

# Environmental concerns hamper 'missing link' plan

FEAR about the impact on parkland could delay work on the \$6 billion "missing link" freeway between Greensborough and Bulleen even further.

Banyule Council wants to boost environmental safeguards for the Banyule Flats and Warringal Parklands.

The delay so far to the freeway project has been due to the area's complex terrain, the need for compulsory acquisition of properties and uncertainty over federal funding.

The nine-kilometre road – from the Metropolitan Ring Road in Greensborough to the Eastern Freeway in Bulleen – is likely to have tunnels running half the length, underneath sensitive areas.

Engineering consultant GHD's report says tunnels would not affect local amenity or have a visual impact. But it reveals a tunnel would make connections to the Eastern Freeway more difficult and be sig-

nificantly more expensive than an above-ground road.

The council and conservation group Friends of Banyule say the freeway would damage the environment because of entry and exit points, and ventilation stacks.

"Council needs as a matter of urgency to investigate all options to protect this area for future generations," councillor Jenny Mulholland said at last week's meeting.

Mayor Tom Melican said any heritage listing would need to be approved by the State Government.

"I'll support whatever it takes to protect that area, but think it's unlikely given the Government's current proposal for a tunnel."

Ivanhoe MLA Craig Langdon is backing the council's push for environmental protection.

"I suggest they go for strong environmental protection as part of the heritage listing," he said.

– Will Wright