

# LEADWEST MEMBERS / COUNCIL HIGHLIGHT REPORT DECEMBER 2010



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## **LeadWest Facilitates Forum for the Prime Minister in Melbourne's West**

Prime Minister and Member for Lalor, Julia Gillard presented to western region stakeholders the release of the Government's discussion paper on a National Urban Policy.

Over 70 key stakeholders from Melbourne's west convened at a Leadwest forum hosted by Wyndham City Council. Also in attendance were the Hon. Nicola Roxon, the Hon. Brendan O'Connor and the Hon. Bill Shorten.

"This is the start of an important national conversation about the future shape and character of Australia's biggest cities and regional centres, the engine rooms of growth, innovation and opportunity," Julia Gillard said.

"And there is no more appropriate place to talk about those issues than in the West of Melbourne.

"Western Melbourne is now the fastest growing region in Australia. That growth presents challenges that require long term planning which can make communities such as ours more productive, more sustainable and more liveable. Today I called upon government, business and community leaders to take part in this critical national discussion."

The final version of our National Urban Policy will provide a blueprint to:

- Better connect infrastructure with work and opportunity in our cities so we can reduce people's dependency on the car.
- Develop high quality public transport and infrastructure systems to ease congestion and improve quality of life.
- Reduce the carbon footprint of our cities and adapt them to the consequences of climate change.
- Improve urban planning and design to better reflect our increasingly diverse lifestyles, boost access and affordability.
- Get the right mix of urban density and renewal strategies.

"While national leadership is vital, we understand that lasting and meaningful change will only be achieved when all three levels of government are sharing the responsibility and working together to achieve agreed outcomes.

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“Importantly, the development of the National Urban Policy is the latest initiative by this Government to restore national leadership over the growth of our cities and the development of a sustainable Australia.

“Already this Labor Government has made substantial investments in the West including \$3.2 billion in the Regional Rail Link to make train travel faster and more efficient for commuters; \$15 million for a Western Melbourne GP Super Clinic to ease the pressure on Primary Care services, and over \$180 million for roads, housing, schools and community infrastructure as part of the National Building Package.

“But there is more work to do. I trust that the tradition of great community leadership in the west will continue and that our region will make some considered and informed submissions to this consultation process.”

Public submissions will close on 1 March 2011, with the final National Urban Policy to be published later in 2011.

For more information on the consultation process, go to:

<http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/urbanpolicy/index.aspx>.

## **LeadWest inputs into Committee For Melbourne Forum**

LeadWest’s CEO participated in the Committee For Melbourne end of year forum on the “shape of our city”. The forum at the MCG was attended by over 75 key stakeholders.

## **LeadWest Submission to VEAC re Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation**

LeadWest’s objective is to foster and undertake actions that will support sustainable growth and development of the region. We aim to build on the region's social, economic and environmental capacity and to plan and create a sustainable future for the wellbeing of its communities. LeadWest and the organisations it represents have a keen interest in the contribution of public land to the liveability of Melbourne’s west and seek to promote the opportunities for enhancing this contribution. Accordingly, LeadWest lodged a submission to the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council on matters relating to the Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation.

## **New Broom Sweeps Away Planning Laws**

LeadWest highlights the following report from *The Age* on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2010:

*PLANNING laws that made building high-density apartments near train and tram lines in Melbourne easier have been dumped.*

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*In one of his first official acts as Victoria's new Planning Minister, Matthew Guy last night overturned the former Brumby government planning laws facilitating high-density residential developments near all public transport and began an overhaul of the state's planning system.*

*It will take about 10 days for Mr Guy's changes to planning laws on public transport routes to come into effect.*

*The minister told The Age that instead of sprinkling high-density housing across Melbourne, the Baillieu government would look at massive strategic developments in specific sites close to the central business district, including at Fishermans Bend, the 20-hectare E-Gate site just off Footscray Road, and the area around Richmond station.*

*In a wide-ranging interview Mr Guy also promised that:*

- *His first priority will be to tackle housing affordability with increased land supply and urban renewal.*
- *The Growth Areas Authority will be incorporated in the Department of Planning.*
- *He will not retrospectively block the Hotel Windsor redevelopment, but believes it should not have exceeded the recommended height controls for the precinct.*
- *Has no intention of reviewing the Heritage Act.*
- *Will work on housing more of Victoria's booming population in regional centres such as Geelong.*

*Mr Guy said Victoria's new Treasurer, Kim Wells, would soon announce the promised stamp duty cuts of 50 per cent for those buying a first home valued up to \$600,000.*

*A new Urban Renewal Authority would be created in the next year to spearhead the massive new inner-city developments, Mr Guy said.*

*"We believe that Melbourne has huge potential for urban renewal.*

*"We look at places like Fishermans Bend, like E-Gate, areas such as Richmond station and others, which have been talked about for decades and never acted upon - we see these proposals as real opportunities for urban renewal in Melbourne.*

*"I believe this will be a hallmark of our generation, to leave to our children a city that believes not just in real homes on the edge of the city, but real opportunity for large-scale urban renewal close to the city, close to public transport and close to jobs, which can be realised, which is not pie in the sky."*

*Labor planning spokesman Brian Tee said the Coalition's housing strategy was too narrow.*

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*"Baillieu promised to fix the problems, but this approach is going to create problems," he said.*

*"You need an even spread, greater options rather just Richmond and the growth areas.*

*"Young couples need choices and we need to regenerate our housing.*

*"He is going to increase the cost of living, he is going to increase the cost of housing, he is going to drive young people, our best and brightest, interstate. They won't have options - their only option is going to be growth areas or interstate.*

*"It is easy to say where people can't live; Mr Guy has got to say where people can live."*

## **LeadWest meets with Pivot West**

LeadWest's CEO met with the CEO of Pivot West to discuss future development of Health Services in the West. Issues around GP Super Clinics and Medicare Locals were also discussed. The need to further enhance the health services facilities in the rapidly growing western suburbs continues to be a key LeadWest imperative.

## **Implementation of Medicare Locals**

By releasing the latest draft of the planned geographic boundaries for Medicare Locals, the Australian Government is taking the next step in reforming Australia's health system and establishing a new network of primary health care organisations.

Medicare Locals are a key component in the Australian Government's health reforms, which will provide better health services and a strong local focus for Australia's health system.

Medicare Locals will support health professionals to provide more coordinated care, improve access to services, and drive integration across the primary health care, hospital and aged care sectors.

They will build on the work of Divisions of General Practice, enhancing their role in supporting local health professionals and service providers, and focusing on the health needs of local communities.

The planned boundaries are based on work commissioned by the Australian General Practice Network and released for consultation in July 2010. About 120 submissions were received in response, and the Australian Government's planned boundaries reflect those submissions as well as extensive modelling of local populations and health services.

The Australian Government is now consulting with state and territory governments on the planned boundaries, with the aim of reaching agreement on final boundaries for Medicare Locals and Local Hospital Networks by the end of 2010.

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The first group of Medicare Locals – expected to be around 15 organisations – will commence operation in mid-2011, with the remainder commencing in mid-2012.

The planned geographic boundaries are available at <http://www.yourhealth.gov.au/>

## **LeadWest discusses Corporate Membership with RASV**

LeadWest met with the CEO of the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria (RASV) – managers of the “Showgrounds” about possible future areas of collaboration. The RASV is interested in joining LeadWest as they share a common interest in developing the western region capturing much needed funding to support the upgrade of transport infrastructure serving the western suburbs.

## **LeadWest discusses Corporate Membership with Citywide**

LeadWest met with Brad Green, the Infrastructure Business Development Manager for Citywide, a company founded by the City of Melbourne. Citywide is now a major Australian physical services company providing civil infrastructure, open space and environmental services to government and private enterprise. Sustainability is a company philosophy for Citywide and is supported by a strategy plan, integrated with operational systems, and social programs. Citywide has a track record of effective environmental management. From water use minimisation in heritage listed gardens to investment in world leading asphalt technology, Citywide is helping its customers meet tough environmental and emissions targets.

## **NCVER Research Paper – Responding to Changing Skills Demands**

A Research Paper released by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) *Responding to Changing Skills Demands: Training Packages and Accredited Courses* can now be accessed at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/>.

In part it confirms the Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is working effectively. It also highlights a number of key areas of action that align with the Australian Government’s reform agenda, such as:

- The Skills for Sustainable Growth package (\$660 million), designed to ensure that Australia has the skills it needs to drive productivity and support a growing economy.
- Critical Skills Investment Fund (\$200 million), a significant next step in ensuring a secure future for Australian industry that provides co-funding for industry partnerships to undertake projects that provide training and employment opportunities in the resources, construction, and renewable energy and infrastructure sectors.
- National VET Regulator and the National Quality Council (\$55 million), involving work in partnership with the States and Territories to further improve training delivery, assessment and responsiveness.

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The NCVET Research Paper also highlights the need to build basic literacy, language and numeracy skills so that no-one gets left behind.

The Australian Government's Foundation Skills Package endeavours to deliver a range of initiatives and additional funding aimed at improving literacy and numeracy skills through an expanded community-based service development and Workplace English, Language and Literacy program and a National Foundation Skills Outreach and Leadership Project.

The importance of quality and supply of the VET workforce is further demonstrated by the recent release of the Productivity Commission's draft report into factors affecting the current and future demand for the VET workforce, and the required mix of skills and knowledge.

The Commission is reviewing the current and future supply of the VET workforce; the structure of the workforce and its efficiency and effectiveness; and workforce planning and development, including any changes to ongoing data collection to provide for future planning and reporting requirements.

The NCVET Research Paper also examines how the training system responds to workplace change including new technology, innovative work practices and changing compliance requirements.

According to the research, training packages generally do reflect trends identified by industry, and the VET sector has robust mechanisms for identifying changes in occupational skills and knowledge and translating these into training package content.

Accredited courses are being used to cover emerging skills needs in the short-term until they can be formally incorporated into national training packages.

The Research Paper emphasises the importance of delivery and assessment in maintaining industry confidence in training. Skilled trainers and assessors are essential. Accordingly, the Research Paper is supportive of Industry Skills Councils and the key role they play in Australia's VET system.

## **Brimbank Social Justice Coalition Strategic Implementation Group**

LeadWest's Manager of Business & Projects participated in the Strategic Implementation Group for the Brimbank Social Justice Coalition, which is a forum for Brimbank City Council, community organisations and service providers to work collaboratively on issues that diminish the health and wellbeing of community members in Brimbank and to develop joint advocacy, service and project development.

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## **All is Growing on Melbourne's Western Front**

LeadWest highlights the following report from *The Age* on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010:

*Melbourne Age December 13, 2010*

*Melbourne has grown to resemble a fat lamb chop, with the meat of suburban development to the east of the city and a long rib of new housing that runs south to the Mornington Peninsula.*

*But that distinctively lopsided shape is now shifting as the western suburbs and Geelong attract a disproportionate share of population growth, according to a new government report.*

*The Changing Shape of Melbourne, by the Department of Planning and Community Development, predicts six western municipalities that currently have 16 per cent of Melbourne's population, will absorb 27 per cent of the total metropolitan growth to 2026.*

*The City of Wyndham, centred on the suburb of Werribee, is already Melbourne's fastest-growing metropolitan area, having attracted an extra 10,758 residents in the year to June 2009.*

*The City of Greater Geelong is the state's fastest-growing regional municipality, with an extra 3963 residents during the same year. Melbourne's population has tripled and its urban areas quadrupled in the past 60 years, with a development bias towards the south and east, according to the report, issued yesterday.*

*The current development frontier at Caroline Springs is approximately 20 kilometres west of the city, compared with Pakenham in the east, which is almost three times further out.*

*At the last census, nearly three-quarters of Melbourne's population lived east of Melbourne's north-south axis.*

*"But the balance of Melbourne's development is now changing," the report said.*

*"Gentrification has pushed across the Yarra into Yarraville, Seddon and adjacent [western] suburbs that are cheaper than their eastern equivalent but still close to the resurgent city."*

*Meanwhile, development in the east has been constrained by natural barriers, such as the Dandenong Ranges and the Upper Yarra Valley, as well as the distance from the CBD.*

*The Western Ring Road, the planned regional rail link and expansion of Avalon Airport are expected to underpin further growth in the west.*

*Hayley Bartlett, 28, and fiancée Troy Pretty, 29, purchased a three-bedroom house and land package in the Bluestone Estate in Wyndham Vale two years ago for \$292,000.*

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*Mr Bartlett, who grew up in the western suburbs, said it was always more affordable than other parts of Melbourne, but only recently progressed to have the same high standard of services and facilities, such as schools.*

*"Where I live now used to be paddocks and sometimes when I drive into the estate I laugh because all that land is now gone. We are still close to the city and close to the surf coast. You have everything you need and don't have to spend a ridiculous amount of money to live here."*

The report mentioned in the article (i.e. *The Changing Shape of Melbourne*) was a section of Issue 56 of DPCD's Research Matters publication, which is available at:  
[http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/53283/DPCD-ResMatters56-web.pdf](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/53283/DPCD-ResMatters56-web.pdf)

## **LeadWest attends Western Region CEOs' Meeting in Wyndham**

LeadWest's CEO attended the monthly meeting of the Western Region Council CEOs, which was hosted by Wyndham City Council. Key issues addressed included:

- Victorian Election – impacts on transport, health & general advocacy
- Western Melbourne Regional Development Australia – Regional Plan
- National Transport Commission - high productivity vehicles
- Brooklyn Industrial Precinct
- Funding (to Brimbank, Maribyrnong & Wyndham) for prevention of Violence Against Women

Presentations at the meeting were made by Pam Anders, a Director for WorkHeath on engagement models for smaller employers and data from health checks, as well as by Joan Phillips and Jill McLean from the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council on the Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation.

## **LeadWest convenes Arts & Culture officers (AIMWEST) meeting at Maribyrnong Council**

LeadWest's CEO and the Executive Officer of West Metropolitan Melbourne RDA delivered a briefing to the Arts & Culture officers of councils in Melbourne's west on the proposed "Arts & Culture Strategy" for the West. LeadWest and Arts Victoria are keen to support the growth of this sector in Melbourne's west and the councils in the region have indicated both their interest and support for this initiative.

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## **LeadWest to Push for Flemington Rail Extension**

LeadWest believes that there is a real opportunity to more effectively use the dual railway line from Melbourne to Flemington Racecourse and the Melbourne Showgrounds. At present, the existing line is being wasted and consideration should be given to extend the line three kilometres to a planned new suburb on the Maribyrnong River. With planning already underway for a Melbourne Metro, and with its western portal proposed for north of Dynon Rd at Kensington, as well as significant urban infill developments in the pipeline, such as the redevelopment of the Maribyrnong Defence Site, such a rail line extension merits consideration. Extending the line would allow it to service the thousands of additional homes planned for the inner western suburbs and the Highpoint Shopping Centre, potentially taking thousands of cars off inner-city streets. Currently, this section of rail line is underutilised, given it is dual track, and is basically only used for two periods a year at the spring racing carnival and the Royal Melbourne Show.

The major infill development plan to build a new suburb on the 128-hectare former Department of Defence explosives factory site next to the shopping centre would benefit from access to high quality and reliable public transport into the city. With an existing rail line already in place for 60% of the distance to the city, a rail link to the new suburb is a prospect worth considering. An extension of the Flemington line could be incorporated into the construction of the new suburb. Potentially a new station could be situated in proximity to Victoria University's campus on Ballarat Road and another at Highpoint Shopping Centre. Consideration could also be given to extending the line to Keilor East.

To better use a poorly utilised piece of rail infrastructure is going to be to everybody's benefit, so LeadWest will call on the Victorian Government to conduct a study, testing the viability of this rail extension.

## **LeadWest supports YouthNow Employer Champion Awards**

The 2010 YouthNow Employer Champion Awards celebrated the significant contribution made by employers in Melbourne's west to the future of young people in the region's secondary schools and alternative community learning settings. LeadWest's Manager Business & Projects was Master of Ceremonies at the Awards event. Moonee Valley Council was the major sponsor with minor sponsorship coming from other councils and the LLENs.

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## **Advisory Board of Regional Development Australia (RDA)**

LeadWest's CEO attended the regular RDA Board meeting hosted by Toyota Australia. A comprehensive briefing was conducted on the Australian automotive industry and its key role as a major employer & as a catalyst for innovation.

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