

8th September 2010

Mr Corey Hannett
Executive Director
Regional Rail Link
Department of Transport
PO Box 2797,
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Hannett,

LEADWEST SUBMISSION ON THE REGIONAL RAIL LINK PROJECT

Please find attached the LeadWest submission on the proposed alignment for the Regional Rail Link project.

LeadWest recognises that the project will have a significant effect on communities during and after construction. Thus, LeadWest requests that the issues raised in the submission be carefully considered and that continuous and close consultation occur with the councils of the western metropolitan region as the project progresses through its planning, design and implementation stages. LeadWest further believes that corridor based integrated land-use planning and high quality urban design is essential to achievement of optimal outcomes for the project.

LeadWest and its broad-based membership see the Regional Rail Link project as an extremely important project for the future of rail based transport to support the rapid population growth and associated development of the western metropolitan region and we commend the attached submission and recommendations to you.

Please feel free to contact me if you require further information on LeadWest's submission.

Yours sincerely,

Anton Mayer
Chief Executive Officer
LeadWest Ltd

LEADWEST SUBMISSION TO THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT ON KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE REGIONAL RAIL LINK PROJECT

LeadWest, on behalf of its members which are key western metropolitan region stakeholders, is pleased to submit its views on the strategically important Regional Rail Link (RRL) project.

LeadWest requests that the Victorian Government work closely with our key member councils on issues to achieve a high quality result from what is a major infrastructure investment by both the federal and state governments.

In order to optimise the overall benefits from the project to both the broader Melbourne metropolitan area and the western region, it is important that both broader and local community viewpoints are taken into account.

Regional Strategic Drivers

The RRL project delivers significantly improved public transport outcomes for the west and it offers much more.

There are four key points of concern for the regional stakeholders:

1. Optimising the opportunities for urban renewal and higher density greenfield development

Accommodation of increased population in Melbourne's western region in a manner that supports sustainability requires higher density development for residential and mixed uses along existing railway corridors throughout the region.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders seek to realise opportunities for urban renewal and higher density greenfield development. This can be facilitated through the RRL by redevelopment of the Footscray Station Precinct and the Sunshine Station Precinct, minimisation of impacts on current urban renewal sites within the Footscray Activity Centre and integration of existing planning in greenfield sites in Wyndham Vale with planning for the RRL.

2. Optimising the opportunities at road interfaces

The RRL has many interfaces with current arterial roads and will impact on roads that are planned.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders seek grade separation of road and rail at all interface points between current arterial roads and the RRL. Stakeholders also seek to avoid the imposition of unnecessary costs for infrastructure that is planned through provision of in the design for the RRL for "future-proofing" through designs that can achieve grade separations now or in the near term.

3. Optimising the opportunities for future rail projects

The duplication and electrification of the railway line to Melton is required to support future urban development in this growth corridor. Prior to implementation of a duplication and electrification project on the Melton line, it is expected that following the electrification of the Sunbury line the number of services will double on the Melton line and the Sydenham line from Sunshine.

Consequently, there is high probability of serious congestion and safety problems should there not be implementation of timely grade separation projects at the crossings with interfacing roads along the Melton/Sydenham lines.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders seek in the design of the RRL measures that “future-proof” by allowing for efficient grade separation projects on both “greenfield” and “brownfield” sections.

4. Enhancing the image of Melbourne’s West through good quality urban design and landscaping

The image of Melbourne’s western region that is impressed upon people travelling through and within the region is impacted by the design and maintenance of facilities and landscaping along regional transportation corridors. The RRL will run in a long corridor through a range of urban environs in Melbourne’s western region.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders seek high quality urban design and landscaping throughout the RRL corridor so that it provides a positive contribution to the image of the region.

Other points of concern shared by the regional stakeholders include:

5. Communication and community engagement

A well researched Communication Program, keeping all stakeholders informed ahead of decisions being made, is essential to the planning and implementation of major infrastructure projects.

The initial consultation and engagement process on the RRL project led to significant uncertainty and gave rise to community concern and confusion about property acquisition and other aspects of the project.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders perceive scope for much improved communication processes regarding the RRL and seek input into how the RRL Communication Program is further developed and refined.

Regional stakeholders also commend the formation of an ongoing Communication Coordination Committee.

6. Technical Reference Group

Regional stakeholders commend the formation of a Technical Reference Group.

7. Land Acquisition Process

Regional stakeholders accept that there is established procedure for the acquisition of land. However, the councils of the region directly impacted by the RRL (i.e. Maribyrnong, Brimbank and Wyndham) seek a monitoring role in which they are kept informed of where and when additional land acquisition is planned. This request reflects the fact that affected property owners usually look to their council for information and support.

8. Construction Impact

The RRL project is of a scale that its construction is likely to have significant temporary impacts for residents, businesses and visitors travelling within the region.

There is likely to be significant construction access, traffic and parking impacts, impact on amenity due to the noise and vibration created by construction vehicles and equipment, and impacts associated with storage of construction materials and management of construction waste.

These impacts are likely to be more intense in the “brownfield” sections of the RRL route.

Additionally, there is likely to be direct impacts on assets owned and/or controlled by councils in the region.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders seek consultation on the Construction Management Plan.

9. Operational Impact

As the RRL corridor goes through “brownfield” that in part is presently built-up residential areas, as well as “greenfield” that in part is planned to be developed as residential areas, there is an imperative to attenuate noise and other pollution caused by operation of the RRL.

Accordingly, regional stakeholders seek a design process for the RRL that places appropriate attention on measures that properly attenuate noise and other pollution.

10. Pedestrian and Bicycle Access

The RRL will present as a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrian and bicycle crossings will need to be accommodated.

The RRL, covering some 50 kilometres, will also provide for numerous opportunities to further the Victorian Cycling Strategy. There are many areas where opportunities will present to link the railway stations with shared pathways that provide access to Principle Activity Centres, Major Activity Centres and Central Activity Districts. The councils of the region directly impacted by the RRL accept the premise that they will have responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the shared pathways, so long as the paths are constructed to a standard that satisfies both the Victorian Government and the councils.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders seek:

- a) Incorporation of pedestrian crossings into the RRL project, both in alignment with current crossings and making allowance for future crossings.
- b) Provision within the RRL project for the construction of shared pathways.

11. Integration with other policies and strategies

There are various policies and strategies of the Victorian Government and local governments within the affected region that cover key precincts along the RRL corridor, such as those covering Footscray, West Footscray, Tottenham and Sunshine.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders suggest a multifaceted master planning exercise around the key nodes on the RRL corridor. At these key nodes integration is required to ensure the RRL does not compromise what is already planned. It is also required to ensure opportunities are opened, thus enabling optimal outcomes.

12. Drainage

The RRL corridor traverses a number of areas where drainage of surface water is problematic. Rather than exacerbate the problems, careful design of the RRL could assist in overcoming them.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request that drainage issues be included in the RRL design process.

13. Contaminated Land

Due to the long history of industrial land use in large tracts of land within the region, land contamination is a key issue.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request that an Environmental Audit be provided as part of the RRL planning approvals process.

14. Public Art

The image of Melbourne's western region that is impressed upon people travelling through and within the region is impacted by the design of infrastructure and landscaping along regional transportation corridors. There is an opportunity to enhance the image of the region through some of the design features of the RRL project.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request that commissioning and installation of suitable public art become part of the RRL project.

15. Local Employment Opportunities

There is an opportunity to enhance employment and skill training prospects for the region's workforce participants through involvement in the RRL project.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request that local employment and skills

development become part of the RRL project objectives.

16. RRL Maintenance

The image of Melbourne's western region that is impressed upon people travelling through and within the region is impacted by the maintenance of facilities and landscaping along regional transportation corridors. The opportunity to enhance the image of the region through proper maintenance when the RRL is operational is dependent upon consideration of maintenance issues at the design stage.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request the development of a maintenance schedule that provides for suitably programmed maintenance covering graffiti deterrence and eradication, litter collection, landscape maintenance and weed deterrence and eradication.

17. Crime Prevention Design and Physical Activity Support

The image of Melbourne's western region that is impressed upon people travelling through and within the region is impacted by their perception of safety. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behaviour through environmental design. There is an opportunity to realise benefits of CPTED in connection with the RRL project.

The crime prevention opportunity is best represented in the potential for redesign and re-building of railway stations and/or the public realm surrounding railway stations, particularly at Footscray, Middle Footscray, West Footscray, Tottenham, and Sunshine.

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request that CPTED be considered in the design of the RRL, especially with respect to the design of upgraded railway stations, associated car parks and public realm, and pedestrian and cycle path overpasses and underpasses along the RRL route.

18. Operational Issues

The operation of the RRL will have ongoing effects on the region. Mostly the RRL is likely to have operational effects with beneficial potential, providing advantages such as greater accessibility and reduced traffic congestion as commuters switch transportation mode. However, some operational effects have potential to be detrimental (e.g. noise pollution).

Accordingly, the regional stakeholders request confirmation that operational measures are taken to reduce noise and mitigate safety risks (e.g. speed controls).