



NORTH EAST LINK

Client: VIDA Roads (part of the Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority, formerly NELP)

Location: VIC, Australia

Project value: \$26 billion

Contract form: Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Alliance

Project lifecycle stage: Strategise, Development, Procurement and Delivery

Duration: 2017 – ongoing

At a glance: North East Link is Victoria's largest ever road project. It is a mixture of an availability-based PPP under the Partnerships Victoria framework and a range of collaborative contracts with a total budget in excess of \$ 26 billion. The project:

- Completes Melbourne's orbital road network by connecting the Eastern Freeway to the M80 Ring Road, featuring twin tunnels and new interchanges at key arterial roads.
- Includes major upgrades to the Eastern Freeway, introducing express lanes and collector-distributor roads to ease current bottlenecks and accommodate future traffic demand.
- Includes enhancements to the M80 Ring Road, adding capacity and delivering a free-flow interchange with North East Link and the Greensborough Bypass.

As part of the works, North East Link, the Eastern Freeway, and the M80 Ring Road will become fully integrated smart motorways, equipped with ramp metering, lane-use management, and vehicle detection systems to improve safety and efficiency.

Objectives

The Victorian Government set out to deliver the missing link between the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road to reduce congestion and freight traffic on local roads. The State required specialist advisory support across the full project lifecycle, from early concept development through to delivery and completion.

Our services

SmedTech was engaged by NELP at the project's inception in January 2017 and has provided ongoing technical support and strategic direction throughout the project's lifecycle. Over the years, we have provided a range of services which showcase the breadth and depth of our experience and expertise in providing leadership and subject matter advice in the development of major infrastructure projects. Our services include:

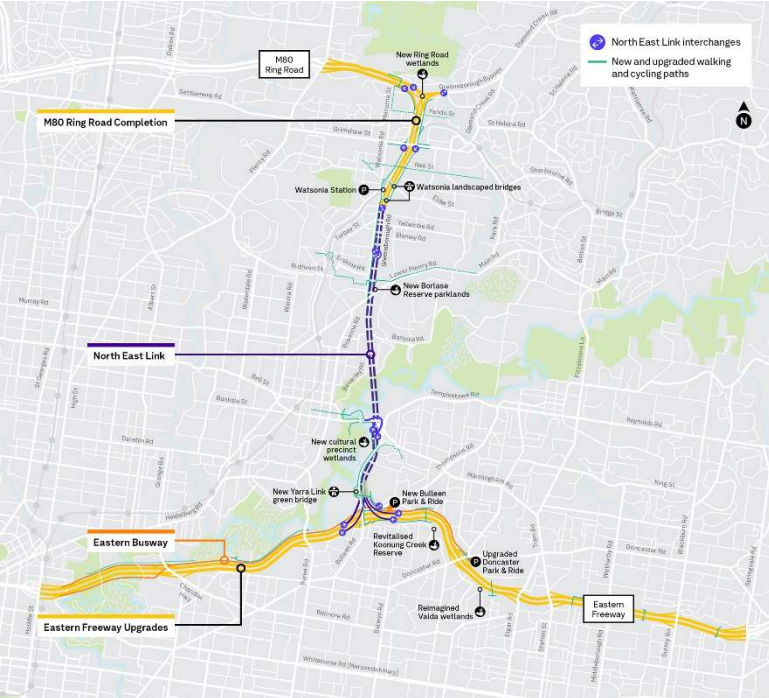
Business Case:

SmedTech was embedded within the NELP project team on the development of the Business Case, providing leadership in the development of the technical solution, assessment and the resulting benefits and costs appraisals. We:

- Defined project problems and responses as part of the needs assessment.
- Developed the project objectives and guiding principles, and guided options development and assessment.
- Refined the preferred solution and oversaw demand forecast development.
- Established the project's benefits profile.
- Reviewed all technical elements and contributed to drafting several sections of the final Business Case.

Tolling Strategy:

- SmedTech led the development of tolling policies and principles to inform the Business Case.
- We worked with both NELP and DTF to develop a range of pricing structures for the State's consideration, balancing toll revenue, user value and traffic demand management outcomes.
- We supported DTF and NELP in the establishment of Victoria's first state-owned toll collection company (STC) for the collection of tolls on the North East Link, which involved advice across a range of tolling, technical and commercial matters.



Project Solution:

- SmedTech played key role in the development of the project solution and Reference Design.
- We acted as gatekeeper of project scope to ensure solution alignment with Business Case outcomes.
- We served as subject matter experts on key elements for aspects of the development of the solution.
- SmedTech defined the functional configuration of the design (lane arrangements, interchange locations and functionality and integration with the surrounding road network).
- We led the operational assessment using a corridor-wide microsimulation model.

Project Approvals:

- We were heavily involved in the development of the project approvals documentation, acting as the key technical reference point to ensure that the approvals documentation reflected the project solution.
- We produced the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment (TTIA) for the North East Link EES, including presentation and cross-examination through the public panel hearing process.
- We contributed significantly to the project's community engagement process, presenting at town hall meetings and supporting multiple information sessions to ensure community feedback and concerns were clearly understood and addressed.

Delivery Strategy:

- SmedTech assisted the NELP project team to develop the corridor-wide Delivery Strategy.
- We defined project packaging and responsibilities across the asset lifecycle, as well as broad risk allocation and mechanisms to ensure integration across the corridor.
- We structured multiple packages with varying responsibilities for design, delivery and operations.

- SmedTech supported the testing of the strategy with industry during development to confirm appropriate alignment with market's appetite.
- We developed package integration frameworks and mechanisms that aligned with the commercial risk allocation.

Project requirements documentation:

- SmedTech was responsible for developing the project requirements documentation for each delivery package.
- We ensured each package's documentation was fit-for-purpose, clearly articulated requirements to meet project objectives, and was consistent with statutory obligations, industry standards and community expectations.
- We established a robust, comprehensive methodology to define the principles underpinning package requirements, tailored to the contract model.
- SmedTech collaborated with technical, communications, environment and commercial teams, as well as external stakeholders to develop clear, implementable requirements.
- We implemented governance processes for the review, management, and endorsement of requirements documentation.

Project Procurement:

- SmedTech worked within the NELP team to bring the first package to market as a PPP, leading the technical components of procurement.
- We were heavily involved in the development of the availability abatement and KPI mechanisms of the payment structure.
- We structured the technical aspects of the tender process and developed tender documentation.
- SmedTech engaged with tenderers via interactive workshops and managed Q&A responses.
- We managed project requirements documents through addendum releases.
- We participated in tender assessment and evaluation.
- We led negotiations on selected technical elements and produced final documentation for contract award.

Our impact

The SmedTech team ensured all deliverables were of the highest quality and consistently met milestone deadlines, leading to our reappointment twice in varying roles supporting the NELP team.

We played a pivotal role in shaping the North East Link project, from leading the creation of the project solution, supporting design refinement, preparing contract documentation, to working closely with NELP to progress the project from initial concept through to construction.