Submission form: Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy

About you

Please tell us which best describes you:

- ☒ Victorian resident
- ☒ Victorian business owner/operator
- ☒ Industry professional
- ☐ Community organisation representative
- ☐ Local government representative
- ☐ State government representative
- ☐ Researcher
- ☐ Other (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.

Your focus areas

Select the topics or regions you are providing feedback on (select all that apply):

Topics	Regions
☒ Across sectors	☒ Regional Victoria
☒ Circular economy	☐ Urban growth areas
☒ Cities	☐ Melbourne
☒ Climate change	
☐ Community infrastructure	
☐ Education	
☒ Energy	
☒ Freight	
☐ Health	
☐ Housing	
☐ Infrastructure for Victoria's First Peoples	
☐ Transport	
☐ Water	

Your feedback

Add as many sections as you need to provide all your feedback in this submission.

Topic/area:	**Climate Change & future risks**
Recommendation name:	**Coordinate faster delivery of key energy infrastructure**
Recommendation number:	**29**
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
2. Tell us why	Centralising information about pending projects allows project proponents to understand the environment in which they are working. It also allows businesses to plan for location in resourced areas that suit their needs.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Businesses that require gas may be encouraged to NOT close down or move interstate, if renewable gas developments are proposed and likely in their regions. Recent closures of some brick and glass makers demonstrates the lack of planning in reliable, affordable energy.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Absolutely agree that renewable gas (including hydrogen) projects should also be treated as part of the energy transition pipeline. Also important to align approvals process with the GreenPower program, including renewable gas certification, of which Victoria is a founding member. Additionally, consider the rollout of "community energy hubs" where areas with high density of rooftop solar collectively contribute to and draw from a community location with stored energy from those systems. This localises energy and provides backup in times of weather driven outages across the State.

Topic/area:	**Climate Change & future risks**
Recommendation name:	**Improve environmental assessments and site selection for energy projects**
Recommendation number:	**30**
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part

6. Tell us why	This process needs improvement and increased local involvement and support from early stages so delays are not extended. If communities recognise the benefits of localised energy supply, it would incentivise new industries to develop in designated areas, including growth regions. Additionally, different requirements would relate to different technologies.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	There are certain regional areas that design industrial estates around airports, without due consideration for the energy requirements of those estates. This means that such estates rely on "grid" energy rather than "behind the grid" localised energy, including renewable gas and hydrogen to replace natural gas.
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Heavy industry, circular economy precincts and localised energy from waste to support these could be customised to suit specific regions. Some regional towns have little spare industrial land available for energy generation to underpin existing industries. This means they must have relaxed height restrictions to allow for increased activity and therefore not clustered around airports exclusively.

Topic/area:	**Climate Change & future risks**
Recommendation name:	**Develop regional energy plans, including reliable gas supply**
Recommendation number:	**33**
9. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
10. Tell us why	Renewable gas, including hydrogen is not yet commercially available because there has been little effort to support this industry sector, compared with the widespread govt support for wind and solar to "electrify everything". If renewable hydrogen from waste was better supported, instead of being treated as merely a waste management service, rollout of renewable gas supply for specific uses would accelerate in regional areas, supporting industry and transport. This MUST be ramped up to avoid imports and shortfalls. A more decentralised, regional approach may well reduce transmission costs and speed up project development.
11. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Examples include the recent closure of several high energy users such as brickworks, glass makers and some dairy processors. If renewable gas had been better supported, these businesses may have continued. We can cite examples of

	industrials that continue to use diesel in their processes because the local supply of gas is insufficient for their needs. Targeted stored hydrogen supplies could be quickly brought online to support industry and peak electricity generation.
12. Include proposed changes and improvements	Align with the GreenPower guidelines to encourage renewable gas projects, including hydrogen from biomass. There is also too much emphasis on hydrogen from electrolysers, with export focussed production at the expense of more speedy developments with supply aimed at local industry. Sites for hydrogen production via electrolysis are likely to be increasingly difficult, given the limited available land that is not suited for agriculture or grazing, yet suitable for solar, with adequate water supplies. Therefore, alternative hydrogen and renewable gas processes should be prioritised for regional areas, where there is farming.

Topic/area:	**Productivity and Circular Economy**
Recommendation name:	**Prepare for more recycling and waste infrastructure**
Recommendation number:	**38**
13. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
14. Tell us why	It is clear that the waste generation will outgrow the landfill capability and that Victoria will be unable to recycle as much as hoped, of a wide range of materials. This is mainly because new products are cheaper to manufacture than recycled products and/or contamination makes recycling difficult or unviable.
15. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Austria and Germany, acknowledged as the world's best recyclers, cannot recycle the level of ambitions promoted by Victoria, still both demonstrating below 70% diverted from landfill. It is unlikely that Victoria will exceed this figure within a reasonable timeframe if we consider industrial and commercial waste as well.
16. Include proposed changes and improvements	The recommendation acknowledges that waste and recycling facilities need careful siting. However, what it fails to understand is that very large facilities are not necessary. If localised, special waste facilities can cater for their own regions and there is no need for very long and intrusive transport corridors. Using technologies that can focus on specific waste types could allow more widespread use of waste

	to energy options with smaller plants and less transport infrastructure required. The Australian public is aware that waste incineration is no longer acceptable in regions that are more experienced with this technology and is not prepared for certain specific regions to be allocated as "Dump Town" sites. Melbourne's "Ring of Fire" is not the most suitable answer for waste issues. Nearly ALL waste incinerators around Australia have experienced strong community and local government opposition. To name a few:- Ipswich in Queensland managed to block their incinerator proposal. The Gold Coast has further delayed their proposed incinerator, Bellarine region, including Geelong and Wyndham Councils continue to strongly resist the proposal in Lara and as far back as 2018, Ballarat Council reversed their approval to consider a waste incinerator. Smaller, more advanced and cleaner technologies can support regional or suburban areas while providing reliable energy support in those specific areas. If each region managed its own waste, there would be reduced need for excessive transport upgrades and traffic management. There would be less incentive to supply waste and less grate and fly ash created with alternative processes. There has been acknowledgement from government representatives that even now, there is little understanding of the value of energy from waste. To quote a Vic public servant:- "the waste people know about garbage and the renewable people know about energy, including hydrogen, but they don't talk to each other or understand the connection of renewable energy from waste unless it's a steam turbine driven by heat from an incinerator".
Topic/area:	**Productivity and circular economy**
Recommendation name:	**Make rail freight competitive, reliable and efficient**
Recommendation number:	**41**
17. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
18. Tell us why	Victoria's rail freight will double by 2050 and road freight triple by that time. The design of rail in both city and rural areas is much less disruptive to traffic and maintenance than heavy road freight, yet Melbourne carries more road freight than any other capital, despite the investment in rail. Further, despite the fact that rail carries a total of almost double the freight of road in tonnage, road is still the dominant mover of freight.
19. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Australian Infrastructure and Transport Statistics-Yearbook 2024

20. Include proposed changes and improvements	Compared with the investment in roads, the rail investment proposed is very modest. However, combined with the proposed Inland Rail project (Inland Rail: Home - Inland Rail), improvements in rail freight systems can transform how goods are moved around the country. With a land size 12% smaller than the USA and sparse population, Australia needs rail freight for long distance or heavy items. Yet to achieve emissions reductions targets we must reduce emissions. Rail is three times more fuel efficient than road freight. Given our small population and tax base, it is beyond reasonable to consider electrifying long distance rail. When Germany considered electrifying long distance rail, it was found to be three times the price of introducing hydrogen powered trains over the average distance. In Australia, that figure would be exponentially higher. Hydrogen locomotives would not require special upgrade of tracks and would more comfortably manage the heavy freight demands of bulk goods, as well as managing the long distances. Hydrogen powered locomotives should be seriously supported, by initially using a blend in the diesel, then moving to full fuel cell operations over time.
Topic/area:	**Productivity and circular economy**
Recommendation name:	**Create and preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure projects**
Recommendation number:	**43**
21. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part
22. Tell us why	Nearly all of these proposals relate to Melbourne. Slowing population growth in the Capital will slow the need for drastic investment. Infrastructure designed and built over a century ago is not equipped for greater demand. More support is needed for growth in regional cities, rather than simply making Melbourne larger. If anything, people should be encouraged to move away from the capital, reducing congestion, pollution and other demands.
23. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
24. Include proposed changes and improvements	Lighting and communications should be moved underground wherever possible, reducing exposure to weather variants. Water, gas etc should not be built under roads, rather footpaths, reducing traffic complications. Trains should be improved. People use cars due to better comfort and convenience. Suburban trains are neither safe

	nor comfortable, they are designed to crowd people in, with more standing room than seating. Light road vehicles, service on demand including driverless taxis should be encouraged to increased use in local areas. Trams are traffic disruptive and should not be rolled out where there is no designated allocation away from road traffic. Greater allocation of green space where it is clear that populations will increase dramatically. Areas well suited to agriculture and/or tourism attractions should be set aside - banning wind towers and solar farms. Areas in Geelong, Corio Bay, where there are retired heavy industry sites, should be considered suitable for newer developments in industry, freight etc.

More feedback (optional)

Tell us about infrastructure challenges, gaps or opportunities not covered by the draft strategy. This can include things you think we should add to an existing recommendation, or suggestions for a new recommendation.

Please provide evidence for your suggestions. This can include data, specific examples, cost benefit analyses, surveys, or program evaluations. Also, explain how your suggestions align with the objectives of our draft strategy (see page 11 of the draft strategy).

Suggestions for new recommendations should point towards infrastructure opportunities that can deliver long-term benefits for Victorians. They should also be areas where the Victorian Government has a leading role.

Click or tap here to enter text.