

Project Summary - Keane Road Strategic Link - Skeet Road to Anstey Road

Public Environmental Review (PER) and EPBC Assessment

Project Overview (December 2013)

Keane Road is located approximately 20 km south-east of Perth and approximately 7 km northwest of the Armadale Regional Town Centre in the rapidly growing Harrisdale - Forrestdale localities. The Keane Road dedicated road reserve under the care and control of the City of Armadale comprises of two constructed sections separated by a central section. The central stage, or Keane Road Strategic Link, has not yet been constructed as a sealed road and is undergoing formal environmental impact assessments prior to commencement of any road construction works. The Keane Road Strategic Link comprises the construction of the 1.5 km central section of road as a single carriageway with dual use pathway on one side.

Keane Road is identified as an important linking road in the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) Southern River / Forrestdale / Brookdale / Wungong District Structure Plan (2001) and the City of Armadale's District Zoning Scheme (Town Planning Scheme No.4, 2005). The unconstructed central portion of the existing Keane Road dedicated road reserve currently restricts community accessibility between facilities located on the constructed portions of Keane Road. Facilities being provided west of Skeet Road include the Harrisdale Town Centre, District Open Space and the Harrisdale / Forrestdale High School. The uncompleted district road also restricts accessibility to facilities being located to the east of Anstey Road, including the Forrestdale Business Park (West), Armadale Regional Sporting Facility and the Armadale Strategic Regional Town Centre. Refer to the Location Plan below (an Aerial Photo Location Plan is also located on the City's web-site (at www.armadale.wa.gov.au)).

Background

In 2000, the State government identified the area surrounding the unmade section of Keane Road in its Bush Forever policy (Site No.342). Bush Forever policy recommends that as far as practicable, the construction of planned district road infrastructure should be undertaken in a manner that minimises impacts on the environment.

In 2001, the State government subsequently released the District Structure Plan for the urbanisation of what are now the Harrisdale, Piara Waters and Forrestdale urban localities of the City of Armadale. The District plan highlights the role of Keane Road in the urban design, land use and transportation structure of the district. The District Structure Plan shapes and determines the access members of these communities will ultimately have to district facilities upon completion of the new urban developments. New residential areas and urban developments are being implemented in accordance with the approved District Structure Plan and have been progressed in stages since 2006. The City is accordingly seeking approvals to construct the last unmade section of Keane Road under both State and Commonwealth government environmental legislation in order to complete the planned district structure and access network.

The City recognises that the location of Keane Road is an area which is environmentally sensitive and therefore the completion of the State government's allocated district road network and implementation of the District Structure Plan requires careful Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The City has managed the design process for the Keane Road Strategic Link to be responsive to the findings and recommendations of comprehensive environmental studies the City has undertaken since 2008 and

which are the subject of the applications for formal environmental approval by the appropriate government authorities.

The Keane Road Strategic Link currently has available the existing 20 metre wide dedicated Crown road reserve that was previously set aside by the Western Australian government for the purpose of the district road. However, in addition to supporting cleared areas and off road vehicle trails, the previously allocated district road footprint was found to negatively impact on Threatened Ecological Community (TEC) vegetation and other fully vegetated and wetland areas. The City therefore has proposed that a modified alignment that preserves the TEC vegetation and minimizes clearing and related impacts would be preferable to the existing dedicated road reserve.

In addition to linking neighboring residential areas presently separated by the unsealed section of existing road reserve, the modified road alignment being proposed by the City is intended to accommodate future infrastructure services by relevant government agencies, such as water, reticulated sewerage, communications and public transport bus services. The City considers that service agencies can reduce the overall cumulative impacts on the environment if all service agencies utilize the realigned road reserve service corridor which maximizes the use of existing cleared areas and enables the co-location of such services with the constructed road.

Keane Road Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The completion of construction of Keane Road is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment as the “Keane Road Strategic Link”. The City of Armadale has undertaken environmental studies to ensure that the project design specifications proposed implement the State government’s Bush Forever regional bushland policy, which acknowledges district and local infrastructure requirements where environmental impacts are proposed to be managed and where impacts of road and related service infrastructure construction are minimised. The completion of Keane Road will ensure that the existing and planned new urban residential communities in Harrisdale, Piara Waters and Forrestdale have appropriate ease of access to the schools, parks, shopping and employment centre facilities that are allocated and being implemented under the approved District Structure Plan and Town Planning Scheme.

These facilities include the Harrisdale / Forrestdale High School fronting Keane Road on the corner of Skeet Road which the State government has announced will open in January 2017. It also includes the Harrisdale Town Centre fronting Keane Road, which is expected to have the first stage shopping complex opening in mid-2015. To the west of Anstey Road, the Forrestdale Business Park (West) (FBP) being implemented by the State government’s Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority includes a Service Commercial zone fronting onto Keane Road. The FBP will be developed for showrooms, trade and professional services, wholesaling and similar land use types, all of which will benefit from the passing traffic exposure on the Keane Road. The first commercial establishment in FBP is likely to be the Hitachi Servicing facility due to open in mid-2015 on a site located to the north of Keane Road. Further stages of development in the FBP are likely to rapidly follow.

The City of Armadale’s project EIA is being undertaken via an application to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (the EP Act). The City has prepared a comprehensive environmental impact assessment at the Public Environmental Review (PER) level of assessment (Assessment No. 1701). As part of its assessment the City also referred the proposal to the Commonwealth government’s Department of Environment (DoE) for consideration of matters of National Environmental Significance listed under the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) (DoE was formerly the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities). The City has prepared Preliminary

Documentation to the requirements of the Commonwealth on EPBC matters that may be relevant to the road works.

Through a range of measures that include refining the road alignment to avoid vegetated areas and utilising previously cleared areas as much as possible, the City of Armadale has been able to substantially reduce the amount of vegetation clearing required for road construction in comparison to conventional construction of the existing dedicated road reserve land already provided for that purpose. Under the City's proposal, construction of the remaining unmade portion of Keane Road will require the clearing of 1.65 ha of native vegetation. The total area of native vegetation that will be required to be cleared for road construction represents less than 1% of the adjacent bushland area in Bush Forever Site No.342.

Subject to environmental assessments and approval of the proposal under the Western Australian EP Act and the Commonwealth EPBC Act, the respective Ministers for the Environment will determine appropriate guidelines and conditions that should be applied and implemented as part of the road's construction to implement the urban design structure in the District Structure Plan.

Environmental Studies

The City has undertaken a series of specialist environmental assessment studies for the Commonwealth and State Keane Road EIA processes which are aimed at ensuring that the completion of the local and district road network is undertaken in an environmentally responsible manner.

The City of Armadale has taken the environmental specialist studies into account in revising the existing road reserve alignment and in the road design and construction specifications. In accordance with its principles of environmental and biodiversity management the City is also proposing to implement "Environmental Offset" benefits as part of the project to compensate for the 1.65 ha of native vegetation required to be cleared to allow for construction of the incomplete Strategic Link section of Keane Road.

"Environmental Offset" benefits have been discussed with the State land manager and planning agencies and are proposed to include improvements to the protection and management of the adjacent bushland area in the Jandakot Regional Park (currently subject to chronic long term degradation caused by off road vehicles and rubbish dumping activities) and reinstatement of degraded areas. It also includes the transfer of designated City of Armadale land into the conservation estate. The proposed lands to be transferred into the conservation estate presently support native vegetation and fauna habitats, however, are currently dedicated and planned for other local recreational and infrastructure purposes. Due recognition of their conservation significance and future conservation management as part of the City's offset commitments will achieve an overall net environmental benefit in the Forrestdale location of the Keane Road works. The offsets involve the City relinquishing usage and development rights for the recreational and infrastructure purposes originally intended and currently designated in respect to these lands. These offsets demonstrate the City's real commitment to the environment while also respecting both the State government intentions for the district and the needs of the incoming residential communities for equity of access to the new schools, shops and recreation facilities being put in place by urban development and revitalisation.

The Keane Road district road network linkages planned under the approved District Structure and Zoning Plans are intended to achieve net socioeconomic benefits related to improved community access to local facilities and reduced travel time and costs. In addition, completing the partially made road will underpin and support local economic development and the employment opportunities provided in commercial enterprises relying on appropriate levels of accessibility and the district traffic

movements planned between Harrisdale and Forrestdale. The reallocation of offset landholdings and habitats into the conservation estate for appropriately legislated management by the government agency with the appropriate skills and experience in managing sensitive conservation lands, would ensure the protection and management of the biodiversity the offset land supports for the long term. The Keane Road project and the offset package proposed by the City therefore has potential for net environmental benefits and net socioeconomic benefits to the district community.

The following studies have been completed and will be made fully available for public comment and submissions (EPBC Documentation already released in March 2013 marked thus*):

- Flora and Vegetation*
- Fauna*
- Targeted survey for Short Tongued Native Bee*
- Targeted Survey for Graceful Sun Moth*
- EPBC Listed Fauna Habitat Assessment*
- Review of Wildlife and Underpasses*
- Cultural Heritage Study
- Traffic Study
- Noise Study
- Dieback Assessment*
- Scoping Document*
- Surface Water and Wetland Assessment*
- Review of Previous Hydrology and Hydrogeology Studies*
- Hydrology Study
- Acid Sulphate Soils Assessment*
- Environmental Offsets*

Environmental Management

Environmental Management Plans / Measures in the State PER released by the EPA for public comment include:

- Vegetation, Weeds and Rehabilitation
- Dieback
- Fauna
- Fire
- Acid Sulphate Soils
- Surface Water
- Cultural Heritage
- Noise
- Dust
- Spills
- Waste.

Social Impact Assessment

Social impact assessment is also included in the State PER. Social impacts to be managed include:

- Noise
- Visual amenity
- Dust
- Safety
- Traffic and Transportation
- Cultural Heritage
- Land use
- Community access to Activity Centres and services.

Background to EPBC Act Controlled Action Assessment – Commonwealth Approvals

The Commonwealth advertised the City's project referral documentation on the Environment Department's website for an initial 10 day period in August 2009, providing an opportunity for the public to have input into the first of the Commonwealth's EIA process decision points which was the Department's determination of formal assessment requirements for the proposed road works as a "Controlled Action" under the EPBC Act. After undertaking additional surveys requested by the Commonwealth, the City's EPBC Referral Documentation was available for formal public comment via written submissions in accordance with the requirements of the EPBC Act between 25 March 2013 and 26 April 2013. The Commonwealth is formally assessing the road works as a "Controlled Action" at the "Preliminary Documentation" (PD) level of assessment.

The City and the Enviroworks consultant team are currently working through the issues relevant to the EPBC Act raised by public submissions. A report responding to EPBC issues is expected to be completed by May 2014. The City will advise the Department of Environment if any matters require further information and assessment and/or of any changes that are recommended to be made to the advertised project proposal to protect matters listed under the EPBC Act. Notice of the City's responses and a summary of the public submissions will subsequently be published on the City's website. Following the Commonwealth receiving the City's summary of public submissions and its responses and recommendations, the result of the Commonwealth's environmental impact assessment under the EPBC Act is anticipated to be published within 40 days.

Background to EP Act Public Environmental Review – State Approvals

Following the City's referral of the proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the EPA determined in October 2007, that the road works to complete the last stage of Keane Road would require formal EIA assessment under State legislation. The EPA set the road works to construct the linking section of Keane Road at the Public Environmental Review (PER) level of assessment with a minimum 8 week public review and submissions period. The City's Environmental Scoping Report for the PER was approved by the EPA in May 2009, specifying the studies the City was required to undertake and include in the PER documentation to be subsequently published.

The City submitted drafts of the PER to the Office of the EPA (OEPA) in May 2010, September 2012 and in November 2013 after undertaking further specialist environmental consultancy studies based on feedback provided by OEPA at each of these reviews. OEPA approved release of the PER documents and commencement of the minimum 8 week public comment period in December 2013. The public comment period will commence on 9 December 2013 and conclude on 3 February 2014. Details of the PER documents for public review and the public submissions period have been published in the Western Australian newspaper, with further details provided on the City's website: www.armadale.wa.gov.au

Consultation and Formal Public Comment Periods

The consultation framework for the project has included the following activities (Note: as each public consultation milestone becomes available details of the anticipated State and Commonwealth assessment and consultation timelines will be posted on the City of Armadale’s website):

Activity	Timeframes
An EIA project commencement mail - out to local residents, stakeholder and interest groups	November 2008
Project Summary & EIA Process update information placed on the Armadale website	Ongoing (since November 2008)
Stakeholder meetings	as above
Updates of Website	as above
Formal EPBC Controlled Action Public Comment Period (Commonwealth Environmental Approvals)	Public comment period on the EPBC Referral Documentation commenced 25 March 2013 and concluded on 26 April 2013 (public EPBC submissions are currently being reviewed). A report outlining any additional information requirements or recommended changes to the advertised project documents will submitted to the Commonwealth and published on the City’s website upon completion of the City’s submissions assessment, which is anticipated for completion by May 2014.
Formal PER Public Comment Period (State Environmental Approvals)	The public comment period will commence on 9 December 2013 and conclude on 3 February 2014.

How to get Involved

- Go to www.armadale.wa.gov.au for project summary updates and details of advertised PER documentation and opportunity for public submissions
- Write a submission during the public review or appeals periods
- Contact the City of Armadale on info@armadale.wa.gov.au
- Join your local progress association, land care or a reserve ‘friends’ group

For further information on the EIA processes or if you have a particular query please contact one of the people listed below:

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