

BRIEFING NOTE

VICTORIA'S DRAFT 30-YEAR INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY - HIGHLIGHTS FOR RAIL

Since 2016, when Infrastructure Victoria released its first 30-year infrastructure strategy, Victoria has experienced rapid population growth, and more recently the bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Infrastructure Victoria is seeking feedback and evidence on its 95 draft recommendations for infrastructure policies, reforms and projects, to help it shape its 2021 strategy. Once tabled in the Victorian Parliament later this year, the Victorian Government will have up to 12 months to respond to the recommendations and create its own five-year infrastructure plan for implementation.

The ARA is reviewing the draft strategy and is seeking the views and input of members to inform a response. Outlined below are the key highlights and recommendations from Victoria's Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy that will be of interest to ARA members.

Confront Long-term Challenges

The recent global experiences underline that events are uncertain and unpredictable. Long-term strategy must be adaptable and resilient, able to adeptly change and recalibrate in different circumstances, while confronting long-term challenges.

Stay Connected to Global Markets

Rec 25 – Act now to protect the future Bay West Port option.

Immediately identify and secure land and apply planning protection for transport corridors and buffers for a future Bay West Port, particularly future road and rail connections within the Urban Growth Boundary, and commence environmental monitoring. Around 2040, begin detailed planning for the port.

Rec 26 – Purchase land for Melbourne's future freight terminals.

In the next five years, buy the land and develop business cases for new intermodal freight terminals and precincts at Truganina and Beveridge to deliver a terminal in time for the completion of the Inland Rail project.

Rec 27 – Construct an outer metropolitan road and rail corridor.

Within two years, determine staging for the outer metropolitan rail and road corridor. Construct the

E6 motorway in the next 20 years, and progressively construct the outer metropolitan road and rail corridor in the next 30 years, including integrating a rail freight line, subject to detailed feasibility studies and business cases.

Manage Urban Change

A decade of rapid population growth has strained Victoria's infrastructure, creating congestion and shortfalls as the state struggled to keep up. The population growth pause induced by the COVID-19 pandemic allows time to ensure systems and policies are in place to better manage population growth when it eventually returns.

Integrate land use and infrastructure planning

Rec 33 – Publish Victoria’s transport plan.

Immediately develop and publish Victoria’s integrated transport plan. Require transport and land use plans to align with each other.

Create Thriving Urban Places

Rec 42 – Redesign tram routes.

In the next 10 years, redesign tram routes, including short shuttle routes, and reserve land for future tram depots, for mor capacity in fast growing inner Melbourne areas.

Rec 43 – Activate urban renewal with new tram links.

Immediately fund the northern Fishermans Bend tram connection for delivery by 2026. Within two to five years, commit to delivering a tram extension to Arden, and to the former defence site at Maribyrnong, if required.

Rec 44 – Plan for public transport accessibility, including tram stop upgrades.

Release a new Accessible Public Transport Action Plan within one year and fund public transport accessibility upgrades, including priority tram stops, to achieve the legislated 2032 accessibility targets.

Harness Infrastructure for Productivity and Growth

Managing demand and squeezing maximum efficiency from existing infrastructure can do much to improve the productivity and effectiveness of the infrastructure Victoria already has. But some future major transport projects may be required especially if the state returns to rapid population growth.

Shape the Transport Network for Better Access

Rec 64 – Increase suburban rail corridor services and capacity.

Develop and progressively deliver a prioritised, 15-year network service upgrade program for Melbourne’s suburban train corridors, including track, signalling and train carriage projects that expand services and help encourage development in locations able to manage extra population growth. Continue to improve service frequency towards a turn up and go service for more of the day.

Rec 65 – Reconfigure the city loop for cross-city train services.

Immediately after the Melbourne Metro opens in 2025, reconfigure the city loop to allow for more cross-city train services.

Rec 66 – Prepare for Melbourne Metro Two.

Within five years, complete the Melbourne Metro Two business case to protect the land required to construct it. To manage and grow demand along the proposed corridor, introduce premium bus services between Newport and Fishermans Bend, and between Victoria Park and Parkville, within five years.

Plan for Growth Areas

Rec 69 – Expand rail access in outer suburbs.

In the next five years, complete plans to progressively expand access to rail services in growth areas and purchase remaining land required for rail corridors and stations. Immediately introduce premium bus services toward Clyde, Wollert and the Mornington Peninsula. Develop business cases to improve the Melton, Wallan and Wyndham Vale corridors, and conduct a feasibility study for a Wollert public transport corridor.

Develop Regional Victoria

Infrastructure can support a region's competitive strengths, help adapt to economic change, and address socioeconomic disadvantage for some of Victoria's most vulnerable communities.

Enhance Market Access and Productivity

Rec 78 – Revise the Murray Basin Rail project plan.

Immediately revise the Murray Basin Rail project plan, informed by the project's business case review.

Connect the Regions to Help Strengthen Wellbeing

Rec 85 – Reform regional public transport to meet local needs.

In the next five years, gradually redirect some regional transport funding to redesigned, integrated local transport services, based on regional needs assessments, and incorporating flexible services that meet local needs.

Want to contribute to the ARA's submission?

The ARA is seeking views, comments and input from members to assist with informing the development of the ARA's response to the draft 30-year infrastructure strategy for Victoria.

Please provide your input to the ARA's submission to ARA General Manager, Policy and Government Relations, Simon Bourke, at sbourke@ara.net.au by **Friday, 12 February 2021**.

Further information on the draft strategy can be found at www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au.