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NORTH EAST LINK

The North-East Link (NEL) is Victoria's largest ever road project. NEL is a mixture of an availability-based PPP under the Partnerships Victoria framework and a range of collaborative contracts with a total budget of in excess of \$15 billion.

Project Scope

The North East Link project is a freeway standard connection between the Eastern Freeway and the M80 Ring Road. The project involves:

- A six-lane freeway connection between the Eastern freeway and M80 Ring Road, with interchanges to the existing road network;
- Upgrade of the Eastern Freeway to remove bottlenecks and improve capacity;
- Dedicated busway with segregated lanes from the Doncaster Park and Ride to the city.

The Project is to be procured across a number of separate works packages which range from a PPP to collaborative contract models, across both greenfield and brownfield assets and include tolling services.

Services:

SmedTech has been engaged as a strategic technical advisor to the North East Link project since its inception in 2017.

Over this time we have provided a range of services which showcase the breadth and depth of our experience and expertise in providing both leadership and subject matter advice in the development of road projects, as described in the following sections.

Business Case

SmedTech worked with 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 appraisal.

This included definition of the problems and responses as part of the needs assessment, development of the project objectives, options development and assessment, refinement of the preferred solution, oversight of demand forecast development and establishing the benefits profile. The SmedTech team reviewed all technical elements and drafted several sections of the final business case.

Tolling Strategy

SmedTech was instrumental in the development of tolling policies and principles to inform the business case and is working closely with NELP to develop a range of pricing structures for consideration by the State, requiring consideration and balancing of toll revenue, user value and traffic demand management outcomes.

SmedTech also supported DTF and NELP in the establishment of Victoria's first state-owned toll collection company (STC), to collect tolls on North East Link. This included providing advice across a range of tolling, technical and commercial matters.



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Project Solution

SmedTech was heavily involved in the development of the project solution and Reference Design. SmedTech acted as both the gatekeeper of the project scope, to ensure that the solution reflected the business case outcomes, and the subject matter experts for aspects of the development of the solution. This included responsibility for the functional configuration of the project design, including lane arrangements, interchange locations and functionality, and integration with the surrounding road network. As part of the solution development SmedTech led the operational assessment of the project, undertaken through a corridor wide microsimulation model.

Project Approvals

SmedTech was 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. SmedTech 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.

Delivery Strategy

SmedTech worked with the NELP project team to develop the Delivery Strategy, which identifies how the project will be delivered across the corridor, including the project packaging, responsibilities across the asset lifecycle, the broad risk allocation and the primary mechanisms for ensuring integration across the corridor. The strategy, which includes a number of separate packages with varying responsibility for design, delivery and operations was tested with the industry throughout its development to ensure an appropriate alignment with the market's appetite.

Project requirements documentation

SmedTech is responsible for the development of the project requirements documentation for each of the project packages. This involves ensuring that the documentation for each package, are fit for purpose and appropriately articulate the requirements to ensure that the project meets its overall objectives; and are delivered in a manner consistent with statutory requirements and community expectations. As part of this SmedTech established a robust and comprehensive process for development of the principles on which the requirements for each package are based, considering its delivery methodology. From this basis we worked with each of the technical, communications, environment and commercial teams, as well as external stakeholders, to develop the project requirements, including the implementation of governance processes for the review, management and endorsement of the documentation.

Project Procurement

SmedTech worked as part of the NELP project team to bring the first package works to the market as a PPP. SmedTech led the technical elements of this procurement, including:

- structuring of the technical aspects of the tender process and development of tender documentation;
- engagement with tenderers through interactive workshops and responding to Q&A's;
- management of the project requirements documents through addendums and release of new versions;
- participating in assessment and evaluation of tenders;
- leading the negotiation phase for some of the technical elements and producing the final documentation for contract award.

SmedTech is currently working with the NELP project team to scope and develop tender documentation for the remaining packages.