



Western Highway Report

Victorian Ombudsman



Easy English

Hard words



This book has some hard words.

The first time we write a hard word

- the word is in **blue**

- we write what the hard word means.

You can get help with this book



You can get someone to help you

- read this book

- know what this book is about

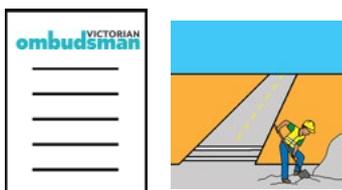
- find more information.



About this book

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This book is written by the Victorian Ombudsman.



This book is about an **investigation** into the Western Highway project in Victoria.

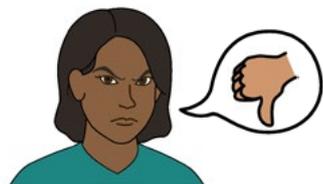


Investigation means we find out what happened.

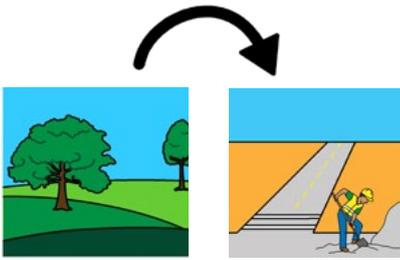
Why we investigated



We wanted to know why people made **complaints** to us about the Western Highway project.

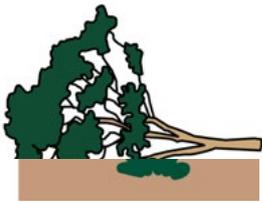


Complaints means people say they are **not** happy about something.

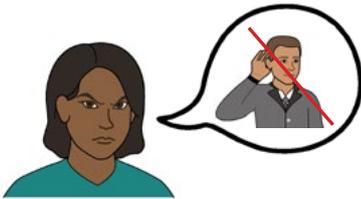


People were **not** happy because

- the government wanted to make a wider highway on the lands of the Aboriginal group called Djab Wurrung



- the wide highway would damage important places
 - for example, they said the area had **birthing trees**

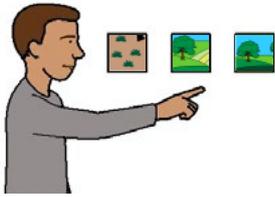


- they said the government did **not** listen to people who wanted to protect the area.



Birthing trees are special places where Aboriginal women gave birth.

What we found

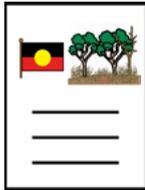


We found that the government

- tried to find different areas to build the highway



- talked with the main Aboriginal group called Martang



- made a plan to protect Aboriginal areas.



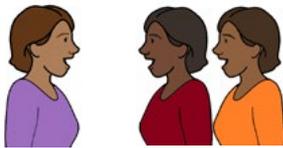
The Martang group said the plan would keep important areas safe.



In 2017 the government was told about possible birthing trees in the area.



The government asked a group called Aboriginal Victoria to check if they were important trees.



Aboriginal Victoria checked with women from Martang and Eastern Maar Aboriginal groups and said it was OK to build the highway.



Later, Eastern Maar Aboriginal group and other Aboriginal people asked for changes to the highway plans to protect the area.



The government agreed to save 16 out of 22 important trees including 2 possible birthing trees.



Eastern Maar Aboriginal group was happy with the changes. Other Aboriginal people were **not** happy. They thought the area would be too damaged.

What we think



We think

- the government talked to the main Aboriginal groups and made changes that were fair



- the law could change to make sure more Aboriginal groups are heard in future



- governments should protect areas that are important to Aboriginal people.

More information



For more information contact the Victorian Ombudsman.



For Melbourne call 9613 6222.

For regional areas call 1800 806 314.



Website www.ombudsman.vic.gov.au

If you need help to speak or listen

Contact the Victorian Ombudsman through the National Relay Service or NRS.



Call the NRS help desk
1800 555 660

Go to the NRS website

communications.gov.au/accesshub/nrs

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Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre wrote the Easy English version in August, 2020.

To contact Scope call 1300 472 673 or visit www.scopeaust.org.au

To see the original contact the Victorian Ombudsman.

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