

Victoria's Draft Infrastructure Strategy

Casey's Summary of Submission April 2025



	Draft Recommendation	Casey Position	Casey Commentary
Goal 1 - Victorians have good access to housing, jobs, services and opportunities			
1	Build more social housing	Supported	Ensure social housing includes best practice environmentally sustainable considerations to ensure energy costs are kept low.
2	Facilitate markets and invest in kindergarten infrastructure	Supported	The City of Casey has a high demand for kindergarten places, with 302 children currently waitlisted (as of March 2025) and unable to be placed in a preferred kindergarten. With the increase of kindergarten hours in response to the Best Start Best Life reform, combined with the population growth within the City of Casey this unmet demand is estimated to significantly increase each year. By 2036 it is estimated that there will be a shortfall of more than 6000 kindergarten places within the City of Casey. Without having the data and awareness of market demand for kindergarten programs within long day care settings it is currently not possible to fully understand the overall demand and therefore not possible to adequately prepare for the necessary infrastructure. After extensive analysis, Casey determined that it was not financially viable to invest in infrastructure to fully respond to the recent early years reforms (BSBL) without seriously compromising the ability of Council to continue with initial capital investment in all other forms of assets and create a legacy of early years infrastructure that had a significant renewal tail which would again impact on renewal of all other asset types. This supports the need to diversify the methods of providing assets – beyond Council provision, to include State provision and/or private/not-for-profit investment in both capital and service delivery. Council has evidenced the appetite of the private early years market to gain an increased share in kindergarten provision, as seen through the transition of Casey kindergarten



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			service provision externally to support increased capacity of service delivery in response to reforms. Mechanisms for identifying and sharing supply and demand of kindergarten currently exist, but is State-Department centric (via the KISP). Creation of a dynamic open-data platform would support whole of market to contribute to the understanding of supply and demand and support private and not-for-profits to invest with confidence in priority shortfall areas. Current enhanced (Building Blocks) funding is supported and note that investment is targeted to areas of identified unmet demand. Council supports continuation of this funding stream to enable private investment, provided sector can have an agreed and transparent method of identifying supply and demand.
3	Plan and deliver expanded and new schools	Supported In Part	Casey will continue to need new and expanded schools to cater for population growth, so continued investment in schools is essential. One concerning aspect of this Strategy recommendation is that the government plan for new students in existing schools before building new ones. In growth areas such as Casey, schools are often already oversubscribed with many more students than intended for the site and portables occupying play space. Consequently, there is often requests by schools to utilise neighbouring Council sports reserves for student play; and surrounding streets being overly impacted by traffic and parking. For growth areas, where land has been allocated for new schools, it is appropriate for new schools to be prioritised over expansion of existing beyond their appropriate enrolment numbers.
4	Expand TAFE in Melbourne's growth areas and some large regional centres	Supported	
5	Build libraries and aquatic centres for Melbourne's growing communities	Supported In Part	Provision of libraries and aquatic recreation centres in growth areas as identified within this recommendation is essential for improving the health and wellbeing of young and diverse growth communities. Growth area Councils are typically undersupplied with these high value assets as there is inadequate funding to support their delivery. Casey will require an additional four libraries and a further aquatic facility to adequately service the community.

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			The Strategy recommends the Victorian Government contribute up to a third (or \$25 million) for aquatic and recreation centres and up to \$10 million for libraries, with the remainder of funding sourced from Council, Federal grants and/or potential commercial partnership. It would be preferable that the Strategy recommend the State fund a minimum of one third of the cost of construction of all integrated library and /or aquatic and recreation facility project costs. With reliable funding contributions growth Councils would be better placed to progress these major projects. The Strategy encourages integration of libraries with aquatic recreation facilities, along with shared planning and delivery with adjacent municipalities. This may not always be practical or desirable. The geographic expanse of Casey creates a growth corridor in isolation from neighbouring municipal development, with no opportunity to share resources or infrastructure. Additionally, while there is compatibility between libraries and aquatic recreation facilities, libraries also benefit strongly from co-location with other community infrastructure such as schools, kindergartens, community hubs and mixed-use activity centres which may or may not accommodate integration with an aquatic recreation facility.
6	Make government infrastructure more accessible	Supported	This recommendation which proposes priority public transport stop upgrades to meet legal accessibility requirements and fund further upgrades is strongly supported. When referencing further upgrades, the Strategy should also incorporate other essential improvements such as connecting paths and safe crossing points to make infrastructure accessible.
7	Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more homes.	Supported	The recommendation proposes to change all relevant planning schemes to rezone for more homes in Victoria's cities and reach housing targets and that more homes should be close to public transport and open space, with good access to services. While the recommendation is supported, the implementation should be led by Local Government, rather than State Government. Councils know their local communities and development constraints and are best placed to lead structure planning processes and subsequent planning scheme amendments. The State can partner with Councils to reach housing targets by processing planning scheme amendments promptly.
Future Option	Mandate more affordable homes near existing infrastructure	Supported	

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Future Option	Phase out residential stamp duties	None	
8	Extend Melbourne's trams to encourage more new homes nearby	Supported	
9	Run faster bus services, more often, in Victoria's largest cities.	Supported In Part	The intent to run buses more often, for longer hours, and give buses priority on the road as well as straighten out existing bus routes so they are fast and direct is supported. Whilst the recommendation aligns with Casey's priorities, it isn't clear whether the focus on 'Victoria's largest cities' includes Casey. New growth areas consistently have the least public transport services so the recommendation should be clearer about prioritising funding for bus services in growth areas. This would also be consistent with the with the Southern Metropolitan Partnership, Investment Framework, and Action Plan 2024.
10	Build a new bus rapid transit network	Supported	This recommendation would involve enhancing Melbourne's public transport network through a detailed assessment and reserving land for a new bus rapid transit network, prioritising routes that connect train stations and key destinations in Melbourne's north, west, and south-east, and extending the new Eastern Busway along Hoddle Street. Route selections will be focussed on addressing transport gaps, competitive travel times, and maximising public transport connections and interchange opportunities. The proposal to provide a bus rapid transit network connecting Endeavour Hills to Dandenong and suburban rail loop in Cheltenham is positive for residents in the north of Casey. The Strategy would be improved by providing clarity on its modelling methodology, specifically whether it relies solely on existing routes or also considers potential future routes, particularly in growth areas. Future routes in key growth corridors and suburbs, such Clyde, Cranbourne and surrounding areas would benefit from the rapid transit route planning.
11	Extend metropolitan trains and run more services in Melbourne's west	Supported In Part	This proposes train network and services improvement only for western suburbs. Although later Recommendation 43 and a future option reference the extension of Cranbourne Rail to Clyde these should have an equal focus to the west of Melbourne.

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			The ABS census data 2023 reveals that despite having a smaller land area than Melton, the City of Casey has a population density per square kilometre nearly 2.5 times higher than Melton, highlighting its unique growth challenges. And while Melton's growth rate percentage is higher than Casey's, the population forecast indicates that Casey's population will ultimately be 1.3 times larger. We therefore urge consideration of the City of Casey's distinct growth needs and public transport challenges, and request that this recommendation be updated accordingly to be inclusive of the southern metropolitan region.
12	Run more bus and coach services to regional Victoria	Supported	
13	Make off-peak public transport cheaper and simplify regional fare zones	Supported	Casey residents would benefit from this recommendation as it encourages better uptake of public transport. Making off-peak transport cheap encourages more people to use it and simplifying the regional fare zones can reduce customer confusion and improve the overall user experience.
Goal 2 - Victorians are healthy and safe			
14	Make local streets safer for children and communities	Not Supported	This recommendation proposes to reduce speed limits to 30km/h on local streets, starting in places that children often visit including around schools, playgrounds, childcare centre and kindergartens. There are road safety benefits of lower speed limits however several other critical factors must be considered and a default speed limit of 30km/hr is not appropriate. Factors to be considered include road design and cross-sections, road classification, traffic volume and vehicle types, housing density, and time of day and peak hours when children are most likely to be present. As a growth area municipality with typically wider road cross-sections, many of our local streets near these land uses may not be suitable for a 30km/h speed limit. A more tailored and context-specific limit reduction approach should be applied where there is a higher likelihood of vulnerable road users walking or using other forms of active

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			transport including near activity centres, station precincts, and areas with high housing density.
15	Build safe cycling networks in Melbourne and regional cities	Supported	The intent to “continue building protected and connected cycle corridors across Victoria and publish updates to the strategic cycling corridor network” is notable however, the detailed investment plans lack benefits for Casey. The ten priority corridors identified are guided by research from the Institute for Sensible Vehicle Transport's Bicycle Use Propensity Index. This index guides investment in cycling infrastructure by identifying areas with high potential for increased cycling uptake however this index relies on fundamental inputs such as low motor vehicle ownership, bicycle use, and short car trips, all of which are not applicable to Casey and many metropolitan areas. There should be additional metrics included to inform the planning and investment of safe cycling corridors. Consideration needs to be given to areas with unique demographic characteristics and investments be made to encourage more cycling trips and reduce car ownership and dependency, in line with Southern Metropolitan Partnership, Investment Framework and Action Plan 2024.
16	Help government schools share their grounds	Supported in Part	This recommendation recognises that sharing public assets such as school grounds for out of school hours play and exercise. It reflects a reluctance by around one third of public schools to share their outdoor recreation facilities after hours or on weekends due to concerns about damage to school property or increased maintenance requirements. The recommendation seeks a commitment to funding to help schools in priority areas be upgraded to allow community use. It also suggests that local government should partner with schools to help maintain school grounds for out of hours use. General sharing of grounds for exercise and play shouldn't come at a cost to local government however like most growth Councils, Casey has a shortage of sporting facilities, particularly indoor stadiums and the growing costs to maintain more over time will be an ongoing challenge. Where shared use agreements can be negotiated and it is serving a gap in the provision then there is merit in partnering with schools. There is precedent for this and learnings that can be applied to ensure outcomes are mutually beneficial.

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17	Invest in maintenance, upgrades and expansions of community health facilities	Supported	
18	Build more residential alcohol and other drug treatment facilities	Supported	
19	Invest in digital healthcare	Supported	
20	Upgrade critical public hospital infrastructure	Supported	
21	Better use prisons and invest more in health facilities and transition housing	Supported	
Goal 3 – Aboriginal people have self-determination and equal outcomes to other Victorians			
22	Invest in secure homes for Aboriginal Victorians	Supported	
23	Fund better health and wellbeing infrastructure for Aboriginal Victorians	Supported	There are an estimated 2395 people residing in Casey who identify as part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This represents the third largest population for local government areas in Greater Melbourne and sixth largest across Victoria. Funding for health and wellbeing infrastructure projects for Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) along with additional annual funding to further develop the skills and capacity of health and wellbeing ACCOs to plan, develop and deliver new and upgraded infrastructure in a self-determined way is supported.
Goal 4 – Victoria has a thriving natural environment			

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24	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from infrastructure	Supported	
25	Advance integrated water management and use more recycled water	Supported	The recommendation focuses on advancing integrated water management by increasing the use of recycled water, including an innovative approach of using recycled water for drinking purposes. It also highlights the importance of improving community understanding of the need for diverse water sources to enhance long-term water security. The recommendation of enhancing recycled water use for long-term water sustainability is supported subject to broadening the scope to include stormwater and rainwater reuse opportunities. With appropriate state-level guidelines and additional funding, stormwater and rainwater reuse can be expanded for innovative usage such as swimming pool top-ups, showering, and in cooling towers. Identifying opportunities beyond recycled water will further reduce pressure on Victoria's drinking water supply as demand continues to grow. The City of Casey currently operates several stormwater harvesting systems for open space irrigation. In collaboration with water authorities and state government, Council is keen to explore opportunities to expand stormwater and rainwater reuse beyond irrigation, supporting greater community water resilience.
Future Option	Plan for and invest in manufactured water	Supported	
26	Better use government land for open space and greenery	Supported In Part	The recommendation aligns with Casey's strategic directions; in that it focuses on increasing and connecting open spaces and achieving 30% tree canopy on public land which is aligned to the Greening Casey Strategy. Unfortunately, it lacks viable actions to achieve meaningful outcomes in Casey. Casey has limited centrally located large size parks and open space despite rapid population and development growth. The recommendation talks to government land like golf courses and cemeteries being opened up for public use, however Casey doesn't have any public land of this type within the municipality. Another part of the recommendation in the report is for Council's to use the Pick My Park program's \$250,000 grants to help

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			improve connections. The scale of these grants is insufficient to acquire and connect open spaces in urban growth areas and its community voting model leads to outcomes focussed on improving infrastructure in established suburbs as opposed to city shaping outcomes. The recommendation doesn't address biodiversity and habitat value in reserves and doesn't acknowledge that in growth areas land isn't allocated specifically for conservation, just active and passive open space. If Casey is to achieve cross city trails as earmarked in its Walk and Ride Strategy, State and Federal Government funding will be required. Currently there a limited grant programs that support this type of infrastructure.
26	Better use government land for open space and greenery	Supported in Part	
Goal 5 – Victoria is resilient to climate change and future risks			
27	Better prepare infrastructure for climate change	Supported	This recommendation acknowledges the importance of investing in climate-resilient infrastructure through the updated Victorian Climate Action Plan and the development of an energy sector adaptation plan. While the City of Casey supports this direction, the recommendation does not provide confidence that local councils' needs will be adequately considered. Given the work already undertaken through <i>Victoria's 2017 Climate Change Adaptation Plan</i>, the <i>2022 Built Environment Climate Adaptation Action Plan</i>, and the <i>2024 Weathering the Storm – Adapting Victoria's Infrastructure to Climate Change</i>, the recommendation remains ambiguous. It essentially suggests updating existing plans, with the energy sector adaptation plan already identified in the <i>2024 Weathering the Storm</i> report. Many local councils have conducted or are currently completing climate change risk assessments on council assets. Casey Council has identified approximately 260 at-risk assets due to extreme weather events. In Caseys coastal towns, Tooradin and Warneet, some existing structures may need to be decommissioned or relocated due to present-day coastal hazard mapping. Implementing adaptation measures is both costly and complex, beyond the capacity of local councils.

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			Despite the increasing impacts from extreme weather events, local governments are struggling to adequately invest in the resilience of their infrastructure (including storm-water management, drainage etc) due to a lack of translation of risk information into financial context to inform infrastructure investment. In addition, many of the required solutions require collaboration and action with other key stakeholders such as Melbourne Water, Park Victoria, Planning Victoria and private to adequately engage in decision-making with these partners. Recommendation 27 should emphasize meaningful collaboration with local councils to prioritize infrastructure investments for adaptation. The <i>Financing Flood Infrastructure Project</i>, supported by the National Disaster Ready Fund and executed by South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA), exemplifies effective partnership with local councils to develop clear, well-costed programs. Strengthening infrastructure resilience will protect communities and ensure councils can continue providing essential services.
28	Use new flood maps to revise planning schemes	Supported In Part	The Victorian State Government should be resourced to coordinate flood studies and maps in consultation with floodplain management authorities and local government authorities and make the information available earlier to the public. The current flood study process is left to floodplain management authorities and individual local government authorities to prepare and attempt to deliver in an ad hoc way. Furthermore, the timing of planning scheme amendments to implement the modelling is usually subject to resources and a political desire to entertain the need for updating planning schemes. The Victorian State Government could also assist with coordinating a more consistent policy approach to planning controls via planning schemes; support for local government storm and flood Emergency Management Plans; building regulations via the report and consent process and property information certificates; and state emergency services via VicSES local flood guides.
29	Coordinate faster delivery of key energy infrastructure	Supported In Part	This recommendation is critical to achieve the State Government Net Zero Target of 2040 by fast tracking renewable energy projects, storage and transmission infrastructure through better coordinated approach of the various renewable energy projects. The City of Casey Council supports improved coordination of key projects; however, this must not come at the expense of environmental protection obligations. Notably, delays in the Victorian offshore wind project have resulted from the denial of environmental approvals for the Port of Hastings development due to its impact on protected wetlands. The coastal environment is fragile and increasingly affected by climate change, leading to

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			erosion and inundation. Some of these ecosystems are unique to the region and found nowhere else in the world. It is strongly recommended that the energy transition be carried out in harmony with nature.
30	Improve environmental assessments and site selection for energy projects	Supported In Part	Improving transparency and clarity of requirements is supported providing streamlining processes doesn't reduce effectiveness of environmental protections. Often extra assessments are only required when initial assessments discover something unexpected. Streamlining too much may reduce the ability to identify these unexpected situations.
31	Invest in home, neighbourhood and big batteries for more energy storage	Supported	
32	Determine long duration energy storage needs	Supported	
33	Develop regional energy plans, guide transition from fossil gas and maintain reliable gas supply	None	
34	Speed up household energy efficiency and electrification	Supported	This recommendation is focused at improving energy efficiency and electrification of households. This is aligned to City of Casey's community programs on electrification and improving energy efficiency for greater thermal comfort. City of Casey is supportive of this as 77% of Casey Councils community emissions if from natural gas (18%) and electricity from non renewable sources (59%). Electrification of homes and making homes energy efficient will significantly reduce carbon emissions once households are able to transition to renewable energy. This recommendation specifically calls out low income households and renters as being at a disadvantage as low income earners and renters are less likely to access schemes such as solar rebates and energy upgrades. Support to low income homeowners to electrify their homes and government funding to electrify all social homes is highly supported. City of Casey Council has a diverse community with 46.5% that are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD). 14.1% of the community have trouble speaking English and in some communities like Mandarin, Hazaraghi and Khmer, one quarter experience difficulties reading and speaking. Information that is made available to residents needs to be simple and consider the diversity.

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			The recommendation also requires Victorian homeowners to disclose the energy efficiency ratings of their homes at the time of sale or lease. This will allow buyers and renters to make informed decisions about potential energy costs and overall comfort however there is a need for staged implementation. The Australian Government's Home Energy Ratings Disclosure Framework, developed in 2024 establishes a national approach to assessing home energy performance and should be relied upon for consistency.
Goal 6 – Victoria has a high productivity and circular economy			
35	Prepare and publish infrastructure sector plans to shape Victoria's cities	Supported	The draft recommendation requests that government agree on a set of assumptions, including long-term population, job, and land use forecasts, to guide departments in shaping more compact cities. Once established, departments responsible for infrastructure are requested to publish strategic-level plans for infrastructure delivery, tailored to meet the needs of various city types, including compact and diverse cities. This is supported and would be particularly helpful in growth areas where there are significant infrastructure deficits. Notably, the Strategy repeatedly references 'compact cities' in established suburbs, which may be linked to housing intensification. However, the document lacks a clear definition of 'compact' and specific metrics, such as dwellings per hectare, to quantify this concept.
36	Reform infrastructure contributions	Supported In Part	The draft recommendation proposes to "simplify Victoria's infrastructure contribution schemes to cover all types of housing developments and reflect the cost of infrastructure in different development settings." Casey is a metropolitan growth area council managing 15 Development Contribution Plans and Infrastructure Contribution Plans (contribution plans) in various stages of the implementation life cycle. These contribution plans deliver infrastructure costing at over \$2.5 billion and provide tailored responses to the infrastructure needs of, and land values in, our growth areas. Casey also manages public open space contributions. There is merit in a Statewide approach for levying all development and subdivision that requires demand for infrastructure and addressing loopholes like build-to-rent not requiring public open space contributions however bespoke contribution plans need to be maintained for growth areas.

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37	Improve asset management of all government infrastructure	Supported	Improving the Victorian Governments asset management capability would assist with the prioritisation of resources on maintaining existing assets. The level of investment in asset renewal of State infrastructure is particularly evident in the State road network throughout Casey. Council is often receiving complaints about the condition of State roads.
38	Prepare for more recycling and waste infrastructure	Supported In Part	The recommendations to identify and publish places for new recycling and waste infrastructure in the next update to the <i>Victorian recycling infrastructure plan</i> is supported. It is preferable that the process for planning major recycling and waste infrastructure sites be led by the Victorian Government, following a transparent and robust process that takes into consideration the views of local communities and Councils. There is also a need for more support for local government in preparing for more recycling and waste infrastructure facilities. Currently the respective roles of the EPA and local governments in planning for waste and resource recovery infrastructure are not clearly defined. There is overlap between the planning and licensing regimes and inconsistencies in the way land uses are defined. A review of the <i>Planning and Environment Act</i> and <i>Environment Protection Act</i> has the potential to eliminate unnecessary complexity and avoid duplication in the planning and licensing approvals and improve ongoing accountability for enforcing these matters under both Acts. There has been increasing demand for smaller waste and resource recovery facilities seeking to operate on more constrained sites within existing commercial or industrial precincts. Changes to current planning controls to give Councils and the EPA appropriate tools to ensure these are appropriately designed and located to ensure their safe operation in the context of surrounding land uses would be welcome.
39	Use digital technologies to better design, build, operate and maintain government infrastructure	Supported	
40	Use modern traffic control technology for efficient and safe journeys	Supported	
Future Option	Charge people fairly to use roads	Not Supported	Congestion charging can effectively reduce road congestion, but it unfairly impacts residents people with less means to pay, or those in growth areas who are unable to source local jobs and do not have public transport options. The focus should be on

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			improvements in public transport networks to make those modes more appealing than driving.
41	Make rail freight competitive, reliable and efficient	Supported	
42	Encourage off-peak freight delivery in urban areas	Supported	
Future Option	Plan for more efficient and sustainable urban freight	Supported	
43	Create and preserve opportunities for future major infrastructure projects	Supported In Part	A focus on creating and preserving opportunities to build long-term major infrastructure projects including a rail line extension to growth areas in Melbourne's southeast is welcome. Unfortunately the recommendation only addresses planning for the rail extension to the southeast (Clyde) but does not provide a clear plan for the delivery of this much-needed project that will connect fast growing communities to essential services and jobs. connectivity, and severed cross-connectivity across the rail corridor.
Future Option	Reconfigure the City Loop for more frequent and reliable trains	Supported	
Future Option	Extend metropolitan trains to growth areas in Melbourne's north and south-east	Supported	This future option to be upgraded to be a priority recommendation. If made a priority recommendation, it would require government action within the next five years. This project will complement other draft recommendations linked to public transport, which address transport gaps, competitive travel times, and public transport connections and interchange opportunities. The Clyde rail expansion must include an upgrade Cranbourne Railway Station which is needed to avoid a suboptimal solution for the rail crossing of South Gippsland Highway. A potential quick-fix road bridge design will have detrimental impacts, including poor urban design outcomes, limited pedestrian connectivity, and severed cross-connectivity across the rail corridor.

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