026

Petition Grievance: The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council to the North East Link Project (NELP). The NELP construction has caused significant native animal habitat removal and fragmented wildlife corridors serving Plenty Gorge, the Simpson Army Barracks to Banyule Flats and Yarra Parklands. Thereby increasing kangaroos and wildlife killed on roads through Macleod, Heidelberg, and Bulleen. Distressed kangaroos have been rescued or euthanised from these suburbs including Yallambie and Viewbank, causing heartache to residents while also presenting traffic hazards.

During the project's Urban Design and Landscape Plan consultation, NELP "received more than 250 submissions from local community groups, businesses, residents as well as local councils and made changes to the project design including: ... A new wildlife crossing under Lower Plenty Road between Borlase Reserve and Banyule Flats". This was signed off by the Minister for Planning in February 2023.

NELP have since reneged on an underground wildlife crossing at Yallambie and propose a rope bridge for climbing species, ignoring kangaroos, wombats and echidnas and the possibility of platypus and turtle travel.

This is a betrayal of NELP's commitment to protect wildlife.

Petition Action: The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council calls on the Government to ensure that the underground Wildlife Crossing at Banyule Creek, Borlase Reserve Lower Plenty Road, Yallambie is installed as previously promised to the community in the North East Link Tunnels Urban Design and Landscape Plan and publicly release the Kangaroo Management Plan for the project interface with Simpson Barracks and for the M80 interchange.

Reply:

I thank the Member for the North Eastern Metropolitan Region and his constituents for raising this matter.

The North East Link Project recognises the importance of protecting local wildlife and their habitats, and this has been a key consideration in the planning and delivery of the project. To achieve this, the project is required to meet strict Environmental Performance Requirements and is committed to avoiding and minimising impacts on both flora and fauna, in line with the *Wildlife Act 1975* (Vic).

A range of environmental management controls are also implemented during construction to protect wildlife. These measures include ecological monitoring, fauna rescue and relocation where required, and species-specific management plans, including a Kangaroo Management Plan developed in consultation with relevant authorities and specialists to manage potential impacts on kangaroos during construction.

The North East Link Tunnels Urban Design and Landscape Plan (UDLP) was approved in 2023. Pending further ecological advice, the UDLP proposed a wildlife crossing that made use of two existing drainage culverts under Lower Plenty Road. The crossing was not intended to facilitate movement of larger ground-

dwelling species such as kangaroos, wombats and echidnas, as encouraging these species towards Lower Plenty Road could increase the risk to wildlife, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

The project uses existing road corridors and has not disrupted existing wildlife habitat corridors. Accordingly, the project is not expected to change established wildlife movement patterns in these areas. The waterways in the area are highly modified and provide limited suitable habitat for aquatic species such as platypus and turtles, making their use of the area unlikely.

As part of the design process, the project has continued to work with key stakeholders and technical experts to refine all elements of the design. During this process, the project received advice from ecologists on factors such as the length of the underground crossing, access to natural light and the types of species, and movement patterns likely in the area. Taking these factors into account, ecological advice indicated that the existing drainage culvert would not be suitable as a wildlife crossing, and that an overpass would provide a more suitable outcome for the species most likely to use this connection.

Based on this advice, the underpass approach was revised to an overpass across Lower Plenty Road. This change provides a connection for possums and other climbing species between the Banyule Creek corridor and the re-vegetated Borlase Reserve area. The rope bridge is based on ecological advice and is designed to integrate safely within the existing road environment.



The Hon. Paul Hamer MP
Minister for Roads and Road Safety

5 / 10 / 2026