



A special light spill barrier has been developed for the environmentally sensitive reserve.

The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve

Peninsula Link is one of the largest road projects to be undertaken on the Mornington Peninsula. Construction began in February 2010 and is due for completion in early 2013.

The Southern Way consortium is financing, designing, building, maintaining and operating the freeway. Southern Way, and its construction contractor Abigroup, are making every effort with environmental management for the project.



Artist's impression of Peninsula Link.



Artist's overview of The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve.

About the reserve

The Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve (The Pines), surrounded by the developing suburb of Frankston, is a biosite of state significance that supports a variety of native flora and fauna species.

As well as its ecological and conservation significance, The Pines provides a unique recreational and educational experience for the local community and visitors to the area.

The Pines was originally established in 1989 as an area of 108 hectares. In 2006, it was expanded to 220 hectares to include the existing Pines Flora and Fauna Reserve (managed by Parks Victoria); former Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs land; the freeway road reservation and the former Frankston landfill site.

The Pines and Peninsula Link

An alignment and land for the Frankston Bypass (now referred to as Peninsula Link) was reserved in the 1960s. A planning study known as an Environment Effects Statement (EES) was undertaken between 2007 and 2009 to assess where the freeway would go and what effect it would have on the surrounding area.

This included extensive flora and fauna studies in The Pines. Subsequently the freeway was moved further to the east to avoid the most environmentally sensitive bush areas as a result of these studies.

Parks Victoria has prepared a Master Plan for The Pines to help guide its future management. Key elements include directions to protect and enhance biodiversity values, an increase in the size of the reserve and provision for visitor access to the new eastern sector of the reserve.

Abigroup has sought to ensure the design of the new freeway has incorporated opportunities to reduce the footprint of the road.

A range of onsite management measures will be implemented to enhance ongoing habitat connectivity and longevity of The Pines' conservation values while minimising the project's overall impact on the reserve.

National significance

The Pines is considered to be an important ecological and biological site due to the diversity of species and vegetation communities it contains.

One flora species of national significance, River Swamp Wallaby Grass, has been identified growing around the Tamarisk Creek wetland. The project will impact approximately 0.04 hectares of this grassland. Seeds of this plant will be collected from existing plants prior to construction.

These seeds will be used for future revegetation of this grass species. The Tamarisk Creek wetland area also supports aquatic habitat for the fish species, Dwarf Galaxias and is a potential habitat for the Swamp Skink.

The Pines also potentially supports the nationally protected Southern Brown Bandicoot, although these are thought to be in very low numbers following an extensive monitoring program implemented as part of the Peninsula Link project.

A site-specific bandicoot management plan supporting the state's overarching long-term plan for the protection of this species, has been prepared for vegetation clearing and construction works. Seven categories of native vegetation areas of high ecological value are present in the reserve.

As noted previously, the original Peninsula Link alignment was altered in order to reduce impacts and ensure the protection of these areas of higher quality vegetation.

Protection of flora and fauna

The design of the alignment has incorporated a range of measures to reduce impacts on vegetation and fauna habitats. Tamarisk Creek has been channelised in the past, which has reduced surface water flows. The design of the alignment over the creek will allow for the passage of fish during a range of water flows.

Two 30-metre-wide fauna underpasses and several smaller fauna crossings have been designed and will be constructed to allow animals to continue to move between the areas on either side of the roadway.



Tamarisk Creek wetland area.

In addition to the specific management of protected species, the following measures will be undertaken to protect general flora and fauna species in the reserve:

- ▶ salvage and translocation of threatened flora species to areas with the same conditions
- ▶ use of retaining walls in critical areas to reduce the construction footprint
- ▶ maintenance of drainage and water flows in retained vegetation areas
- ▶ erection of 'no go' fencing for protected areas of vegetation
- ▶ erection of fauna exclusion fencing during construction
- ▶ creation of temporary habitat connections during construction
- ▶ use of noise and light walls to limit the amount of light spilling into the reserve at night when native nocturnal animals are most active.

Track closures

Some sections of tracks along the freeway alignment are now closed to the public to enable construction to proceed. Please refer to project signage and Parks Victoria Information Boards at Excelsior Drive and Ballarto Road for details.



Artist's impression of the fauna underpass.



Contact Details



If you require the assistance of an interpreter please phone (03) 9280 0753

Phone 1300 453 035
Email contact@peninsulalink.com.au
Web www.peninsulalink.com.au

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