



# **Transport Infrastructure for the Western Metropolitan Region of Melbourne**

**SUBMISSION TO  
INFRASTRUCTURE AUSTRALIA**

**October 2008**

## Executive Summary

The Western Transport Alliance (WeTAI) welcomes the opportunity to respond to Infrastructure Australia's call for input to assist in ensuring that infrastructure spending decisions can maximise their effectiveness in delivering on economic, social and environmental objectives. WeTAI views this initiative as an important opportunity for the future planning and development of transport infrastructure in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne, which will have broader positive outcomes for the south east of Australia.

The tremendous economic and population growth in the Western Metropolitan Region which is outstripping current State Government estimates combined with the major growth in freight activity through the Port of Melbourne and the western region will place huge demands on all forms of transport systems serving the Western Metropolitan Region and the total Metropolitan area.

The challenge is to achieve triple bottom line benefits for both Metropolitan Melbourne and the State of Victoria by planning for the longer term future, i.e. 2020-2050, not today, and not just a forecast demand for 2030. WeTAI recognises this is a difficult task, but it is paramount we address the best value responses to the transport challenges which will occur, and the vision and opportunities for the future.

Key issues identified by WeTAI in this submission are:

- The need to establish flexible transport networks matched to the needs of the community of the future.
- Promoting efficient transport options for workers accessing employment.
- Promoting job creation in the Western Metropolitan Region to meet the current shortfall and in the longer term to reduce transport demand.
- The need for travel demand management by the provision of facilities and employment in Major and Principal Activity Centres and Transit City Centres under the Melbourne 2030 umbrella.
- The need to maximise triple bottom line benefits from any proposed infrastructure.
- Responding to the long term vision of the Western Metropolitan Region's development.
- The strategic need for an East-West Link as an alternative to the Monash-City Link Westgate Corridor.
- The need for an overall Freight Strategy for Victoria and the nation.
- The need to focus on the metropolitan container freight task as this is where substantial growth will occur.
- Support for the establishment of freight hubs in the West, North and South East of Melbourne with improved rail access and container handling in the Port of Melbourne.
- The urgent need for the upgrading of the rail track configuration and capacity (particularly at North Melbourne Station and in the city loop)

- That the planning and timing of new transport infrastructure take into account the distribution of population growth and economic activity and its effect on travel demand.
- The need to protect the amenity of residents adjacent to freight and heavy traffic routes.
- Opportunities for significant funding for new infrastructure for walking and cycling.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Western Transport Alliance (WeTAI) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to Infrastructure Australia as the Alliance sees transport infrastructure as a critical factor in relation to future access, mobility and amenity in the Western Metropolitan Region of Metropolitan Melbourne as a whole, and in terms of economic development and sustainability in south east Australia.

Infrastructure Australia in its discussion paper has set out the following key goals and strategic priorities that are supported by the WeTAI.

- Expand Australia's productive capacity
- Increase Australia's productivity
- Diversify Australia's economic capabilities
- Build on Australia's global competitive advantages
- Develop our cities
- Reduce greenhouse emissions
- Improve social equity, and quality of life in our cities and our regions

The Alliance formed following widespread concern that insufficient attention had been placed on the issues of planning for future rail and road capacity, between the West and the Central Melbourne, and Port of Melbourne areas. The Western Metropolitan Councils, Melbourne City Council, businesses in the west, transport companies, Transport Workers Union and peak transport bodies combined in 2005 to form WeTAI, and focus attention on these issues with the vision statement:

***“to achieve an efficient and sustainable transport corridor progressively upgraded at a time matched to the needs of the West of Melbourne (encompassing the Western Metropolitan Region) and connections to the Melbourne CBD and Port of Melbourne”.***

The organisations involved are:

- Brimbank City Council
- FCL Interstate Transport Services Pty Ltd
- Hobsons Bay City Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Martrans Company
- Melbourne City Council
- Melton Shire Council
- Moonee Valley City Council
- P & O Ports Ltd
- Patrick Logistics
- Asciano
- Port of Melbourne Corporation
- Queensland Rail
- RACV
- Toll Group

- Transport Workers Union
- Victorian Transport Association
- Wyndham City Council
- Vic Roads
- State Government (Department of Transport)

Please note that while some representative organisations may have an alternative view to some specific comments and recommendations contained in this submission, the general principals and objectives are supported.

The Alliance is able to highlight significant changes which are occurring or are foreseen in the Region, which have transport implications. The Alliance resources don't extend to quantifying future transport demand, or more particularly, providing an assessment how expected changes in the Region will translate to traffic in the West Gate Corridor into and around the Melbourne CBD. Nevertheless the Alliance is able to provide various pointers to assist this Review.

Two key determinates which will influence transport volumes and patterns over the next thirty to forty years are population and economic growth in the western region of Melbourne and the anticipated growth in freight movement, including to and from the Port of Melbourne. It is important that the review of transport infrastructure needs is focused on the future, and not just the needs of 2008.

Today there are deficiencies, bottlenecks and amenity problems in the western and northern inner areas. These will be made worse as the inner city continues to grow as a residential address and destination, port throughput expands, and the growth areas to the north and west of Melbourne substantially increase in population. These issues will need to be addressed in the context of the state's "Meeting Our Transport Challenges" and the soon to be released "Victorian Transport Plan".

Predicting needs in 2020 is challenging and the needs of 40 years even more difficult, giving rise to a view that the recommendations should consider transport flexibility and provide scope to accommodate changes of demand. The difficulty of forecasting future demands has already been demonstrated by population changes which have occurred in the last decade. These changes are particularly relevant to Melbourne's West.

Melbourne's West is undergoing a major transition from an industrialised area, primarily attracting first home buyers and newly arrived migrants, to a dynamic growth area offering affordability and attracting a broad cross section of society, with the associated infrastructure challenges.

This transition is reflected in substantial variations in the scale and location of residential growth from that anticipated around 2000 as defined in Melbourne 2030 and Victoria In Future 2000. Industrial activity in Melbourne is increasingly concentrating to three major hubs which together with residential growth will impact on travel desire lines and major pressure points on Melbourne's road and rail network.

Key areas of interest from the viewpoint of the Western Transport Alliance are:

- Establishing flexible transport networks matched to the needs of the community. The existing road and rail networks serving Melbourne's West have limited spare capacity in peak periods. The capacity of the rail network to accommodate passenger and freight levels commensurate with State Government policy in the scenario of all recommendations of Meeting Our Transport Challenges, being constructed has not been demonstrated;
- Promoting efficient transport options for workers living in Melbourne's west accessing job opportunities in other regions. Victoria University has stated that Melbourne's West had 12% of Victoria's population, but only 8% of the jobs in 2001. Recently SGS Economics and

Planning concluded in a Study of Local Economic Development in the Interface for the Interface Council's Group that Outer Melbourne has 24% of metropolitan Melbourne's population, 22% of the workers, 15% of the jobs and accounted for 10.7% of gross regional product;

- Maximising the triple bottom line benefits. Triple bottom line assessments require balance and to the degree possible, quantified data. The economical, environmental and social costs of building or not building new transport infrastructure need to be understood. The triple bottom line costs of accessing employment are addressed in the SGS Economics and Planning Study for the Interface Councils, when it was concluded that a new job in the Interface area filled by a resident of the Interface provided community savings of \$11,000p.a. Regrettably it is not easy to achieve major improvements in matching job and work locations, but it is possible to encourage more efficient journey to work options;
- Responding to the long term vision of the Region's development. The recently released East-West Link Needs Assessment predicts significant future development and associated transport demands in the west of Melbourne;
- Supporting and promoting job creation in the Region, and particularly in areas where there are substantial mismatches between workers and job opportunities.

## 2. POPULATION DATA AND TRENDS

Melbourne's development has featured periods when the fastest growing areas were in the east (1910 – 1970), the south east (1970 – 2000), and now Melbourne's West. This transition was not foreseen when Melbourne 2030 was formulated and the population projections of 2000 prepared. Revised population projections (Victoria In Future 2004) partially recognise the extent of change in Melbourne's west, but again underestimate the growth which has been experienced in recent years.

In 2003/04 Melbourne's West had the third and fourth fastest growing local government areas within Australia in terms of growth rate. Significantly the fastest two growing municipalities, both based in Western Australia, had total populations of less than 10,000, while Melton with a growth rate of 9.1% and a population of slightly over 60,000, while Wyndham with a growth rate of 8.4% had a population of 100,000.

### Fastest growing 10 LGA's in Australia (growth rate 2003-04)

LGA	STATE	GROWTH 2003-04(p)	GROWTH RATE 2004-04(p)
Perth (C)	WA	1,132	12.1%
Capel (S)	WA	926	11.6%
<b>Melton (S)</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>5,923</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>Wyndham (C)</b>	<b>Vic</b>	<b>8,378</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
Mandurah (C)	WA	4,296	7.9%
Wanneroo (C)	WA	6,727	7.2%
Cardinia (S)	Vic	3,315	6.5%
Melbourne (C)	Vic	3,710	6.4%
Chittering (S)	WA	198	6.3%
Miriam Vale (S)	Qld	291	6.0%

Source ABS Cat No. 3218.0 – Regional Population Growth Australia and New Zealand 2003-04

Melton and Wyndham have continued to be among the fastest growing municipalities in Australia. The 2005/06 ABS population estimates indicate Melton grew by 6,814 at a growth rate of 8.9% to 83,002 while Wyndham grew by 6,660 equating to a growth rate 5.7% to 122,574.

Significantly, Australian Bureau of Statistics data for population at the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006 shows that growth in Melbourne’s West was 242.5% of that predicted in Victorian in Future 2000 (85,808 compared to 35,379) for the six year period commencing on 30 June 2000.

There are strong indicators that Melton and Wyndham, and to a lesser degree Brimbank, will continue to experience substantial growth, and an increasing likelihood that the northern growth areas of Hume and Whittlesea will also become increasingly important in terms of metropolitan growth towards the end of the current decade.

Developing an understanding of the way in which Melbourne’s growth is changing is fundamental to understanding the future transportation task and the associated challenges. Figures 1 to 3 below compare growth by Melbourne regions (1911 – 2006) with projected household growth rates (Victorian In Future 2004) for the period 2006 – 2031 and further demonstrates the State Government’s predictions are likely to be exceeded for the Western Metropolitan Region in the years to come.

**Dwelling Growth - North/West versus South-East Region (Melbourne 1911-2005)**

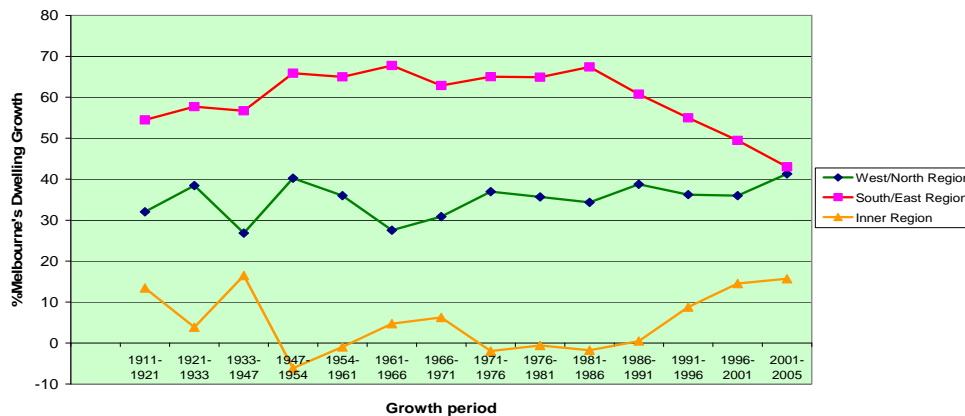


Figure 1: Shift in the balance of Melbourne’s Growth, 1911-2005:

**% of Total Melbourne Dwelling Approvals - Melton/Wyndham cf. Casey/Cardinia cf. Hume/Whittlesea**

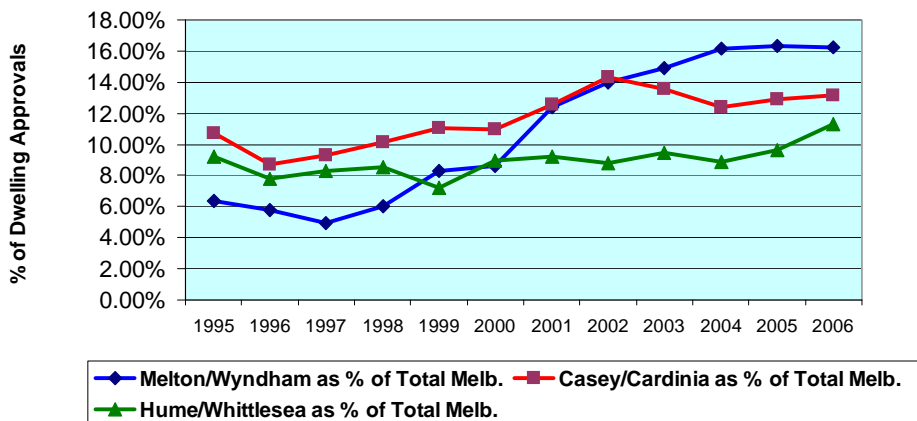


Figure 2: Total Dwelling Approvals – Melton/Wyndham vs. Casey/Cardinia vs. Hume/Whittlesea

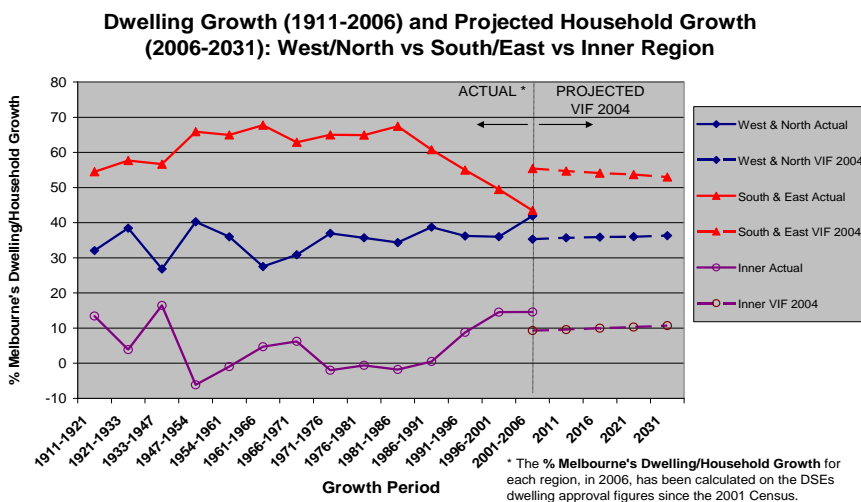


Figure 3: Dwelling Growth (1911-2006) and Projected Household Growth (2006-2031)

### 3. KEY ISSUES

Quantifying future transport demand will be essential to the assessment of options and establishment of priorities. The future vision of Melbourne's west should inform that assessment, but only represents part of the information required. The growth of traffic demand on east-west roads and rail corridors can also inform this Review.

There have been many indicators that the recent build up of transport activity and increase in rail passengers has been substantial and has exceeded forecasts by significant margins, given the substantial under-estimation of population growth in Melbourne's West and the consolidation of major Freight Activity Centres.

It is also essential to understand the capacity and constraints of the existing rail and road networks, the growth and distribution of the freight task and in particular, port associated activity and metropolitan employment patterns.

However, it is apparent that Melbourne's Western Region has entered a process of major new industrial development change, which accelerated with the development of the Westgate Bridge and the Western Ring Road. This has spurred a wave of investment in logistics-based industries, and led to the formation of the West industrial Node, recognised in metropolitan policy as one of the three major industrial nodes in the Melbourne metropolitan region.

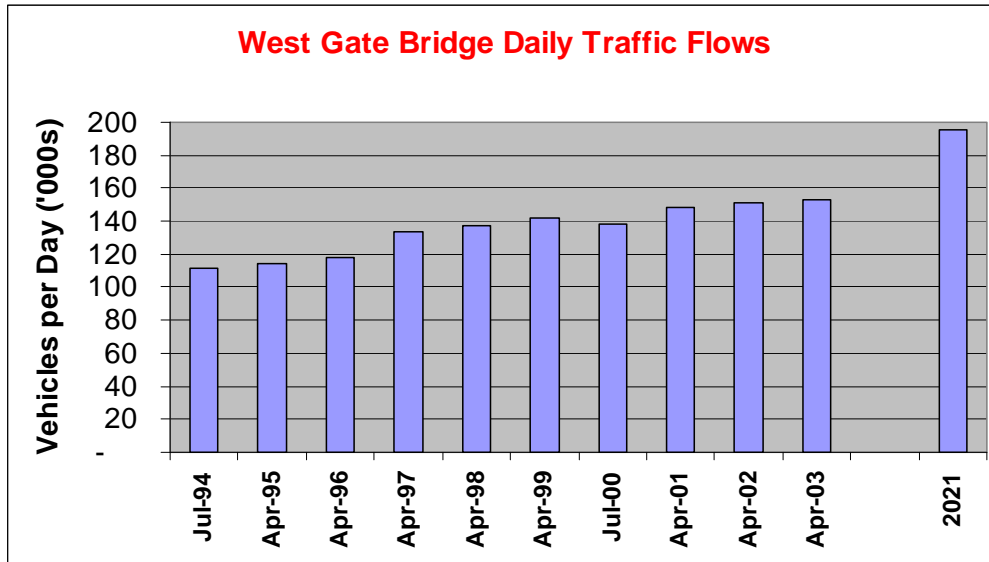
WeTAI has identified a number of key transport issues which should be addressed by the Review.

#### 3.1 Road Network – The Strategic Need for an East-West Link as an Alternative to the Monash – City Link – Westgate Corridor.

Notwithstanding the plans to upgrade the Monash – City Link – Westgate transport corridor the system is, to a large extent, still constrained by the traffic carrying capacity of the West Gate Bridge and provides capacity for ten to fifteen years. Long term growth in traffic, both commuter and freight related, from the growth areas of the west and the Port of Melbourne will again quickly place pressure on travel within the corridor. Growth in the West is substantially exceeding projections and there is no

current evidence of significant changes in journey to work patterns. A long term vision and strategy for a transport network is required to address demands up to and beyond 2030 to 2050.

Demand projections for the West Gate Bridge (based on outdated population projections used in the IWITS) suggest that daily volumes will reach close to 200,000 vehicles by 2021.



- **Commercial vehicles are 12% - 13% of the traffic flow**

If the current growth patterns in the West are continued, demand of 200,000 vehicles will be reached much earlier.

The reasons for this growth of travel demand vary considerably, but can best be summed up as:

- Economic growth in the Western Region of Melbourne will exceed the metropolitan average;
- Rapid population expansion in the Werribee-Melton growth corridor due to the availability of land at competitive pricing;
- Accessibility of the Western Region to the Port, the CBD and major road and rail corridors.

High volume/capacity ratios on arterial roads have consequences on travel reliability. An incident (breakdowns, accidents – minor property damage or more significant or general incidents) results in long delays to vehicles using the arterial road. When there is a lack of alternative routes the consequences are greater, as traffic cannot deviate around the incident or take an alternative route.

Transport networks need to be developed to provide flexibility for travel. Focusing traffic onto one major route has serious consequences on overall travel times, delays, and travel reliability. Alternative routes are needed.

The economic value of congestion is significant. This is exacerbated by the increasing proportion of commercial vehicle traffic and the higher value of time for commercial vehicles and freight movement. Economic losses to business from delays have been estimated at \$3 million per hour.

Major incidents often result in full road or carriageway closures and have an economic consequence that has not been quantified, or the estimated financial costs verified, to date.

### 3.2 Public Transport Network

Australia is the only developed country in the world where its national government does not fund urban public transport. Major expansion in the provision of mass transport infrastructure is sought to meet increased demand for public transport travel arising from rising motor fuel costs, congestion, to access jobs, education and services. To reduce road demand it is necessary to provide public transport services to:

- first provide an alternative travel mode to the car, and
- attract travellers from their car onto public transport.

Increases in the cost of fuel, parking levies in the CBD, and the removal of zones on the suburban rail system, have led to increasing numbers of commuters using public transport for their journey to work and also during their leisure hours. The present system in the western and northern regions of Melbourne is ill equipped to deal with this influx due to major capacity constraints at North Melbourne Station and in the City Loop.

The Northern Group lines consist of train services on the Upfield, Broadmeadows, Sydenham, Werribee and Williamstown lines. Information from State Government in 2006 indicated that the capacity of train services are exceeded on the Broadmeadows, Sydenham and Werribee lines.

Four of the five designated growth areas are serviced by the Northern Group lines. The demographic shift to the west and north of Melbourne will place even greater demands on the Region's transport system. During the preparation of the Outer Western Suburbs Transport Strategy and the Inner West Integrated Transport Strategy, it was indicated that a major constraint to the operation of train services is the track arrangements west of the North Melbourne railway station. Currently the VLine regional services from Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, the freight services and the Northern Metropolitan Rail Group of lines, which comprise services from Williamstown, Werribee, Sunshine, Watergardens, Broadmeadows and Upfield, all pass through North Melbourne Station.

The capacity constraint at North Melbourne manifests itself in terms of service reliability in two ways on the train network:

- (i) If a train is late in arriving for the allocated slot at North Melbourne then other trains affected by the cross over will be subsequently delayed. (The common anecdotal comment of waiting in the railway yards.)
- (ii) If a train is cancelled, the loadings on the following train are increased and the boarding/alighting time at each station is increased. This slows the overall travel time of the train. It will arrive late at North Melbourne and impact on the other trains and line services.

WeTAI believes the following key public transport improvement projects should be given a high priority:

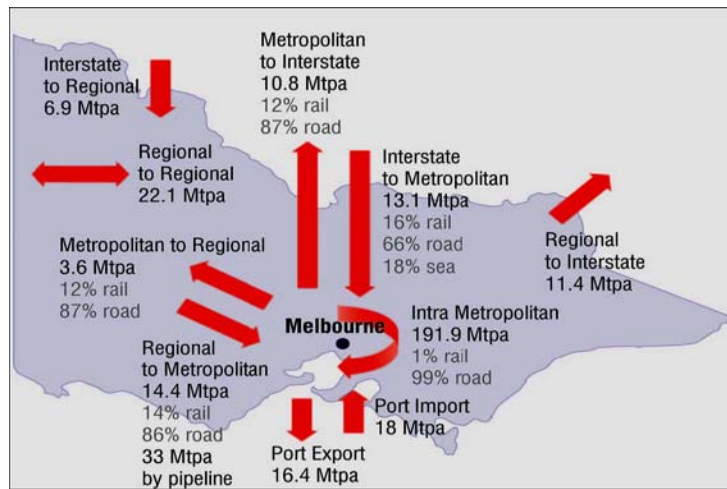
- Upgrade and improve capacity through North Melbourne and City Loop
- Duplication and electrification of the line to Bacchus Marsh
- Electrification of the line to Sunbury
- Construction of the Tarneit Link (as recommended in the EWLNA Report) but also including electrification of the line
- Accelerating the implementation of orbital bus routes across the region

The principal strategic issue is to provide capacity within the train network to support the number of trains required to meet current demand and the future long term vision.

### 3.3 Freight Task

The freight and logistics industry in Victoria accounts for 23 per cent of the national freight task and contributes \$16.7 billion annually to the Australian economy. Overall approximately 50 per cent of Victoria's production (by weight) originates in the Melbourne Statistical Division and nearly 70 per cent of the commodities have a destination there.

Urban freight movement is largely the preserve of road transport; rail carries very little of the urban freight task.



**Victorian Freight Task, Million Tonnes per Annum (Mtpa). DoI 2006**

Figure 1 (from the East-West Link Needs Assessment Study Overview) identifies the freight routes and the primary business/industrial areas that currently exist. The diagram should be expanded to recognise that within the next 30 years several changes are likely. They are:

- Increasing consolidation and growth of industrial activity in the three major freight activity centres;
- Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong are likely to become much more significant as capacity at Tullamarine Airport and the Port of Melbourne is filled. Predicting increased significance of Avalon Airport and Port of Geelong does not discount the possibility of the Port of Hastings also being more significant in terms of Port activities, but recognises that the Port of Hastings is best positioned for the major industrial sector near Dandenong, while Avalon and Geelong offer other potentials for the growing west of Melbourne.
- Business/Commercial Centres will expand and also impact on the freight task to a greater extent.

Figure 3. Freight routes and business/industrial areas

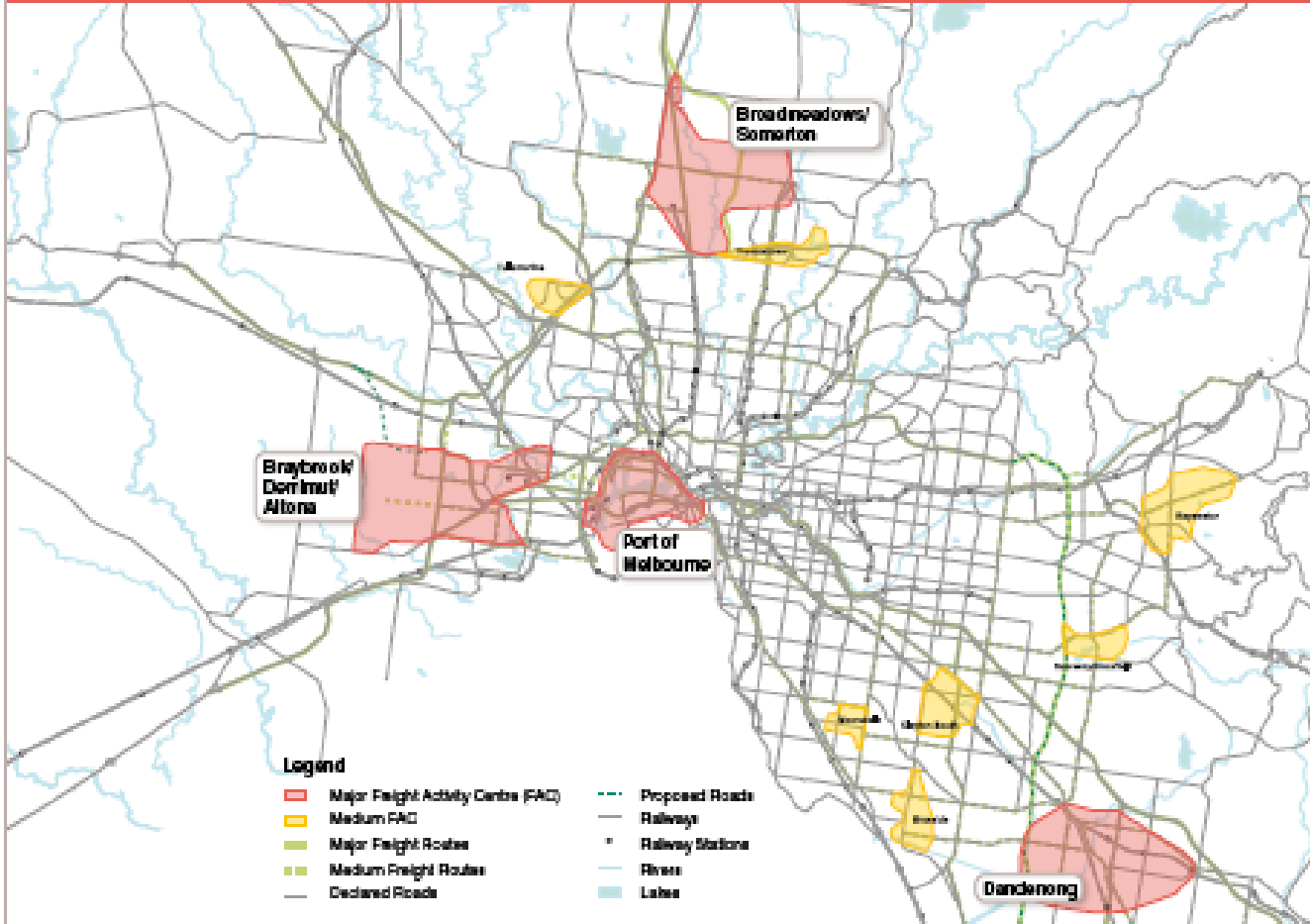


Figure 1: Freight Routes and Business/Industrial Areas

Understanding the forward projections of freight demands is particularly challenging given the very limited data currently available and the potential changes led by Government policies including the target of moving 30% of all Port trade in Victoria (excluding liquid bulk) by rail by 2010. The potential for community pressure to increase this target to 40% - 50% is readily apparent. However, targets are only part of the answer because substantial action will be essential if the target percentage of freight movement from inland ports is to be achieved by rail and the current 15% of port related freight by rail doubled or tripled.

Freight is obviously a key component of transport demand and WeTAI applauds State and Federal Government initiatives such as the Melbourne Port@L Strategy and targets being set for movement of freight by rail in/out of the Port.

### 3.3.1 Inland Ports

The development of Inland Ports or freight hubs is a land use initiative to support increased rail use to the port, reduce truck movements within Melbourne and particularly the inner metropolitan areas. The development and operation of an inland port network is supported by major freight industry organisations. There is a strong need to identify sites suitable for inland ports at the three primary

industrial hubs of Melbourne (Laverton/Altona, Somerton and Dandenong) which have the scale and position to meet the road and rail transport requirements for efficient operation.

The Alliance believes that these sites need to be both identified in the planning scheme and protected in the same way as airports and natural resources are recognised for their importance to the economy and Victorian community. WeTAI strongly supports the strategic role of freight hubs in the north, west and south east of Melbourne with direct rail access into the port and national distribution centres clustered around those hubs to reduce cross metropolitan road freight journeys.

### **3.3.2 Rail Freight Infrastructure**

Road based freight has received the benefit of road infrastructure funding, taxation and other advantages at the expense of rail freight. When external costs are included, the competitiveness and use of rail freight becomes very cost effective.

The decline of rail freight transport particularly between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, is a case in point. Rail's market share on the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane freight route has declined since 1971/72 from 30% to 5-7% currently.

While some Auslink Funding is now directed to rail freight improvements, the Alliance believes that Infrastructure Australia and the Building Australia Fund provide a significant investment opportunity for rail freight transport infrastructure to support projects linked to:

- standardising rail networks, including to major ports and freight hubs;
- interstate rail freight connectivity between the states;
- inter-modal freight hubs based on regional rail links; and
- regional rail freight infrastructure to support regional development.

### **3.4 Port of Melbourne**

The Melbourne Port@L Strategy provides information on the growth and role of the Port of Melbourne for international and interstate trade. Forward projections from the Port of Melbourne show that container trade will treble in the next 20 years. International container trade will increase from 1.4 million to 7 million containers per annum by 2035. A 50% increase in dry bulk tonnage is envisaged while slightly lower levels of growth are expected in relation to other bulk freight activity.

Trade growth indicates the need to focus on the metropolitan container freight task as this is where the majority of freight growth will occur. Of importance is that 77% of imported containers that pass through the Port have origins/destinations within the Melbourne metropolitan area. This figure is expected to increase to 84% by 2035. Thus the Port of Melbourne is a focal point of activity and needs links to all parts of Melbourne.

In terms of the role of the Port of Melbourne, WeTAI is mindful of the State Government's vision to develop the Port of Melbourne, the Dynon precinct and its transport links into a world class intermodal freight hub. In achieving that vision WeTAI assumes that the improvements envisaged include grade separated rail access into the port and facilities to handle containers to and from rail.

The growth of freight movements through the Port of Melbourne has implications on the use of West Gate Bridge and the West Gate Freeway and the associated links to freight and logistics facilities in the West. WeTAI believes that provision of improved road and rail access into and out of the Port of Melbourne is critical for the long term economic viability of the state.

### 3.5 Cycling and Walking Infrastructure.

The most sustainable forms of transport are walking and cycling, with infrastructure for these modes largely the responsibility of local governments. Safe cycle and pedestrian paths involve substantial capital investment from Councils who are financially under-resourced.

The Healthy and Active Transport (HEAT) Program by an alliance of the Australian cycling sector has proposed that the Federal Government establishes an infrastructure funding program for local governments to build cycling and walking infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> The HEAT program highlights that obesity costs Australia \$21 billion annually. As stated in the HEAT submission:

*“Improved cycling and walking infrastructure can be a practical solution to tackle climate change, reduce activity related diseases such as obesity and diabetes; decrease traffic congestion; and provide a viable transport option for short trips ...*

*The program would fund significant, high quality cycling and walking infrastructure projects, providing health, transport, environment and community benefits across urban, regional and rural areas ...*

*Local governments have seen increased demand for cycling facilities and many are struggling financially to keep up with this and other demands on their resources. This program would enable councils to keep up with their bike plans sooner, providing practical choices for their local community and visitors.”*

WeTAI requests Infrastructure Australia consider funding for sustainable cycling investment. This should be for regional cycling infrastructure initiatives involving segregated on and off-road cycleways linking communities to jobs, education and other services.

### 3.6 Land Use and Amenity Aspects

*Melbourne 2030*, the planning blueprint for Melbourne’s growth, provides a policy for land use planning within Melbourne. A major platform is Transit Cities and Principal Activity Centres. The development of these centres provides:

- a focus for public transport services;
- multi activity centres and services, and
- the opportunity to reduce travel and reliance on private car use.

Also the Western Region Employment and Industrial Development Study (WREIDS) undertaken for the six western municipalities under the auspice of the DSE, provides a number of strategic land use initiatives that aim at providing sustainable growth and development opportunities for the region.

WREIDS identified the importance of a strong regional transport system and linkages to the State’s trade gateways, metropolitan Melbourne and wider State and National markets to employment growth, including, a mass transit corridor, an Outer Western Ring road, freight handling facilities, and other arterial road connections that would support major long distance bus services.

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<sup>1</sup> Alliance of Bicycle New South Wales, Bicycle Queensland, Bicycle South Australia, Cycling Australia, Bicycle Federation of Australia, Cycling Promotion Fund, *Health and Active Transport Program* (HEAT). 23 August 2007; see [www.vote4cycling.com.au](http://www.vote4cycling.com.au); *Cycling > Moving Australia Forward*, Cycling Promotion Fund 2007, [www.rideabike.com.au](http://www.rideabike.com.au)

The National Logistics City concept currently being developed by the Institute for Logistics and Supply Chain Management at Victoria University is also a potential major influence on transport activity in the Region when the 20 year timeframe is considered.

The Alliance has concerns about the growth in commuter and industrial traffic through Melbourne's inner west and the resulting negative impacts on residential amenity and the environment in general. Pollution from traffic, particularly trucks, may cause long term adverse health effects on residents living along the many heavy truck routes through the residential suburbs in the west.

The Australian transport sector accounted for 79 million tonnes of Australia's total net greenhouse gas emissions in 2002, representing 13 per cent of Australia's total emissions. About 88 percent of these emissions came from road transport including cars and trucks.

The proximity of the port and historical road pattern network means that many of the main road freight routes to and from the port pass through the inner west residential networks, creating adverse amenity issues for the local community.

Moving container freight traffic onto rail will reduce road freight movements. The storage of containers in outer suburban freight hubs would also improve amenity by reducing truck movements.

The Alliance requests Infrastructure Australia to consider the following in its consideration of new transport infrastructure:

- Roads and their environments should be planned, designed, developed and managed as integrated facilities, with provision for more than one transport mode.
- Recognition of the relationship between the corridor and the adjoining communities, land uses, built form, amenity and environment.
- Planning for integration of development controls and traffic management.
- Consideration of traffic on safety of pedestrians and cyclists, parking, local businesses and activities, and environmental assets.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, WeTAI believes there are a range of key transport infrastructure projects that need to be considered for the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. The key strategic issue is the need to provide flexibility in the Region's transport system by providing an alternative to the Monash – City Link – West Gate Corridor which provides for the movement of freight, public transport, and private passenger cars.

Current information indicates that in the long term the West will have significantly higher population estimates than estimated by the State Government. The implications of this are:

- Predicted demands in the West will occur sooner than estimated.
- The overall travel demand task in the West will be significantly greater than estimated.
- The required actions are likely to be more significant than currently contemplated.
- There is a need to plan and develop a strategy earlier than currently thought.

The most challenging aspects of the assessment are determining likely transport needs beyond 2020, and up to 2050. Historic transport needs provide a partial guide, but Melbourne's West is undergoing a significant transition as evidenced by growth in the Region for the six year period to June 2006,

being 242.5% of that predicted. Factors driving this growth including proximity to the Melbourne CBD, housing affordability, proximity to rural environments, etc suggest that recent trends in the West will continue and point to the likelihood that growth in Melbourne's North will also increase.

Another significant trend is the consolidation of industrial activity in the three major metropolitan hubs. The Laverton/Derrimut and Somerton inland ports offer the potential to drive increases in rail freight activity, but significant reductions of the portion of freight on road will only occur if a very active program is developed to address the blockages to economically transporting containers to the port by rail.

The population growth in Melbourne's West will lead to new and bigger activity centres. The Regional Councils support the creation of a major activity centre at the west of the Laverton/Derrimut area as recommended in the Western Region Employment and Industrial Development Strategy. Infrastructure projects are required to address capacity constraints associated with the public transport railway network and the road network, as well as undertaking land use initiatives and travel demand management actions.

Infrastructure Australia is urged to consider the issues raised in this submission in determining priorities for the allocation of the Federal Government's Building Australia Fund.

Finally WeTAI appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this most important initiative.

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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8. **East-West Link Needs Assessment - Investing in Transport**  
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