



**EastLink**  
Time better spent.

**EastLink Operations Centre**  
2 Hillcrest Avenue  
Ringwood VIC 3134 Australia

PO Box 804  
Ringwood VIC 3134

T 03 9955 1700  
F 03 9955 1701

[EastLink.com.au](http://EastLink.com.au)

Coroner Audrey Jamieson  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank VIC 3006

29 March 2017

Dear Coroner Jamieson

**CONNECTEAST GROUP RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATION ARISING FROM THE FINDING WITHOUT INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF DARREN MARK GAVIN WATTS – CASE NUMBER 026016**

We refer to your finding without inquest into the death of Darren Mark Gavin Watts, dated 1 February 2017. In that finding, you made the following recommendation to ConnectEast Group pursuant to section 72(2) of the *Coroners Act* (2008):

*"With the aim of preventing injuries and like deaths, I **recommend** that the ConnectEast Group, conduct a risk assessment of the EastLink Trail's footbridge which crosses the Dandenong Creek and review any opportunities for safety improvements, such as, but not limited to, warning signs regarding speed, speed bumps, and additional fencing".*

In your finding, you acknowledged that the ConnectEast Group is the operator of the EastLink motorway and has responsibility for the maintenance and management of the EastLink Trail. By way of background, ConnectEast operates and maintains the EastLink tollway (EastLink) under a Concession Deed signed with the State of Victoria to design, finance, build, own and operate the EastLink tollway until 2043. The subject trail of this finding is considered to be a "Maintained Off-Freeway Facility" as defined under that Concession Deed.

Under the Concession Deed, ConnectEast is required to maintain and repair each of the Maintained Off-Freeway Facilities so that these facilities remain at all relevant times fit for their intended purpose, as well as being maintained and repaired in accordance with Operation and Maintenance Best Practices, as defined under the Concession Deed.

ConnectEast has closely considered your recommendation in relation to Mr Watts' death and advises that it accepts and will implement your recommendation to undertake a risk assessment to review any opportunities for safety improvements. ConnectEast has already commissioned that risk assessment and expects a report to be provided to us in the near future. ConnectEast has also advised VicRoads, as the State's representative under the Concession Deed, of your recommendation and our acceptance and implementation of your recommendation.

As the investigation did not become a public inquest, ConnectEast wishes to take this opportunity to convey its condolences to Mr Watts' family for their loss.

Should you have any further queries, please contact Murray Keen, Risk and Safety Manager by email  
[enquiries@connecteast.com.au](mailto:enquiries@connecteast.com.au).

Yours sincerely



Tamira Herbst  
General Counsel & Company Secretary  
**ConnectEast Pty Ltd**  
ABN 99 101 213 263