

The Punt Road Public Acquisition Overlay Advisory Committee conducted public hearings over the two week period concluding Friday 19 February 2016.

The Advisory Committee has been established to review the future of the Public Acquisition Overlay (overlay) affecting properties within the City of Stonnington on the east side of Punt Road along the 2.6 kilometres between Alexandra Avenue, South Yarra and Union Street, Windsor by seeking input from affected landowners, stakeholders and agencies and to recommend to the Minister for Planning whether to retain, modify or remove the overlay.

One group which made submissions to the hearings were the ***Punt Road Action Group***. The Action Group's position is that they oppose widening of Punt Rd and propose the removal of the Public Acquisition Overlay. Their position is based on their view that: The widening would not necessarily solve the Hoddle St gridlock, and that widening Punt Rd would attract 70-140% more traffic. The Group believe this can be supported by Vic Roads research. The Action Group believe increased traffic on Punt Rd will have a flow on affect to feeder roads which are also reported by the group to be at capacity, particularly during peak hours. The Group argue that this will result in decreased accessibility and movement for local residents.

The Action Group also believe increased traffic will negatively the area's amenity including neighbourhood safety, green areas and increased vehicular emissions in the green park precinct and school areas.

As a result of increased traffic congestion, reduced amenity, there will be a flow on detrimental impact on the local economy, particularly for retailers, cafes and businesses.

The Punt Road Action Group report that at the hearing all presenters opposed the widening of Punt Rd other than Public Transport

Victorian and Vic Roads.

Public Transport Victoria argued that the widening of Punt Rd could be used to create a dedicated bus lane for the 246 service, and widen the footpath for walking commuters. The media published last year, Vic Roads had proposed 7 options for Punt Rd traffic congestion. It was noted that none of the options put forward by Vic Roads included permanent clearways or a tunnel, although Daniel Andrews announced early in 2016 that the government would proceed with permanent clearways. The timeline for commencement is July this year, but prior to commencement there is the preparation of dedicated car parking areas and agreements with Stonnington council to determine the ongoing operation.

The Advisory Committee is currently reviewing all the information presented in February and are required to provide a recommendation to the Minister for Planning, Richard Wynne within three months of the February hearing. The recommendation is not required to be made public, and it is likely that any indication of the outcome is likely to come via the Government announcement.

Prepared by Gayle Gledhill