

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:	Victorians have good access to housing.....
Recommendation name:	Build More social housing
Recommendation number:	1
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
2. Tell us why	We are a long way behind in this area as there seems to have been far less activity on this area for over 30 years than in earlier years yet the demand continues to grow. There is an urgent need for more social housing is it should and should have greater priority than actions in many of the other recommendations. This begs the question – Have you done any assessment comparing the value of sets of actions in one recommendation with those in other recommendations?
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.

Topic/area:	Victorians Have Good Access
Recommendation name:	Make Government Infrastructure more accessible
Recommendation number:	6
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
6. Tell us why	This is important but there is a glaring omission – Pedestrian access to Bus Stops.

	This should be included in the strategy as the strategy is encouraging active transport, is looking at smaller scale projects that can make a difference and ones that provide equity. In outer areas of Melbourne and regional urban centres there are often not footpaths in the built-up areas, so pedestrians have to walk on the roadway. Often a very well designed, standards meeting, bus stop has been provided, but there is no suitable foot access to it. Let alone anyone trying to get to or from the stop in a wheelchair, or a person with balance issues. This may reflect the roles of the State in providing the bus stops and Councils being responsible for footpaths. There is a lack of co-ordination and it is certainly not integrated transport! The State needs to get involved to provide funding at the level needed.
7.	
8. Share any supporting evidence or examples	 Unsatisfactory Access to Bus Stops.pdf
9. Include proposed changes and improvements	 Better Walking to Bus Stops.pdf

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access.....
Recommendation name:	Run more bus and coach services ...
Recommendation number:	12
10. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part
11. Tell us why	The project team should investigate some service improvement options to improve regional rail services as well as bus and coach services.
12. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
13. Include proposed changes and improvements	 Regional Rail.pdf

Topic/area:	Victoria has a high productivity.....
Recommendation name:	Create and preserve opportunities.....
Recommendation number:	43
14. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
15. Tell us why	I very strongly support this recommendation. It should be extended to include protecting land for projects of all sizes. One part of this task is to not sell off current government land which may be used for future projects. Once it has gone it is extremely expensive and time consuming to repurchase the land which may destroy the viability of some projects
16. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
17. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing.....
Recommendation name:	Better Use of Land at Train Stations
Recommendation number:	New
18. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
19. Tell us why	 Better Local Access and Better Use of Land
20. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
21. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.

Topic/area:	Victorians have
Recommendation name:	Build a new bus.....
Recommendation number:	10
22. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
23. Tell us why	it is very good that buses are getting due recognition for the reasons you outline. I support the route but suggest: The Ringwood – Dandenong route be extended to Frankston, The Endeavour Hills route be extended to Narre Warren, both to connect into larger centres. In fact I suggest we have a “Dandenong Valley Rapid Transit” connecting the Knox – Dandenong area to major regional attractors such as Monash Uni and Monash Hospital and rail stations. The Wollert rapid Bus could link to rains at Epping and then link to Latrobe Uni, Northland and continue south to join the Eastern Freeway at Chandler Hwy. It could then use whatever bus route improvements are planned for the Doncaster buses, to get into the city. The “Western Rapid Transit” looks good too
24. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.

25. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.
Topic/area:	Victoria has a high.....
Recommendation name:	Use modern traffic control.....
Recommendation number:	40
26. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
27. Tell us why	It is really good that you have picked this topic up. There are now many techniques that can generate benefits at relatively low cost. Well done! Keep pushing it! (I worked in this area many years ago)
28. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
29. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access
Recommendation name:	Extend metropolitan trains.....
Recommendation number:	11
30. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ In part
31. Tell us why	In considering upgrading and electrifying the Wyndham Vale line, and possibly connecting it around to Werribee, did the analysis include consideration of Geelong line trains? The current combined Geelong/Wyndham Vale service is at capacity as both areas are generating more trips to Melbourne. This may effect the projects priority. At some pint the Gelong service will have to be separated from the Wyndham Vale one to achieve the promised time targets and capacity for Geelong services. Were scenarios tested where Geelong trains could return to running through Werribee, with some improvements on that route? If not, I suggest they should be done.

32. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Click or tap here to enter text.
33. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.
Topic/area:	Victorians have good access.....
Recommendation name:	Make Walking Easier and Safer
Recommendation number:	NEW
34. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In part
35. Tell us why	Walking is an important, but often overlooked mode of transport. It is included in most trips by car or public transport. It is often the only transport mode available for those without access to motor vehicles or distant from public transport or where public transport is difficult or impossible for people with mobility challenges to use. There are serious social issues for people effectively confined to home, when walking is constrained by lack of or poor paths and difficult crossing points on roads All the other modes of transport have recommendations, so should walking. There are links to recommendation 14 about safer streets See below.
36. Share any supporting evidence or examples	 Making Walking Easier and Safer Progi
37. Include proposed changes and improvements	Click or tap here to enter text.

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.

- 1 There is no mention of tourists or visitors in the strategy. They have an impact on Victoria's infrastructure in general and in specific places like the Great Ocean Road. Some recommendations about how we can support this major Victorian Industry should be included. Unlike many other industries, this involves the movement of people and services for them.
- 2 Budgets are limited as you wisely point out, so important, critical choices have to be made. How are informed choices made between projects categories made?. For example is building social housing a higher priority than electrifying the Melton railway?

Making Walking Easier and Safer Program

We need to support walking at its basic level - footpaths.

In this region, like many other middle, outer regional urban areas there is a lack of footpaths on busy roads and a lack of safer road crossings. This is a serious problem as people must walk on whatever surface exists or on the road traffic lanes. People in wheelchairs and those with children in pushers have to use the road lanes. Older people and others with balance problems cannot walk confidently on uneven surfaces. Some can use cars, but others, particularly older and less able people, give up and do not go out. They become isolated at home, unable to participate in community activities. This is an important social issue.

Lack of footpaths and safer road crossings limit people's ability to gain health and recreational benefits and again the less able are particularly disadvantaged. Everyone is challenged by walking at night in areas without footpaths.



For all of the above reasons safe, convenient and attractive walking infrastructure is required to encourage people to choose walking for trips. This includes trips linked with public transport.

Many councils are addressing this through Active Transport Strategies, but sufficient funding is always a challenge.

However, due to the size of the task, the State and Federal Governments, Councils and Related agencies such as the Transport Accident Commission, with its local road safety funding, and health and recreation agencies should contribute to the task.

The ***Making Walking Easier and Safer Program*** is proposed to highlight the need for walking infrastructure and to attract funds. It would be linked to Councils' walking strategies. It will provide:

- safer, direct and well surfaced footpaths lit by street lights on all major roads and many middle purpose roads in built up areas.
- safer crossing points at other locations where there is a high pedestrian demand to cross the road using treatments like median islands or other treatments best suited to the location, prepared by suitably qualified traffic engineers
- items supporting walking such as well-placed seats, direction signs and hand rails in steep or difficult spots.



Better Local Access and Better Use of Land around Train Stations

Land around stations is valuable for all sorts of high density living and services. Currently this is wasted as massive car parks.

The proposal involves extending the use of minibuses or similar delivering people right into the local train station to avoid the need for extensive car parks at the stations.

It would be the extension of the current Flexiride system.

The proposal will address a number of equity, environmental and economic concerns by:

- Providing better access to transport hubs by delivering people right into the station
- Enabling more people to be mobile without needing to use cars
- Freeing up land currently used for train station parking, for higher value uses such as enabling well designed, attractive town centres to be built. Tarneit is an example of a new station sitting in a massive car park. Can we use the land in a better way?
- Providing vegetation and instead of large areas of paved surfaces.
- Reducing energy consumption and emissions by using fuel efficient continually operating electric minibuses and reducing short, energy inefficient trips in current vehicles
- Assisting families by eliminating the need for 2nd or 3rd cars
- Avoiding heat and flooding problems resulting from large areas of paved surface
- Reducing commuter parking in local residential streets.

Immediately there should be some trials at train stations in new outer metropolitan areas, especially where there is limited other public transport. The need for massive car parks could be stopped.

Other Destinations and Variations

Other high priority local destinations served include:

- Medical and health services
- Shopping centres
- Libraries which will become a hub of communications and communication support for people who don't have high tech skills or equipment.

- Community facilities where people can gather for all sorts of meetings and events. Priority could be given picking up people who normally find it difficult to get out by usual transport
- Organisers of meetings and events could book the minibuss provider to collect people attending the meeting and returning them home afterwards, especially if many attendees are mobility challenged.

Other variations could be tried, eg taking people from a large car park at a sporting venue not used on week days to a number of destinations in a CBD.

They may also be a cost-effective form of public transport in developing areas before route buses are provided. I think this was provided in a new development in the Doreen area in Whittlesea municipality.

Finally

It will be up to the State Government extend the initiative and develop the business models for these services and to resolve conflict with other transport providers such as taxis and route buses operators. This should be done so that the services can get up and provide the community benefits they potentially can deliver.



Regional Rail Service Improvements

1 Introduction

This report puts forward potential additional mainly heavy rail transport projects, providing access improvements to additional Victorian regional cities, towns and growth areas. It is based on population and amended VIF 2023 population growth. There is demand for some of the services now, but most rely on future growth to make them viable, however the important action now is to protect the reservations for these futures services.

2 Summary

The projects will be needed at different times to match growth occurring. Some of the projects will be expensive, so the following priorities have been set:

High Priority - Plan now and implement in the next decade, when a reasonable demand exists

- Project 1 Ararat - Horsham - Nhill: reinstate passenger rail services
- Project 2 Ararat - Hamilton - Portland: reinstate passenger rail services
- Project 3 Maryborough - Mildura: reinstate passenger rail service.
- Project 4 Geelong - Ballarat: reinstate through passenger rail services and add suburban services between Geelong and Bannockburn

- Project 6 Torquay - busway or light rail
- Project 7 Drysdale - busway or light rail
- Project 8 Wendouree - Ballarat West - reconstruct line
- Project 9 Warrenheip - new station
- Project 10 Eaglehawk - Marong - upgrade track
- Project 17 Reopen the following Stations on existing rail passenger routes
Harcourt, Lake Boga, Gordon, Barnawatha, Lindenow, Moriac, Allansford

- Project 18 Upgrade Inverleigh Station to support Cruise Trains
- Project 19 Upgrade North Shore Station to over a good transfer experience to interstate trains.

Longer Term - reserve the land now but implement when land settlement has reached a viable level to support the service

- Project 5 Clyde - Wonthaggi: reconstruct rail line
- Project 11 Clarkefield - Lancefield, reconstruct line
- Project 12 Shepparton - Cobram reinstate passenger rail services, part reconstruct line
- Project 13 Benalla - Yarrawonga reinstate passenger rail services
- Project 14 Nyora - Leongatha - reconstruct line

Timing related to implementation of World Heritage Listing developments for Victorian Goldfields

- Project 15 Maryborough - Inglewood - Marong - part use freight line, part reconstruct line, or
- Project 16 Maryborough - Castlemaine - reconstruct line

3 Population Growth in Regional Victoria

3.1 Regional Centres

Regional centres are cities and large towns which have higher order services including educational, medical, business services, sporting and cultural activities and social opportunities to a wide catchment. They also have high populations of their own. There are various lists of existing and potential regional centres, but they generally include, and considered in this report:

South Western Victoria:	Geelong, Warrnambool, Colac, Hamilton, Portland
Western Victoria:	Ballarat, Horsham, Ararat
North Western Victoria:	Bendigo, Mildura, Echuca, Swan Hill, Maryborough
North Eastern Victoria:	Shepparton, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla,
Seymour (emerging)	
Gippsland:	Latrobe (Traralgon, Morwell, Moe), Sale, Bairnsdale,
Wonthaggi	

Although there are large towns in the outer metropolitan and periurban areas of Melbourne and Geelong, they do not provide the range of services expected in a regional centre.

Regional centres do and should continue to take most of the regional growth because they have reasonable levels of educational, medical, business services and cultural activities readily available.

People will move to regional areas if they are attracted. Planning needs to be aware of their preferred settlement locations, such as those with a full range of services, easy access to Melbourne and other higher centres, within two hours of Melbourne, coastal and pleasant landscapes.

For these reasons regional centres should be connected to higher order centres and Melbourne by high standard transport links, preferably heavy rail.

3.2 Existing and Potential Growth Areas

Population growth in regional areas should be above VIF projections to take at least some additional pressure of the Metropolitan area.

Potential Future Growth Areas should continue to be identified to support existing ones.

However, development activities in regional areas should increase the population density to reduce the amount of land to be used.

In growth areas beyond the existing or feasible future rail network high standard transport systems would have to be provided on the road network.

Timeframes for these projects vary. Some of them will be some time off to co-incide with population growth, but the land need for all of these rail routes and stations must be retained or reserved now.

This report considers possible additional growth scenarios in the regional centres of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Wonthaggi and the Lancefield Corridor.

2.3 Other Growth Areas

the Murray River corridor from west of Cobram to east of Yarrawonga.

3 General Transport Points

Even if projects may be any years off, it is vital to now preserve old railway or other reservations which may need to be used for the line and stations.

The additional routes would serve as many or more people than some of the existing regional services.

Indicative Stations are shown on the proposed routes, for land reservation purposes, but would be finalised closer to when the route is being planned for implementation and settlement is taking place.

Light rail or segregated busways may be coming into the feasible range for a limited number of routes in Geelong. In Australia, evidence from Canberra, Gold Coast and Newcastle suggests light rail is implemented when the city reaches a population of about 400,000. Geelong is projected to reach this total in the early 2030's.. Hence a selective light rail system could be realistic then. Other regional cities will not reach this population in the timeframe of this report.

Busways would be an alternative. They come into their own when the road network becomes heavily congested.

Light rail or busway systems should be considered as part of urban transport planning and are not covered in this report.

Road coaches are difficult or impossible to use for people with some disabilities and impossible to use for wheel chair users. When regional trains have to be replaced by coaches, wheel chair users have to be provided with taxis.

The additional routes proposed in this report would serve as many or more people than some of the existing regional services.

4 Detailed Projects

4.1 Improving connections between regional centres and larger regional centres and Melbourne

Of the 22 regional centres five, Mildura, Horsham, Hamilton, Portland and Wonthaggi do not have a passenger rail service. All, except Wonthaggi have freight rail services, so at least a rail track is available. However, Wonthaggi is also considered a potential new growth area.

Even if projects may be any years off, it is vital to now preserve old railway or other reservations which may be used.

Project 1 Ararat - Nhill: reinstate passenger rail services

in conjunction with Melbourne-Adelaide 'Overland' service. Due to railway gauge differences trains could run directly to Melbourne via Cressy or passengers would change to a Victorian gauge train at Ararat and travel via Ballarat.

Indicative Stations - Great Western, Stawell, Murtoa, Horsham, Dimboola, Nhill.

Project 2 Ararat - Hamilton - Portland: reinstate passenger rail services

Similarly, due to railway gauge differences trains could run directly to Melbourne via Cressy or passengers would change to a Victorian gauge train at Ararat and travel via Ballarat.

Indicative Stations - Willaura, Dunkeld, Hamilton, Branxholme, Heywood, Portland

Project 3 Maryborough – Mildura: reinstate passenger rail service.

Unfortunately, passengers will have to change trains at Maryborough, until the rail gauge issue is sorted out

Indicative Stations – Dunolly, St Arnaud, Donald, Birchip, Woomelang, Ouyen, Hattah, Red Cliffs, Irymple, Mildura

Project 4 Geelong – Ballarat: reinstate through passenger rail services and add suburban services between Geelong and Bannockburn

This is currently a freight only line passing through Bannockburn. Suburban services could run between Geelong and Bannockburn and possibly Lethbridge if the growth area is extended.

The rail line continues through to Ballarat and some Bannockburn services could extend to Ballarat to provide a link between Victoria's two largest regional centres on a direct route.

Indicative Stations from North Geelong – Bell Post Hill, Moorabool, Gheringhap, Bannockburn, Lethbridge, Meredith, Elaine, Lal Lal, Yendon, Warrenheip, Ballarat

Project 5 Clyde – Wonthaggi: reconstruct rail line

Wonthaggi is a pleasant regional centre near the coast with a past history of coal mining. It has not developed as much as other Victorian coastal areas, until recently, possibly due to its perception as a coal mining town. Possibilities exist for growth around Wonthaggi that respects country, the environment and existing settlements and should be explored. The Bellarine – Surf Coast area provides an example of coastal development incorporating settlements which can support growth and others which should be protected from excessive growth.

Supporting Transport Initiative -- Rebuild the railway from Clyde, likely future end of the metropolitan service, to Wonthaggi. It could be extended easterly using some of the old coal mine railway routes, if any growth area is in that direction. It is appreciated that this is a high cost, longer term project justified if or when the population in the area is substantial.

However now is the time to ensure the rail reserve is retained.

An interim stage could be to use the more recently used Leongatha rail reservation from the metropolitan area to Lang Lang and then use road coaches. Korumburra, Leongatha and other South Gippsland coach services could use the Lang Lang interchange in either scenario. Regional Rail would offer a faster trip through the Metro area.

Indicative Stations – Tooradin, Koo Wee Rup, Lang Lang, Nyora, Bass Valley, Anderson, Kilcunda, Dalyston, Wonthaggi, Wonthaggi East

4.2 Supporting existing and potential growing areas

Geelong Area

Development in the Geelong area is occurring on a number of fronts including Armstrong Creek, Bellarine Peninsula (Leopold, Drysdale, Clifton Springs, Ocean Grove), Torquay and Bannockburn. Potential future development is considered for the Moorabool area and Bannockburn corridor, possibly extending further northwards.

Project 4 Geelong – Bannockburn – Ballarat

See Project 4 in Regional Connections

Project 6 – Torquay

Project 7 – Drysdale

Light rail or busways are possibilities for South Geelong – Drysdale and Marshall – Armstrong Creek – Torquay as they can use the street system for part of their route to better access key destinations and where no reservation is available. Details of the routes including opportunities at each end require further investigation.

Ballarat Area

Project 8 Wendouree – Ballarat West

Most greenfield development for many years ahead in Ballarat is planned for the north and west of the current urban area.

There are two options to extend rail services from Wendouree into the Ballarat Western and North Western growth areas. Wendouree services could be extended into a station on the selected line, either

- i The former Ballarat Cattle Siding branch last used in 1997, goes into the centre of the Western growth area, but some of the reservation has been built on. Oh dear! or
- ii A section of the former Skipton railway line, now a Rail Trail could service both the Western and North Western Growth areas.

More detailed analysis is required to select the best route and station(s) location.

Indicative Station – Ballarat West

Project 9 Warrenheip – New Station

Whilst more Stations may be required in regional cities in future. One location stands out now – the need for a station on the eastern side of Ballarat, to capture train

users from the eastern and southern sides of Ballarat. Warrenheip is initially suggested. It would also be on the Geelong-Ballarat Line

Bendigo Area

Project 10 Eaglehawk - Marong

Apart from the northern corridor with its recently added stations, the future growth area around Maiden Gully-Marong is the other growth area feasibly serviced by rail. The Eaglehawk - Marong section of the closed railway to Inglewood could be used to access this growth area. The Marong area is also considered for an inland port terminal with rail freight access.

Indicative Stations - Maiden Gully, Marong

All Regional Centres - Additional Stations

Some development in the regional cities may be serviced by additional stations on existing lines. These would be identified by overall transport planning for the city. This has happened recently as stations at Epsom and Huntly were opened to serve Bendigo's northern growth corridor.

Potential Growth Area - Lancefield Corridor

The Lancefield Corridor is physically attached to the Melbourne Plain as it is on the southern side of the Great Dividing Range which forms a physical and environmental barrier in the north. The Great Dividing Range should be used as the metropolitan boundary. It is in the regional Macedon Ranges Shire so has not been included in Metropolitan Planning. A possible growth corridor could extend linearly from Clarkefield in a northerly direction to Lancefield which is the same distance from Melbourne as the eastern parts of the Metropolitan area.

Project 11 Clarkefield - Lancefield,

Rebuild former railway, closed in 1956, 24km.

Indicative Stations - Bolinda, Monegeetta, North Monegeetta, Romsey, Lancefield

Potential Growth Area - Wonthaggi Area

Project 5 Clyde - Wonthaggi

See also Project 5 in Regional Connections

Smaller Growth Area - Victoria's Northern Coast - Murray River - Cobram and Yarrawonga

Growth is being experienced in many towns on Victoria's Northern Coast - the banks of Murray River, especially between west of Cobram and east of Yarrawonga. Growth is being experienced on both sides of the River. When the population of twin towns, such as Yarrawonga-Mulwala (11,000) and Cobram-Barooga (7,100) and people from the southern Riverina, who access Melbourne rather than Sydney, are aggregated, there is quite a potential patronage base. Then add future growth.

There are two possible rail routes which could serve this area:

Project 12 Shepparton - Cobram - 68km total - currently a freight railway to Strathmerton, then 15km of track would need to be replaced in the old railway reservation to Cobram. This route also services the Numurkah and northern Goulburn Valley. Operationally, some Shepparton services could continue on to Cobram.

Indicative Stations - Tallygaroopna, Numurkah, Strathmerton, Cobram

Project 13 Benalla - Yarrawonga - 65km - currently a freight only standard gauge railway for the whole length. No major intermediate towns. Operationally, services could link up with Albury trains at Benalla, Broad gauge trains at Seymour or run through to Melbourne.

Indicative Stations - Tungamah, Yarrawonga

Future detailed analysis is required, but as most of both routes is an operating railway, only action is required to preserve the route between Strathmerton and Cobram.

5 Other Potential routes

Project 14 Nyora - Leongatha - population and population growth - reinstate rail line, reserve remains as a rail trail

Project 15 Maryborough - Inglewood - Marong - a transport component for the World Heritage listing of the Victorian Goldfields

Project 16 Castlemaine - Maryborough - an alternative to the project 15 above

6 Reopening Train Stations on Existing Passenger Lines

During the 1980's and 1990's many regional towns lost their rail passenger service. In some cases whole lines were closed and on other lines individual stations were closed and trains sped through the towns. However other, smaller towns retained their train service.

Times have changes. We're keen on greater accessibility for all members of the community. Moderately sized towns in rural areas have particular accessibility challenges in getting to larger centres for higher order services, such as medicine, and social opportunities.

I recommend that trains again stop in the seven largest towns that trains speed through now. Each has a population of over 500 people and has grown in the past 15 years. Many people objected to losing their train service at the time and restoring it would be very well received.

Even if the station is not reopened in the near future, it is vital to reserve the land required now.

If the old station is no longer available, Victoria has recent experience in building small country stations, eg at Huntly, Goornong and Raywood.

Project 17 Reopen the following Stations on existing rail passenger routes

The stations are:

Harcourt - Bendigo Line north of Castlemaine

Lake Boga - Swan Hill Line, south of Swan Hill.

Gordon - Ballarat Line, west of Ballan

Barnawatha - Albury Line, west of Wodonga

Lindenow - Bairnsdale line, west of Bairnsdale

Moriac - Warrnambool Line, west of Waurin Ponds, also well located for a potential future growth area for Geelong Region and an interchange for bus links to the Great Ocean Road, avoiding the traffic in Geelong.

Allansford - Warrnambool Line, east of Warrnambool

7 Cruise Train Stations

Cruise trains operate for the journey as much as the destination. They stop at locations for hours at a time so that passengers can visit nearby attractions or to have events next to the train. They are an expanding segment of the travel market. Examples of Cruise trains are the Ghan, Indian Pacific and Great Southern.

Cruise train stations are where these trains stop. Inverleigh has become a cruise train station with limited facilities, but there is room to park the train.

The Great Southern luxury cruise train, operated by Journey Beyond, travels between Adelaide and Brisbane in Summer. It has off-train experiences in the Grampians, Greater Melbourne, Canberra, Hunter Valley and Coffs Harbour. One of the Greater Melbourne tours visiting the Clyde Park winery, using Inverleigh as the station for returning travellers.

Some special Ghan services, another Journey Beyond cruise train, have also started from Inverleigh.

The strategy should support development of the Inverleigh Cruise Train Station by improving facilities at Inverleigh to improve the experience and transfers. Good facilities could attract other train operators as well on a one off or regular basis. Local businesses and people should be involved in providing services to the station.

Project 18 Upgrade Inverleigh Station to support Cruise Trains

8 Interstate Rail Service Improvements

The 'Overland' is a conventional passenger train running between Melbourne to Adelaide. It calls into Geelong by stopping at North Shore station.

This can be the starting point for trips on the *Overland* to Adelaide and onwards to Perth on the Indian Pacific or Darwin on the Ghan or many other destinations in SA, WA and NT. It also serves some western Victorian towns.

Interstate passengers could break their journeys here to explore the Great Ocean Road and Geelong regions.

Geelong people are becoming aware of this link to Adelaide. It is a very pleasant way to travel.

However, the platform at North Shore is very basic, with only a 'bus shelter' structure for cover and no check-in facilities. Hardly a good welcome to the region.

Overland patronage has risen in recent years, post covid.

Despite the above, greater tourism and access opportunities benefit people and businesses in the region and beyond.

Project 19 Upgrade North Shore Station to over a good transfer experience to interstate trains.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Better Walking to Bus Stops

Better Walking to Bus Stops is a great way to deliver on:

- More homes in locations with great public transport access
- More options for how we move from place to place
- More jobs and opportunities closer to where you live
- More trees and urban greening in our parks and community space

Well-connected walking and bus links can provide an active alternative to car travel and can enable people who might otherwise stay at home to venture out and participate in community activities. It will make participation in the workforce easier if they can get to work conveniently and safely.

They are essential elements in Active Transport Strategies.

Currently there are some really good bus stops in outer Metropolitan and regional Victoria but pedestrian access is very difficult due to lack of paths and road crossings.

Getting to the buses can be a challenge.

The picture shows a bus stop with boarding/alighting hard standing areas and appropriate tactile facilities. But what about getting to and from the stops? Things go downhill quickly. The tactile ramp leads straight into a big puddle. There is no break in the median or opposite kerb to walk through and don't slip on the weeds in the median. At another stop the intrepid bus user has to negotiate a wire rope barrier in the median. They could walk along the road to the nearest median opening, in 80km/h speed zone, with no path, only vegetation up to the edge of vehicle traffic lane.

But aren't buses meant to cater for people with decreased mobility?

The link between bus stops and getting to them seems to have been missed.

There are plans to upgrade buses services in a big way, but some of this is in vain if people cannot easily and safely get to the bus stops.

Really useful bus stops need to be connected into the local street footpath networks with safe and direct paths. They also need safe road crossing places.

Let's have a ***Better Walking to Bus Stops Program*** .

It would be linked to councils' walking strategies to focus on access to bus stops and would provide:

1 safe, direct and well surfaced footpaths lit by street lights to link bus stops to the local footpath network. Signage would also be provided to indicate the way to the nearest bus stop.

2 safer crossing of roads, using treatments like median islands or other treatments best suited to the location.

When implementing the program, councils could take the opportunity to revegetate and green the road reserves.

Due to the size of the task, the State Government will have to contribute to the program as well as Councils. However, provision of this basic infrastructure will be very well received in outer (and some Middle ring) Metropolitan and regional areas.



Unsatisfactory Pedestrian Access to Bus Stops





