



Leadership for the West

LeadWest – Submission To East West Link Needs Assessment



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CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

Melbourne's West is the fastest growing region of Melbourne and one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. However, the lack of new infrastructure and the inadequacy of existing infrastructure are seen as the greatest threat to the region's economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Transport infrastructure is significantly under developed in the West and urgent major new investment is essential if the region, its businesses and its people are to reach their potential.

Making up around 16% of Melbourne's population and containing two of the three fastest growing municipalities in Victoria the current underinvestment in the West's transport infrastructure is an issue that will ultimately limit the entire Victorian economy if it is not addressed.

Although LeadWest regards the EWLNA Report as having some shortcomings, it nevertheless sees it as a seminal report of exceptional importance for the future of Victoria, Metropolitan Melbourne and especially the Western Region of Melbourne.

LeadWest welcomes the East West Link Needs Assessment report as an important first step in the much needed process of investing in the west to ensure the region's potential, and that of its businesses and people, are finally realised.

INTRODUCING LEADWEST

LeadWest is a regional organisation formed by the Councils of Western Melbourne in 2007 to foster and undertake actions that will support sustainable growth and development of the region. In this respect it aims to provide leadership across the region, to ensure co-ordination of key regional activities, to be an advocate for the region, to promote and market the region, and to develop regional planning. In this quest, LeadWest aims to adopt an active partnership approach between business, government and the community working together on behalf of the region.

Although formed by Councils, its constitution provides for private sector or non Council organisations to be members and to have representation on the Board. Membership is open to all companies and organisations in the region and LeadWest is an organisation encompassing and representing a wide range of interests within the Western Melbourne community.

LeadWest has been established as a company limited by guarantee and its Board of Directors comprises 5 council directors drawn from Maribyrnong, Brimbank, Melton, Wyndham and Moonee Valley plus 4 directors elected by the organisational / business members (Victoria University, Nufarm Ltd, Moonee Valley Racing Club & City West Water) and an independent chairperson Hon Ralph Willis.

OVERVIEW

LeadWest supports the recommendations in the East West Link Needs Assessment report as an important first step in the much needed process of investing in the West to ensure the region's potential, and that of its businesses and people, are finally realised.

Underpinning the East-West Link Needs Assessment report is the realisation that Melbourne's Western Suburbs have significant transport infrastructure shortcomings that urgently need to be addressed. LeadWest welcomes the broad findings contained in the study and the need to look at multi modal solutions to such complex issues. The report recognised that the transport challenges facing the West will require bold initiatives if they are to be overcome. Both the scope and ambition of the proposals are visionary and cover many facets of the transport mix that business and residents use daily.

The report strives to strike a balance between the needs of cross city business travel and commuters while also laying the foundation for further, and much overdue, investment and employment growth within the West itself.

However, it is disappointing that the opportunity to electrify the train service to Deer Park and beyond into the Melton Shire was not included in the report.

LeadWest will continue to call for these missing pieces in the jigsaw while advocating for the work of Sir Rod Eddington and his team to be adopted and delivered by the Victorian Government.

The EWLNA sets out the serious transport deficiencies in current cross-city connections by both road and rail and their utter incapacity, even with serious projected enhancements, to satisfactorily meet the requirements of future economic and population growth and a high level of liveability.

The recent decline in Melbourne's liveability ranking from being one of the top two most liveable cities in the world in each of the four years up to 2005, down to 17th place in the last two years, has much to do with these issues. Unless they are comprehensively addressed, Melbourne's ranking will surely plunge much further.

LeadWest believes that the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure is a vital prerequisite & acts as a key driver of a sound economy, a well connected and livable society, and a quality urban environment. The Western Region is at this point in time facing the real possible risks of economic and social disconnection without major transport augmentation to supplement the West Gate Bridge and Western Ring Road gateways. To quote the EWLNA report:

Doing nothing to improve connections to and from the west will further entrench Melbourne's significant east-west divide and severely constrain investment, business and employment opportunities in the city's western suburbs. In turn, this will have a negative, flow-on effect on the entire city economy.

THE CHALLENGE

Melbourne's Western Region has entered a phase of significant population growth and industrial development that accelerated with the opening of the West Gate Bridge and the Western Ring Road. This spurred a wave of new housing developments particularly in the outer west as well as attracting investment in logistics-based industries.

The renaissance of industrial land development in Melbourne's west, together with significant population growth, has renewed interest in the region for major investment and development. The region has been highly accessible to Melbourne's port and air freight hubs, and to the major rail and road networks linking Victoria to the eastern seaboard markets. The growing regional population offers important opportunities for new business investment.

The region's wealth is largely derived from manufacturing, comprised of:-

- Growth in processing industries that generate some research and product innovation;
- nationally important energy-based industries that are stable in terms of employment; and
- sectors highly exposed to international competition and the rise of low-cost manufacturing in East Asia. Employment in these sectors has declined significantly over the past two decades, a trend that is likely to continue.

The region has recognised strengths in manufacturing, engineering and construction trades, skills and resources. It also has significant competitive locational advantages, including its accessibility and transport links to major freight hubs. An important challenge facing the western suburbs is to capitalise on these existing skills and locational advantages by developing a leading-edge manufacturing and engineering sector.

Linked to innovative product development, the creation of a strong niche industry could deliver significant economic and employment benefits to the region.

The Western Region's resident population of over 650,000 is predicted to exceed 850,000 people well before 2031. Current projections by the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) indicate that the region will be expected to accommodate more than 25% of projected metropolitan population growth over the next 25 years. The LeadWest submission recognises the challenges and opportunities that substantial population growth poses for the region's future development.

At present, Melbourne's Western Region has a limited services base in a range of professional, commercial and educational sectors. The region currently imports more than \$2 billion of services each year from other regions, principally central Melbourne. There exists a significant market opportunity to develop regionally based services and employment

opportunities but attracting these sectors will require a significant upgrade in transport amenity and service.

LeadWest believes there is an overwhelming need to facilitate new sources of employment growth and sustainable development and create a much more diversified employment base. A key element required to achieve this outcome is the provision significantly enhanced transport connectivity for the western suburbs to the rest of metropolitan Melbourne.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LeadWest views the broad recommendations imbedded in the East West Link Needs Assessment study as a fundamental prerequisite to addressing the future transport planning imperatives of the Western Region of Melbourne.

The visionary recommendations recognise and appreciate the tremendous economic development and population growth taking place in the Western Metropolitan Region coupled with the vast expansion taking place in freight / logistics activity through Australia's premier trade gateway the Port of Melbourne. This unprecedented growth has placed huge demands and stresses on all aspects of our transport systems serving both the Western Metropolitan Region and the total Metropolitan area.

The multi modal coverage of the recommendations have met the objectives of planning for the longer term future, not just today, by recommending both longer term solutions to transport problems as well as a suite of short term solutions to current problems that need to be implemented as a matter of priority.

LeadWest sees the broad multi modal recommendations as being creative, visionary and practical, as well as creating a challenge for Federal and State Government as to how the projects recommended are to be funded. However LeadWest feel that an opportunity has been lost to address the rapid growth taking place in the Caroline Springs – Melton corridor and that serious consideration should still be given the electrification of the rail service to serve this rapidly developing growth corridor.

LeadWest believes that in relation to the cross-city east-west travel that significant investment will be needed to address some of the major transport-related problems facing Melbourne and in particular the western suburbs these include:

- The growing demand for train travel which is placing the rail network under considerable strain.
- Melbourne's over-reliance on the West Gate Bridge.
- Growing road congestion which is expected to be put under further stress as Melbourne's population grows.
- There is no connected east-west link across the north of the city, yet strong and growing demand exists.
- Transport issues are more pressing in the west and strong population growth is outstripping local employment growth, creating more pressure as people travel into the CBD and inner and middle eastern suburbs.
- The freight task is growing rapidly and is predicted to grow by 50% by 2020 and container volumes through the Port of Melbourne are likely to grow fourfold.
- Connections to the city's airports are becoming more critical (and the airports are forecasting substantial passenger growth).
- Commuter cycling is booming and should be encouraged.

The EWLNA has wide ranging implications for Melbourne's west. The road and rail infrastructure and associated projects will fundamentally change the transport and land use

arrangements in the Western Region and offers the real potential to facilitate the second phase of strong development & jobs growth in the west which will have significant social, economic and environmental implications.

LeadWest believes that sustainable transport is a fundamental driver to achieve a sustainable economy, a well connected and liveable society, and a quality urban environment. The Western Region is very much facing the risks of economic and social disconnection without major transport augmentation to supplement the West Gate Bridge and Western Ring Road gateways.

The LeadWest submission supports initiatives by the State Government that provide better access between the east and west, reduces the divide between the east and west, identifies the transport imperatives of the west and recommends solutions to a number of these.

The key recommendations supported by the LeadWest Board for the Western Region are:

- **Planning for a new 17 kilometre rail tunnel (Footscray to Caulfield) linking Melbourne’s fast-growing western and south-eastern suburbs – a generational ‘step-up’ in the city’s rail capacity and Melbourne’s first ‘metro’ style passenger line. LeadWest strongly supports the rail tunnel and associated stations should be a priority project from EWLNA. LeadWest welcomes the additional capacity a new line and associated facilities will bring to the network.**
- **Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection starting in Melbourne’s west and linking up with the Eastern Freeway. This is seen as a vital East – West transport link that would provide an alternative to the West Gate Bridge and is needed because of the growing demand for cross city travel and the lack of direct cross city connection, and the need to provide network flexibility and connectivity by completing the key “missing link” in Melbourne’s transport network. Forecast growth in population, heightened economic activity and associated traffic growth will place further stress on Melbourne’s only major east-west link, the West Gate Monash corridor.**
- **The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to provide for**

passenger growth on the Werribee Line and improve the frequency and reliability of services from Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. The proposal also caters for residential expansion in Tarneit and serves the Derrimut Industrial Area. This would require the construction of the third and fourth tracks from Footscray to Sunshine.

- Improving amenity in the inner west by removing truck traffic from local streets and providing alternative truck routes for heavy vehicles.
- Adopting an intermodal freight hub policy with standard rail gauge connections to the Ports of Melbourne and Hastings and to key linked and integrated metropolitan intermodal freight hubs.
- Greater support for Melbourne 2030 and prioritisation of development and employment at key Activity and Transit centres at Footscray, Sydenham, Moonee Ponds, Airport West, Sunshine and Werribee.
- Increasing the capacity of the railway network serving the West, including electrification to Sunbury.
- The creation of a single statutory authority to deliver the projects identified is seen as a fundamental prerequisite in successful delivery.
- LeadWest supports the concept for an interconnected “intermodal hub” network in Melbourne. LeadWest further believes that consideration be given to the setting up of an independent statutory authority as opposed to the Port of Melbourne Corporation taking responsibility to deliver this recommendation.

LeadWest supports any improvements to the cycling network and recommends this be extended beyond the State Government’s current focus on areas within 5-8 kilometres of the CBD to include areas of the middle and outer western suburbs.

Leadwest supports the Victorian Government pursuing a whole of government approach to the funding of transport. LeadWest encourages the State Government to advocate for Commonwealth funding for public transport, sustainable transport and freight projects.

INTRODUCTION

LeadWest considers the recommendations of the Eddington East West Link Needs Assessment (EWLNA) study as a great opportunity to meet the transport challenges of today and the future, and to make all parts of our great city, including the fast growing Western Region, more liveable.

For too long insufficient attention has been placed on issues of planning for future rail and road capacity linking the Western region to Central Melbourne, the Port of Melbourne and across Melbourne to the Eastern and South Eastern region. Key stakeholders in the West see this study as the appropriate time to correct that

Clearly the key determinates which will influence transport volumes and patterns over the next 25 – 30 years are population and economic growth in the Western region of Melbourne and the anticipated growth in freight movement including that related to the Port of Melbourne.



The EWLNA document has delivered that to a large extent by exploring the existing and future travel patterns together with the economic and structural changes influencing those patterns, and the types of journeys that will drive Melbourne’s economy and shape the future of the city.

The report identifies that Melbourne’s strong economic and population growth will create a very substantial increase in travel demand and that central Melbourne will continue to play a major role in Victoria’s prosperity.

As a Western Region entity, LeadWest also notes the report has recognised the improving opportunities in Melbourne's West, the strong population growth taking place and the need for jobs and business growth to provide for this increased population.

Clearly the fact that the region is undergoing a major transition from an industrialised area to a more broadly based dynamic growth and employment area offering housing affordability and attracting a broad cross section of society, presents an associated infrastructure challenge and LeadWest commends the study team for recognising that challenge.

LeadWest believes that the key issues being faced by the West are an underinvestment in commuter infrastructure (road and rail) and inefficient freight, commercial and service industry movements both within and through the region. Until these issues are addressed it will continue to be difficult to attract additional investment and ultimately create a level of job provision similar to that of the rest of Melbourne.

The East West link Needs Assessment report should therefore be delivering initiatives that improve commuter movements on road and rail and improve the efficiency of freight, commercial and service industry movements. These transport improvements should wherever possible be inter and intra region.

In considering its response to the East West link needs assessment report, LeadWest has therefore looked at some key themes:

- The potential for initiatives to ease the congestion for west-east commuters on both public transport and road.
- The potential for initiatives to improve the efficiency of freight, commercial and service industry movements both within and through the region.
- The potential for initiatives to improve internal travel movements within the West itself.

LeadWest's assessment of the recommendations contained in the report is on the whole positive and if implemented as a package they will deliver significant benefits to the region, Melbourne and Victoria.

The key transport issues identified by LeadWest were:-

- Establishing flexible transport networks matched to the needs of the community. The existing road and rail networks serving Melbourne's West have limited spare capacity during peak periods and the capacity gap is closing quickly.
- Managing transport demands involves all modes, travel demand management and land use strategies.
- Promoting efficient transport options for workers from the west having to access job opportunities in other regions due to a shortage of local employment.
- Maximising the triple bottom line benefits, that is the economic, environmental and social costs of investing in transport infrastructure.
- The need to respond to the Western Region's long term future, that is a vision for future infrastructure needs.
- Supporting and promoting the key imperative of local job creation in the region.
- The need for travel demand management by the provision of facilities for employment in Major, Principal and Transit Cities under the Melbourne 2030 umbrella.
- The strategic need for transport network improvements as an alternative to the Monash – City Link – West Gate Corridor.
- The need for an overall Freight Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne.
- The need to focus on the metropolitan container freight task as this is where substantial growth will occur.
- Support for the establishment of freight hubs in the West, North and South East of Melbourne with improved rail access and container handling in the Port of Melbourne.
- The urgent need for the upgrading of the railway network to help achieve the State Government's public transport policy of 20% of passengers using public transport by 2020.
- Improvements for the Northern Group Lines and to the City Loop operation to facilitate increased train capacity and reliability.
- That infrastructure and network projects provide for freight, public transport and passenger vehicles.

- That the planning and timing of infrastructure and network projects take into account the distribution of population growth and economic activity and its effect on travel demand.
- The need to protect the amenity of residents adjacent to freight routes.

LeadWest believes that there is widespread community concern that insufficient attention has been placed on the issues of planning for future rail and road capacity, between the West and the central Melbourne and Port of Melbourne areas, as well as east - west traffic movements. These issues if addressed have the potential to act as a fillip to drive the development of new job opportunities which are seen as critical for the future development of the State of Victoria, particularly as growth continues to exceed official State projections.

POPULATION DYNAMICS

Located immediately to the west of Melbourne's CBD and stretching to the urban fringe, Melbourne's Western Region encompasses the municipalities of Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. Covering an area of 1,333 square kilometres and with a population of 650,000 plus the Western Region accounts for around 16.2% of the total population of metropolitan Melbourne and 12% of Victoria's population.

Melbourne's development has witnessed a pronounced shift in population growth patterns and it is now Melbourne's West that is at the fore in population increases. This transition was not foreseen when Melbourne 2030 was formulated and the population projections of 2000 prepared. Revised population projections whilst partially recognising the extent of change in Melbourne's West, have again underestimated the growth which has been experienced in recent years.

Melbourne's West has amongst the fastest growing local government areas within Australia in terms of growth rate.

Melbourne 2030 envisaged the distribution of new households in Melbourne's West for 2001 – 2030 would be:

- 46% Greenfield development
- 31% strategic redevelopment sites, and
- 23% dispersed urban and non-urban development

However greenfield development in the Shire of Melton and City of Wyndham is accounting for in excess of 80% of population growth in the West. There are also strong indicators that Melton and Wyndham, and to a lesser degree Brimbank, will continue to experience substantial growth and will become increasingly important in terms of metropolitan growth towards the end of the current decade.

Growth in Melbourne's West has substantially exceeded the Victorian In Future 2000 projections, and is already exceeding revised projections released in Victorian In Future 2004. Available evidence clearly shows that Melbourne's West has the third and fourth fastest growing local government areas within Australia, in terms of growth rate. Developing an understanding of the way Melbourne's growth is changing is fundamental to understanding the future transportation imperatives - this aspect has been recognised in the EWLNA report.



Such factors are being considerably exacerbated by population growth in the West, which is high overall and dramatically so in the Outer West. The rate of population growth in the West is 2.83% pa – almost twice the rate for the state as a whole (1.5% pa). The Report notes that this high growth is set to continue with growth in the period 2006 – 2031 likely to be 34.4% for the West compared to 22.6% for the total Melbourne Metropolitan area. Growth of these dimensions is dramatic enough, but in the Outer West it is projected to be far higher – Melton 206% and Wyndham 139%. These extraordinary growth forecasts are likely to be further increased following announcements earlier this year by the Federal Government to raise the level of immigration and by the Victorian Government to remove planning restrictions on residential developments in the outer metropolitan areas, including the Outer West.

Such rapid growth will place great pressure on already over stretched public transport and road systems and requires a quantum leap in the provision of such infrastructure.

But as the Report notes, that is not all it requires. A crucial element of an appropriate public policy response to the current and projected circumstances of the West needs to be a focus on job creation in the region. With 31% of Western region workers having to travel to work in Inner Melbourne, and many also to the Eastern Suburbs, greater job creation in the region could greatly assist in reducing transport pressures. At the same time moreover, improved transport commitments to and from the West would improve the attractiveness of the region for business investments and therefore greater job creation.

TRAFFIC DEMAND

The EWLNA report clearly recognises that quantifying future transport demand is essential to the assessment of the transport options and priorities. This along with an understanding of the capacity and constraints of the existing railway and road networks, and the growth and distribution of the freight task from port associated activity and metropolitan employment patterns should form the basis of the recommendations.

LeadWest wishes to stress to the Government that Melbourne's Western Region has entered a phase of major new industrial development change, which accelerated with the development of the Western Ring Road. This has spurred a wave of investment in logistics-based industries, and led to the formation of the West Industrial Node, recognised in metropolitan policy as one of the three major industrial nodes in the Melbourne metropolitan region.

LeadWest further believes that within the next 20 – 30 years several additional changes will occur to both freight routes and business/industrial areas currently existing and these are:

- Increasing consolidation and growth of industrial activity in the three major freight activity centres.
- Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong are likely to become much more significant growth drivers as capacity at Tullamarine Airport and the Port of Melbourne is filled.
- Business/Commercial Centres will expand significantly in response to what is a western region quest to attract more service sector enterprises to the region. They should also impact on the freight task to a greater extent.

LeadWest believes it is becoming increasingly evident that within the next 20-30 years significant changes will occur to existing freight routes, including increased consolidation and growth of industrial activity centres and increased freight traffic through Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong.

A freight strategy is required and LeadWest supports the EWLNA Recommendation that the Government should create a new freight strategy.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT GROWTH

The last few years has witnessed unprecedented growth in passenger rail patronage primarily due to three key factors:

- Fuel price increases – impact on family budgets plus the cost of parking.
- CBD employment growth has been strong in the past three (3) years and local employment has not kept pace with the population increase in the western region.
- The rapidly growing population in Melbourne particularly in the outer Western Region.

Current passenger growth on the Northern Group Lines is the highest in metropolitan Melbourne and this patronage is projected to continue to grow very strongly. In addition train passenger capacity of 800 passengers per train is also being exceeded by many services on the Northern Group in the am peak by 50% on the Sydenham line, 25% on the Werribee, 50% on the Broadmeadows and 10% on the Williamstown line.

It is also worth stressing that three of the five designated growth areas in Melbourne 2030 are located and serviced by the Northern Group lines. The demographic shift to the west and north of Melbourne will place even greater demands on the region's transport system and LeadWest urges the Government to positively view the EWLNA recommendations as well as providing for the implementation of orbital bus routes across the region and addressing the issues associated with the railway network capacity, particularly through North Melbourne Station and the City Loop operation.

Whilst LeadWest accepts that over time the modernisation of trains and improved maintenance will provide greater passenger numbers, in the case of the replacement program this does not commence until 2013 and by that stage there will be no capacity left in the Northern Group for expansion during peak periods.

To reduce road demand it is necessary to provide improved public transport to provide an alternative travel mode to the car and attract travellers from their car onto public transport.

Various initiatives can be undertaken:

- Provision of park and ride facilities at strategic and appropriate stations.
- Better bus services to the railway stations.
- Encourage cycling and walking to stations.
- Development of orbital bus routes.
- More frequent train services.
- Rationalisation of the fare structure from outer and inner Melbourne to address the issue of outer suburban commuters subsidising inner suburban commuters.
- Electrification of services to Bacchus Marsh.
- Investigate bus and/or transit lanes on the West Gate Freeway.
- Sustained promotion of public transport through programs such as TravelSmart.

However, the principal strategic issue is to provide capacity within the train network to support the number of trains required to meet current demand and the needs and vision for the future.

LeadWest acknowledges advice from senior staff from the Department of Transport that there are solutions to the operational aspects of the overall passenger rail network and specifically the Northern Group lines which address the specific capacity constraints independent of the current city Loop. These short term operational improvements need to be made immediately whilst long term planning on major projects takes place.

Road based commuter public transport from the Western region to the CBD is constrained by the congestion on the West Gate Bridge and West Gate and Princes Freeway, once again emphasising the need for an alternative East – West Link to provide for public transport.

LeadWest believes that a vision for the operation of the passenger railway network to and beyond 2030 needs to be developed encompassing:

- Independence from the current city Loop
- Links to Footscray
- Allowing for more regional VLine services

In summary, LeadWest strongly supports both short and long term strategies being developed to increase capacity, meet demand and to promote use of the public transport system. Improvements are required to remove constraints on the existing system and extensions to the metropolitan system to meet outer suburban needs. In particular, LeadWest strongly supports the following EWLNA recommendations:

- The rail tunnel proposal linking the western and south eastern suburbs.
- The “Tarneit Link” linking Werribee to Sunshine
- Electrification of the network to Sunbury
- The cross city road connections from the Western Suburbs to the Eastern Freeway incorporating provision for public transport, freight and passenger vehicles.
- Facilitation of park and ride facilities
- Acceleration of development and employment in Footscray, Sydenham, Sunshine and Werribee Transit and Principal Activity Centres to reduce transport demand.

FREIGHT GROWTH

Freight is obviously a key component of transport demand and LeadWest awaits the release of the Department of Transport Freight Strategy later this year.

Whilst the EWLNA notes that the 30% of freight by rail out of the Port by 2010 is unlikely to be met and that a new strategy may be warranted in order for more freight to be moved from the Port by rail LeadWest believes that the 30% target should be retained as an aspirational target whilst strongly supporting the need for an overall freight strategy based on realistic targets for Melbourne.

LeadWest believes that this strategy development is especially important given the State Government's vision to develop the Port of Melbourne, the Dynon precinct and its transport links into a world class intermodal freight hub. In achieving that vision LeadWest understands that the improvements envisaged include grade separated rail access into the port and facilities to handle containers to and from rail.



Forecasts of trade growth from the Port of Melbourne would indicate that container trade will treble in the next twenty (20) years. A 50% increase in dry bulk tonnage is envisaged while slightly lower levels of growth are expected in relation to other bulk freight activity. The growth of freight movements through the Port of Melbourne has implications on the use of West Gate Bridge and the West Gate Freeway and the associated links to freight and logistics facilities in the West.

LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Along with other stakeholders, LeadWest has concerns about the growth in commuter and industrial traffic through the inner west and the resulting negative impacts on residential amenity and the environment in general. Pollution from traffic particularly trucks potentially cause long term adverse health effects on residents living along the many heavy truck routes through the residential suburbs in the west.

The Australian transport sector accounted for 79 million tonnes of Australia's total net greenhouse gas emissions in 2002, representing 13 per cent of Australia's total emissions. About 88 percent of these emissions came from road transport including cars and trucks.



The proximity of the port and historical road pattern network means that many of the main road freight routes to and from the port pass through the inner west residential networks, creating adverse amenity issues for the local community. Moving container freight traffic onto rail will reduce road freight movements. The storage of containers in outer suburban freight hubs would also improve amenity by reducing truck movements.

LeadWest is a strong proponent of increased freight on rail where viable, however the rate of growth of freight activity will see road transport continue to grow very substantially over time. Thus an imperative exists in identifying solutions to the congestion and amenity issues resulting from the use of what are primarily residential streets in inner Melbourne, for example Footscray and Yarraville, are recognised in the LeadWest recommendations and need to be supported.

EMPLOYMENT & JOB IMPERATIVES

The west is a large exporter of labour. Despite having 12.5% of the state's population only around 8% of the state's jobs are located in the region. The rapid population growth in the region means that the gap between the number of people and the number of jobs is getting wider.

The regions level of job provision is well below the metropolitan average (315 jobs per 1,000 population compared to 458 for all of metro Melbourne.) To make matters worse most municipalities in the region have a very narrow range of jobs – mainly focused in areas that are traditionally considered blue collar.

The low provision of jobs combined with the narrow range means that 31% of the West's workers commute to inner Melbourne while many others travel to Melbourne's East.

This large West East commuting population, inadequate public transport that forces many people onto the road and the limited number of access points to inner Melbourne and beyond

creates substantial bottlenecks that not only cause congestion for commuters but also severely limit the efficiency of freight, commercial and service movements both within and through the region.

The resulting congestion, both intra and inter region, is acknowledged as a significant contributing factor to the comparatively low level of investment and job provision. In short, investment in transport infrastructure is one of the strategies necessary to attract investment and unlock the regions potential.



LEADWEST RESPONSE TO EWLNA RECOMMENDATIONS

The Leadwest Board has endorsed the following EWLNA recommendations. On some specific issues individual Western Melbourne Councils may have had views that may be at variance with LeadWest's overall position and these will be reflected in their own submissions.

Recommendation 1

Planning work should commence for the staged construction of a new 17 kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel linking Melbourne's booming western and south-eastern suburbs and providing a major increase in the capacity of the rail network.

LeadWest Comment – Endorsed

LeadWest strongly support this recommendation as being crucial to the achievement of a major expansion in public transport patronage. The Report clearly demonstrates that the current metropolitan rail system is reaching capacity with minimal scope for additional train movements in the peak hours after projected initiatives are implemented.

This recommendation will provide a fast, frequent and reliable service between the eastern and western suburbs; create additional capacity in the rail network to enable the expansion and improvement of services to the western suburbs of Melbourne; and assist in the development of Footscray as a Transit City with strong links to Melbourne's centre.

Across the city, the demand for train travel is increasing. Patronage growth on Melbourne's rail network has jumped more than 30% over the past three years – an annual average growth rate of 10.2%. This is a sharp contrast to the 1 or 2% rates over the previous two decades.

The most stress is being felt on the Northern Group of rail lines (Werribee, Williamstown, Sydenham, Craigieburn and Upfield) servicing the growth suburbs in the west and north of Melbourne. Whilst projected enhancements of services on the Sydenham and Werribee lines will provide some temporary relief, with average annual growth over the past 3 years at 13% certainly being expected to grow even further this situation will become critical. At present 20,000 people catch the train during the busiest hour in the morning peak on the northern group, this will increase to 45,000 in 2021 according to the Eddington report and will "hit the wall" within the next ten years.

Patronage on the Sydenham line has grown by 55% over the past 3 years, with trains regularly carrying more than 1100 passengers, each carriage carrying an extra 65 passengers than 3 years ago. This growth has led to a substantial decline in reliability with peak period train services on the Sydenham line declining from 96% in 2003 to 82% in 2007.

The factors found by the Report to be driving this rapidly increasing rail transport patronage are increasing population, rising petrol prices, increased road traffic congestion, abolition of Zone 3, desire for more exercise, environmental concerns and parking costs. All of these factors would seem certain to have continuing relevance.

Petrol price rises have been quite dramatic in 2008 and seem highly likely to continue even without an Emissions Trading Scheme. The foreshadowed introduction of such a scheme in 2010 would seem very likely to apply to the transport sector since it accounts for 14% of greenhouse gas emissions. Such a development would mean a further factor would come into play to push petrol prices higher and so be an added inducement for people to turn to public transport.

The main concern for residents in the western suburbs is their ability to use public transport in a reliable, effective, safe, timely and convenient manner. In particular, residents frequently report that trains are overcrowded and sometimes are unable to board trains during peak periods.

The western suburbs burgeoning population growth coupled with their over dependence & reliance on inner Melbourne for employment makes this an extremely high priority.

LeadWest consider the recommended “Metro – style” rail tunnel from Footscray to Caulfield via Parkville, the CBD and the Domain is the appropriate response. It provides a quantum leap in capacity, enabling carriage of 40,000 passengers an hour, frees up some existing capacity for expanded services, facilitates a new service on the Tarneit link recommended in Recommendation 2 and a full scale electric train service to Melton/Bacchus Marsh, improves access to the city for Vline services from Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong and resolves eventual capacity constraint problems for the Caulfield rail group.

More broadly, it provides scope for an increase in the share of commuter trips going to public transport, so materially contributing to the Governments 20/2020 objective. It is also an integral part of a comprehensive response by Government to Climate change, complementing

as it does other policy measures which will, inter alia, encourage public transport usage as an alternative to private transport.

It would also be a major factor in achieving the Government's objective to develop Footscray as a Transit City, as well as considerably assisting Sydenham, Werribee and Sunshine in this regard.

Recommendation 2

The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to significantly improve the frequency and reliability of services from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. The Government should commit to using the new rail tunnel and Tarneit link as the foundation for extending the metropolitan rail network further to the west within the next 15 years.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

This recommendation involves constructing a 3rd and 4th track from Footscray to Sunshine (already committed by Government in Meeting Our Transport Challenges) and constructing a new rail link from West Werribee to Sunshine. Vline trains from Geelong would follow this route from Werribee rather than proceeding through Laverton and Newport as at present. Starting services would presumably begin from West Werribee to service the people of Wyndham Vale, Tarneit and Derrimut.

LeadWest acknowledges that this proposal involves several advantages as the construction of the railway line provides a railway service to the new growth area estates west and north of Werribee. Without the railway line residents of the new estates are 10 -15 kilometres from a railway line.

The provision of a rail service to the people of this high growth area would be clearly welcome and, in conjunction with the rail tunnel from Footscray freeing up capacity on existing lines into the city, would enable fast reliable service to the City.

The proposal to run Geelong trains to Melbourne on this route would also free up the Werribee – Newport – Footscray lines for additional electric train services from Werribee and in conjunction with capacity for additional regional services to /from Geelong would help to reduce pressure on the Westgate Freeway / Westgate Bridge

However, it would also mean that the essentially urban areas covered by this Tarneit Link would be serviced by what is primarily a provincial form of transport link. This would be in stark contrast to the Eastern suburbs where areas considerably further from the city are part of the metropolitan electric train network (e.g. Pakenham, Belgrave, & Frankston).

Also Vline trains carry far fewer passengers than electric trains. For one of the fastest growing areas of Melbourne to be destined to be served by low capacity Vline trains which do not fully interlink with the rest of the Metropolitan electric train network seems far less than optimal.

LeadWest therefore strongly supports the recommendation for a Tarneit link rail line to be built in conjunction with the Footscray – Caulfield rail tunnel but considers it should be an electrified service providing the same standard of service to the people in the Outer South West as is already provided to the people of the Outer East and South East.

The time frame for the construction of the railway line should be earlier than proposed given that population growth in this region has been and is continuing to be faster than predicted.

The planning and delivery of the railway line should be part of an integrated solution that includes the electrification to Melton.

This initiative not only creates additional west east commuter capacity but also provides valuable intra regional public transport capacity and will service anticipated growth areas.

LeadWest strongly supports this project which should be accorded high priority status within the project suite from EWLNA.

It is understood that this project will create additional capacity in the rail network and as such is a positive outcome. Consideration should be given to electrification of the line to enable residential areas along the line to be serviced as part of the metropolitan system.

LeadWest supports this major addition to services, the benefits it provides for the much needed peak hour services for regional commuters on the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines.

Current residents of the new housing estates west and north of Werribee are up to 10 – 15 kilometres from a railway line. This new line would mean most residents residing in these areas are within 3 kilometres of a railway line.

This project should be coordinated and implemented at the same time as electrification of the railway line to service Caroline Springs and Melton as part of the metropolitan system

Recommendation 3

During the planning and construction of the rail tunnel, the Victorian Government should continue to make better use of the existing network to increase capacity, including commencing work on the electrification of the network to Sunbury to boost services on the Sydenham line.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

In addressing this recommendation LeadWest acknowledges the foreshadowed extension of rail services on the existing infrastructure for the Werribee and Sydenham lines.

On the Werribee line, the additional track to be installed at Laverton will enable the number of peak hour services to be increased by 3 or 4 (from the existing 4) with Werribee trains able to run direct to Newport and avoid the Altona loop which will be serviced by 3 starter services from Laverton. For people in the Werribee / Hoppers Crossing / Laverton area this means more and much faster trips to the city.

This will relieve pressure on this line and is welcomed by LeadWest.

On the Sydenham line, where patronage has increased the most rapidly (55% increase in the last 3 years), the service is already operating near capacity at peak hours with severely overcrowded trains carrying over 1100 passengers. The introduction of 2 additional services in November this year will alleviate this situation somewhat but if growth of patronage continues at anywhere near recent rates it will soon be fully absorbed.

The Report proposes a medium term solution to the need for further capacity on this line by electrifying the line from Sydenham to Sunbury. The Report says this would allow an additional 2800 passengers to be carried in the peak by replacing 3 Vline services from Sunbury (capacity 1200 passengers) with 5 electric trains (capacity 4000 passengers). We understand however that the 5 additional electric trains include 2 to be operating from November this year.

Whilst LeadWest supports this proposal it notes that this involves 15 kilometres of extended electrification to areas which are not expanding as fast as the Melton corridor – which is the

fastest growing area of Melbourne. There is little discussion in the Report of any improvement to services to the Melton line prior to the completion of the Footscray – Caulfield Rail Tunnel, which we consider is a serious oversight.

Sunshine is only 8 stations from Flinders Street Station but from there, on the Melton line, the line is not electrified and after Deer Park, 2 stops from Sunshine, it reverts to single track. Furthermore, the Ardeer and Deer Park stations are totally without amenity – truly deserving of Brimbank Council’s depiction of them as cattle stations – and there is no station at all at Caroline Springs, an area of explosive population growth.

Service on the Melton line is by VLine trains – in the peak hour 2 from Ballarat and 2 from Bacchus Marsh. Such service is already woefully inadequate – providing minimal rail transport to the fastest growing area of Melbourne.

LeadWest strongly believes that the Government should not wait a decade, until the 1st stage tunnel from Footscray to the Domain is completed, before addressing the rail transport needs of the people in the Melton corridor. The very least it should do, in the short term, is to provide longer trains on the existing VLine services, build a station at Caroline Springs and, upgrade the disgraceful stations at Deer Park and Ardeer.

More substantively, it clearly needs to provide a more frequent service. One way to do this, in the medium term, would be transfer one of the services proposed for the electrified Sunbury line and add a further VLine service at peak hour on the Melton line.

Better still, the Melton line could be duplicated and electrified, at least to Caroline Springs, with a connecting service to the Sydenham line at Sunshine to coincide with additional capacity on this line following electrification of the line to Sunbury.

Another short term possibility which could expand capacity between Footscray and the city and facilitate a full electric service to the city on the Melton line would be to investigate the use of the Bunbury Street rail tunnel and bridge which passes through Melbourne on its route into Southern Cross. This line is currently used by interstate trains but it could perhaps be used for some peak hour VLine services – so taking them out of the North Melbourne bottleneck and enabling more electric train services to be provided.

LeadWest’s bottom line here is that the very pressing transport needs of the people in the Melton corridor should not be ignored or shelved for another decade. They are every bit as

deserving of a decent rail transport service as people in the Sunbury corridor, the area is growing faster than the Sunbury corridor and Melton is no further from Melbourne than Sunbury

As mentioned previously the extension of electrified services to Sunbury will allow an additional 2,800 passengers to be carried in the morning peak period. It would relieve the chronic overcrowding on the Sydenham line and improve reliability of services. Sunbury is on the outer edge of the *Melbourne 2030* Urban Growth Boundary. Electrification will join it to the rest of the metropolitan rail network and will also provide Sunbury and Diggers Rest with a quality of service comparable to other parts of Melbourne, including direct access to the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop.

LeadWest sees the construction of the railway line as critical and it be delivered with all possible urgency given that population growth in this region has been and is continuing to be faster than predicted.

The planning and delivery of the railway line should be part of an integrated solution that includes the electrification to Melton.

LeadWest endorses the EMLNA study teams view that this project would deliver very significant benefits to Melbourne's growing west and northwest and could be undertaken in the short to medium term.

Recommendation 4

Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed (subject to further detailed study & consultation)

LeadWest supports the proposal for a new road connection as this is a key element of the multi modal solution necessary in addressing the transport requirements for the west. There is a critical need to raise the road capacity across the Maribyrnong River in both the short and long term.

The cross city road link from the western suburbs to the eastern freeway will also provide a much needed capacity & speed / efficiency to freight, road based public transport, commercial and service industry movements as well as passenger vehicles.

The four lane sections of the Western Ring Road to the north of the Western Highway are already heavily congested during the morning and evening peak periods, and traffic conditions can even be unstable during the middle of the day. Future year forecasts predict & strongly suggest that this problem will become progressively worse in the coming years, unless the critical four lane sections of the Ring Road are upgraded to six lanes.

It is acknowledged that the State Government is committed to capacity widening of the Western Ring Road as a part of Auslink 2, however, there needs to be a correlation between the works proposed on the Ring Road and the proposed tunnel link, to ensure that they are compatible and that gains made by the widening are not lost.

In its first stage, this project would involve either a tunnel from West Footscray under the Maribyrnong River to an interchange connecting Footscray Road and Dynon Road, or an elevated roadway over the Maribyrnong River connecting the Westgate Freeway near Williamstown Road to Footscray and Dynon Roads.

The second stage would be for a tunnel from West Melbourne to connect with the Eastern Freeway and the third stage would involve either a surface road extension westward from Footscray connecting to the Western Ring Road if the first stage was the tunnel option, or widening the Westgate Freeway from Williamstown Rd to the Western Ring Road if the first stage was the elevated roadway.

LeadWest is of the view that the tunnel option is preferred as this would greatly minimise impacts on residential amenity as well as provide a better freight delivery outcome.

LeadWest believes the appropriate starting point for consideration of this recommendation is the physical divide between most of the west and the east created by the Yarra and the Maribyrnong Rivers and the limited number of river crossings – just six in the west, compared to 5 Yarra River crossings directly into the CBD from the south and another 11 to the east between the CBD and Kew.

With the rapid growth of the west and no new river crossings since the Westgate Bridge opened in 1978, these limited crossings in the west have become major choke points at peak hours with all of them near capacity. Westgate Bridge in particular is under acute pressure, having been originally built to carry 40,000 vehicles a day but now carrying around 165,000 a day. Morning peak congestion on this bridge results in traffic backing up as far as Laverton on the Westgate Freeway and for kilometres along the Western Ring Road.

The rapid population growth forecast for the west means that congestion on these river crossings and their approaches will become far worse. The Report projects the number of vehicles crossing Westgate Bridge by 2031 will be 235,000 a day – 42% more than today.

Even if this increase was to reduce substantially by a modal shift to public transport – which would require an enormous increase in public transport usage, given the far greater volume of trips by road taking place– the situation would still be dire, with much more congestion, trips taking much longer, and peak hours being spread over more hours.

Clearly the need for an additional major river crossing in the west is becoming increasingly pressing.

This is so even though major works have been committed, funded by both State and Federal Governments, to strengthen the Westgate Bridge, improve its traffic flow by providing for its 8 lanes to be split 5:3 in favour of the peak hour direction instead of the current 4:4, and widening of the Western Ring Road. In this regard the Report found “the extra lanes across the bridge will be fully utilised within a relatively short period of time as people and goods continue to travel across the city in growing numbers”

LeadWest also believes it is important to have regard to the need to provide redundancy for the Westgate Bridge. With such heavy usage and lack of alternative routes, it only takes a minor incident to cause major congestion on the bridge and the roads leading to it. Should it be rendered unavailable for any substantial period of time the results would be devastating for the west. In effect, it would be largely cut off from the rest of the city.

It would be prudent therefore, to protect the economic viability of the city and of the west in particular, to provide for such redundancy, especially as current and projected traffic volumes make a compelling case for a further high volume river crossing anyway. LeadWest also considers that this insurance benefit should be included in the benefits in any cost benefit analysis and note that no weighting has been attributed to it in the report’s list of benefits.

LeadWest therefore considers the case for construction in the medium term of a major additional river crossing in the West to be overwhelming. Whilst it is LeadWest’s preference that the tunnel option be considered ahead of a bridge, we believe this aspect clearly requires more study by Government, both as to relative costs and the most optimal transport and environmental outcome.

The most controversial aspect of this Recommendation is the proposed tunnel from West Melbourne to the Eastern Freeway. Such a tunnel would have several advantages:

- In conjunction with the new river crossing it would provide a highly efficient east – west link.
- Currently roads from the west to the north east of the city are already at or near capacity in the peak hours and such a journey involves a tedious, time and petrol consuming, stop – start process. This could be completely avoided by the proposed tunnel.
- The tunnel would be of great benefit to business in enabling a much more rapid transfer of freight across the inner north of Melbourne.
- The tunnel would similarly be of great benefit to many of the current 95,000 people who travel from the west to the east across the inner north and back each day, as well as those crossing from the east.
- Pressure would be taken off the Westgate Bridge as those whose journey was to and from the north east of the city rather than the south east switched to a new alternative.
 - The amenity of the inner city suburbs currently coping with considerable through traffic from the east and west would be greatly improved. The residents of Kensington, North Melbourne, Parkville Royal Park, Carlton, Fitzroy and Collingwood would be major beneficiaries in respect of their urban environment – especially if, as the Report proposes, there were no exits from the tunnel between the Eastern Freeway and City Link.
 - North – south traffic through the inner north would benefit from reduced east – west surface traffic and a more even setting of traffic lights.
 - By connecting the Eastern Freeway with City Link, journeys between the north and the city including Melbourne Airport, and the east would be greatly improved.
 - Congestion at the city end and of the Eastern Freeway would be relieved by the through traffic taking the tunnel.

Despite such strong advantages there has been vocal opposition to the tunnel from some environmental and inner resident groups. They contend that Government should not spend more money on major roads but put all its money into public transport and bike paths. This

ignores the fact that even if there was a major increase in public transport's share of daily trips at the expense of private transport, the number of vehicles on our roads is still expected to substantially increase.

As stated by Government in Meeting Our Transport Challenges:

“There are limits to the impact that public transport improvements can have. This is because the current number of people travelling by car is several times higher than those using public transport (meaning that a small reduction in car usage requires a very large increase in public transport usage in relative terms). Consequently road travel is expected to increase.”

The Report estimates that although public transport usage in Melbourne will increase by 54% between 2006 and 2031, car trips will increase by 30% and freight trips by 50%. Given recent growth in public transport usage, and likely future substantial petrol prices increases through ongoing crude oil price rises as we approach peak oil and a carbon emissions trading scheme, these estimates of public transport patronage growth may well be understated.

However, even if public transport usage grew much further, say by the phenomenal 230% needed to take public transports share of motorised trips to 20% by 2031, the numbers of car trips, based on the Report's estimates of total trips would still rise by 15%.

On any rational forecast for the future therefore we must expect road travel to substantially increase (albeit with much more fuel efficient vehicles) which means the traffic congestion problems now faced in Melbourne will become much worse unless remedial road projects are undertaken.

LeadWest therefore concludes that we cannot put all our eggs in the public transport basket - what is needed is a multi - modal response. In that respect, this Recommendation is the appropriate road transport response to the medium term necessity for another high volume river crossing in the west and much improved connectivity and efficiency of our road system between the west and the east across the inner north and of the city.

LeadWest feels that the opportunity exists for lanes within the tunnel to be dedicated for buses, taxis and commercial freight vehicles to give priority to public transport and the movement of goods. This should include a new SmartBus route utilising the cross city tunnel.

Recommendation 5

Community amenity in the inner west should be restored by implementing a Truck Action Plan to remove truck traffic from local streets in the inner west. The plan should include a series of targeted road improvements that form an effective bypass around residential areas, reinforced by local truck bans.

LeadWest Comment - Partially Endorsed (Further study & consultation required)

LeadWest supports the proposals for improvements to truck traffic arrangements in the inner west and the protection of residential amenity.

LeadWest notes with pleasure that the plight of inner western residents in terms of amenity loss by road based freight movement has been recognised and alternative routes suggested.

LeadWest does not believe any significant benefits would be delivered from the Ashley St/Ballarat Rd component. Whilst the proposed connections from the Westgate to the port precinct and associated upgrades offer the potential to significantly improve the efficiency of freight, commercial and service industry movements within the region, LeadWest believes that further study and consultation is required on the impacts and benefits of the Westgate on/off ramp proposal.

LeadWest is strongly in support of measures being introduced and alternative truck routes developed to improve the amenity of inner suburban residents however we believe the preferred concept requires further investigation and presentation of the impacts, benefits and treatments.

LeadWest recommends the following possible measures and actions:

1. The new truck road from Whitehall Street to Williamstown Road must be located, designed and landscaped to minimise amenity impacts on residents and open space.
2. New and upgraded north south road links through Brooklyn / Tottenham to Westgate Freeway.
3. New bridge across the Maribyrnong River connecting Whitehall Street to Mackenzie Road on Coode Island.
4. Improvements to the access connections at Footscray Road and Dynon Road at the interchanges with CityLink.

5. Tunnel under Footscray along the Buckley Street / Napier Street road corridor between Geelong Road and Footscray Road.

Other measures suggested for improved freight movement management include:

- Accelerate action on increasing the movement of freight on rail.
- Effective enforcement of large vehicle loading, noise, speed and emission controls.
- Develop controls to regulate container park operations.
- Investigate means to relocate inappropriately located industry and container parks.
- Implement short term actions to encourage truck traffic onto the freeway system including the introduction of differential tolling charges for CityLink for off-peak travel.

Recommendation 6

Public transport to the Doncaster region is best provided by rapid, high quality bus services, additional bus priority measures and a major new bus-rail interchange at Victoria Park. To deliver this standard of services, the DART upgrade announced in the 2006 Meeting Our Transport Challenges plan should be introduced as soon as possible, along with additional service enhancements and bus priority measures undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 4.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

Whilst LeadWest supports a short term option of providing fast, efficient, comfortable, priority bus service to the Doncaster region, we encourage the Victorian Government not to discount future funding for a light rail service to this area. LeadWest would also propose that consideration be given to similar bus services on the freeway network in the western suburbs eg. The Western Ring Road and West Gate Freeway could accommodate a fast bus service until the rail improvements are provided.

Recommendation 7

A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melbournians cycling to work.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

Leadwest strongly supports any improvements to the cycling network and recommends this be properly addressed within the context of an integrated & widespread plan that could extend beyond the State Government's current focus on areas within 5-8 kilometres of the CBD to include areas of the middle and outer western suburbs.

As discussed in the EWLNA, a coordinated, whole of government approach is needed to plan and finance cycling initiatives.

Recommendation 8

The Victorian Government should work with local councils and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest supports the principle of providing priority for buses on the road network. Complementing this action, there must be recognition of the importance of providing priority for pedestrians, street-level amenity and economic vitality for local businesses in local neighborhoods and especially in activity centres – this principle is particularly applicable to any measures for clearways.

Recommendation 9

A dedicated fund should be established to facilitate the development of Park & Ride facilities, with priority given to improving access to rail services in Melbourne's west and facilitating public transport patronage in the Doncaster corridor.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

Whilst LeadWest supports the establishment of new Park & Ride facilities and expansion and improvement of existing ones, such facilities must be seen as only part of the solution for inter-modal services on the Principal Public Transport Network. Often the provision of better and higher frequency bus feeder services to railway stations is a more sustainable solution.

Recommendation 10

The Victorian Government should re-evaluate its 30% by 2010 rail target (which aims to move 30 per cent of freight from and to all Victorian ports by rail by 2010), given the clear finding by the EWLNA that it cannot be met. The Government should create a new strategy and work with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan for moving more freight by rail.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

Leadwest supports any actions which results in more freight being transported by rail and acknowledges that as a target it is unlikely to be met in the near term. However LeadWest does feel that increasing rail freight contribution to a challenging 30% should be reflected as a longer term aspiration. LeadWest also believe that the opportunity exists that rail freight should be used to develop a linked series of Intermodal freight hubs.

The need to address the challenges of rail freight has been heightened by both the closure of the CRT port shuttle and the growth of rail passenger numbers in recent years.

LeadWest believes that achievement of this longer term policy target will require a range of actions and alternate approaches which could collectively contribute to achieving the goal. Issues of achieving economies of scale, infrastructure improvements, regulations, and stevedoring charges are all vital elements in the mix

Recommendation 11

The Government should take action to increase rail's share of freight by:

Ensuring the development of a single, common user, interstate, intermodal freight terminal north of the city on the Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor

Developing the standard gauge rail freight network to connect the interstate intermodal terminal with the key metropolitan freight hubs

Making and announcing concrete planning decisions about the future sites for metropolitan freight hubs

Ensuring that all future transport plans build in the connection of the Port of Hastings to the interstate standard gauge rail network.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest supports any actions which results in more freight being transported by rail. As mentioned above LeadWest believes the opportunity exists for the provision of an integrated and linked series of intermodal freight hubs / terminals.

The lack of an overall Freight Strategy to determine how Government freight targets are to be met, particularly given the projected growth in the Port of Melbourne is of concern.

LeadWest is a strong supporter of the Intermodal Freight Terminal concept to support the movement of freight traffic.

The development of Inland Ports or freight hubs is a land use initiative to support increased rail use to the port, reduce truck movements within Melbourne and particularly the inner metropolitan areas. The development and operation of an inland port network is supported by major freight industry organisations. There is a strong need to identify sites suitable for inland ports which have the scale and position to meet the road and rail transport requirements for efficient operation.

LeadWest strongly supports the strategic role of intermodal freight terminals in the north, west and south east of Melbourne with direct rail access into the port and national distribution centres clustered around those terminals to reduce cross metropolitan road freight journeys.

LeadWest also recommend that government should:

- Bring forward rail upgrades into the Melbourne Port.
- Identify strategic freight hub sites and place planning protections on these sites and their access routes, including a major hub in the west.
- Issue a clear Government policy which commits to rail freight.
- Release of, and funding commitment to, a Freight Strategy for Victoria.

The State Government has set a minimum 30% rail mode share target (currently around 15%) for all port trade (excluding liquid bulk). For a 30% rail share the volume of containers on rail will need to grow to more than 700,000 TEU by 2010.

Rail produces less than a third of the greenhouse gas emissions per tonne freight carried than trucks and is three times more fuel efficient than trucks. Improving rail links into the port will

improve port efficiency, reduce transport costs and provide a significant economic return to freight customers and the wider community by reducing truck trips, road congestion, road damage, air pollution, noise and greenhouse gas emissions.

Current government initiatives for the port include:

- Developing the Dynon-Port rail link, with grade separation of Footscray Road.
- Protecting strategic land around the port for freight related activities.
- Reconfiguring access links so that more freight can be moved by rail and specialised port vehicles rather than commercial trucks.
- Encourage some port-related freight interchange to outer metropolitan terminals.

A significant change in freight patterns from greater use of rail and/or outer area freight hubs will require government intervention, whether through regulations or incentives to use such means.

Recommendation 12

The Port of Melbourne Corporation should be given overall responsibility for implementing an intermodal hub network in Melbourne, including responsibility for achieving the Government's revised rail freight target.

LeadWest Comment - Not Supported

LeadWest is of the view that the proposal for Port of Melbourne Corporation to subsume responsibility for an intermodal hub network in Melbourne is not desirable or warranted.

LeadWest supports the concept of a single entity being responsible for planning and delivering an intermodal hub network but does not believe the Port Of Melbourne represents necessarily the best option. LeadWest believes an independent statutory authority may be better placed to deliver this recommendation.

Recommendation 13

Given the projected increase in the metropolitan freight task, the Government should take further action to improve the efficient movement of road freight by permitting the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes.

LeadWest Comment - In Principle Support (subject to further studies & consultation)

Leadwest supports initiatives that will deliver a for more efficient and safer freight movement system. It is recognized that there is likely to be substantial growth in the container freight task particularly in the metropolitan area. The Bureau of Transport and Regional Economies indicate that the future freight task in Metropolitan Melbourne will face significant challenges. By 2020, freight vehicle will account for approximately 20 percent of the total billion tonne kilometres in metropolitan Melbourne.

Thus there is a need to focus on the metropolitan container freight task as this is where substantial growth is and will continue to occur and the issue of the use of B triple vehicles needs to be addressed through dedicated truck routes. However the designated routes will need to be carefully considered. Residential neighbourhoods and Activity Centres are not appropriate places for large trucks. Maintenance considerations, turning circles and other impacts on local neighbourhoods will need to be taken into account.

Recommendation 14

The Government should continue to implement Melbourne 2030 and take stronger action to accelerate the development of vibrant suburban hubs in Melbourne's west, particularly Footscray, Sydenham, Sunshine, Moonee Ponds and Werribee.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest strongly supports the revitalization of principal and major activity centres in the Western Region. Infrastructure funding to support improvement in public transport, roads, and cycling and pedestrian facilities in and around activity centres is required to complement the major road and rail projects recommended by the EWLNA. The EWLNA offers the real potential to drive service sector jobs growth in the inner west and generate strong private sector investment into Footscray, Sunshine, Moonee Ponds and Werribee.

The need for travel demand management by the provision of facilities for employment in Major, Principal and Transit Cities under the Melbourne 2030 umbrella is welcome and acceleration of the development of vibrant suburban hubs at Footscray, Sydenham, Sunshine, Moonee Valley, Airport West and Werribee and is supported by LeadWest. In addition LeadWest believes that the planning and timing of infrastructure and network projects take into account the distribution of population growth and economic activity and its effect on travel demand.

LeadWest is most gratified that the EWLNA study team has recognised that “*Melbourne’s western suburbs face major challenges in supporting strong population growth with inadequate transport infrastructure and that population growth is not being matched by local jobs – placing increased pressure on the limited routes available for travel from the west to the CBD and across town*”. LeadWest asks the Government to recognise that this east-west divide which could severely constrain investment, business and employment opportunities needs to be addressed on a priority basis.

Recommendation 15

Through the Council of Australian Governments – and working with the Australian automotive industry – the Victorian Government should pursue measures to bring Australia into line with European CO2 emissions standards for motor vehicles.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest fully supports any actions and initiatives which results in mandatory emission standards for motor vehicles and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Recommendation 16

The Government should develop a clear strategy for increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest supports any actions which results in increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne. LeadWest also believes that any measure to address traffic congestion and improve traffic flows are also beneficial in reducing emissions

and believes an efficient road tunnel would assist by reducing waiting times and reduce overall number of kilometers traveled

Initiatives that increase the proportion of trips made by sustainable forms of transport e.g. dedicated bus routes, public transport, cycling and walking are also strongly supported.

Recommendation 17

The Victorian Government should seek early discussions with the Commonwealth Government regarding a funding contribution from AusLink towards some or all of the EWLNA recommended projects.

The Government should also work with the Commonwealth to extend AusLink to transport projects designed to relieve urban congestion.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest supports the Victorian Government pursuing a whole of government approach to the funding of transport. Having key elements of the EWLNA project mix accorded status of infrastructure of “national significance” is vital if Auslink & Infrastructure Australia funding is to be captured. LeadWest encourages the State Government to advocate for Commonwealth funding for these key public transport, sustainable transport and freight projects.

Recommendation 18

The Victorian Government should consider a funding structure for the proposed new Metro rail tunnel that includes contributions by beneficiaries (including public transport users and property owners across Melbourne).

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed (Further studies & consultation required)

LeadWest believes that a thorough analysis of “funding models” should be evaluated and that more detailed information is required. In general, funding arrangements should be equitable and that the key beneficiaries do contribute an appropriate share. Any funding model must be sustainable in the longer term.

Recommendation 19

The Government should re-evaluate its current road tolling policy to ensure that the long term benefits of new road investments can be fully realised (including public transport priority, improved cycling opportunities, road network balance and improved local amenity).

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed (Further studies & consultation required)

LeadWest believes that more detailed information and an evaluation of pricing options is required and that Public/Private Partnership models be fully investigated to fund these projects. In general, pricing arrangements should be equitable and encourage sustainable forms of transport and travel demand management.

Recommendation 20

A single statutory authority should be created to deliver the EWLNA recommended projects, using a ‘corridor approach’ to planning, managing and delivering the full suite of projects.

LeadWest Comment - Endorsed

LeadWest strongly supports the proposal for a single statutory authority to expedite the delivery of this key infrastructure imperative. The highly successful “Dockland Authority” represents a possible model worthy of consideration and LeadWest feels that such an entity should coordinate infrastructure provision within the west based on that .

Any authority should have mandatory requirements to consult with, and have regard to the views of, local government in its planning and operations.

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Duplication and electrification of the rail line to Deer Park, Caroline Springs and beyond to Melton.

LeadWest strongly supports the view of Brimbank City Council and strongly believes that the duplication and electrification of the line to Christies Road, Caroline Springs, and preferably on to Melton, is a real missed opportunity to address the growth dynamics taking place in this key Brimbank / Melton urban corridor.

The population of the Deer Park, Derrimut, Caroline Springs area is already at 50,000 and is projected to increase to over 70,000 within 7 years, yet the only rail service is a single track, infrequent V/Line rural service.

The electrification is seen as an imperative because the current oversaturated levels of congestion that occur on the Western Highway (Ballarat Road) through Deer Park will 're-emerge' around 10 years after the Deer Park Bypass opens (late 2009), making improvements on the parallel rail line vital. Essentially, road access for this important growth corridor will choke within 10 years without major public transport augmentation.

LeadWest is aware of the limitations presented to the north western lines by the capacity issues at North Melbourne Station and within the City Loop, as well as along the track between Footscray and North Melbourne, and applauds the EWLNA recommendation to construct a new rail tunnel to help address these issues. However, the recommended timing in the EWLNA for the western leg of the rail tunnel to be completed is by 2016, and given the State Government's stated position that electrification to Melton shouldn't occur until after the tunnel is built, this suggests a time frame that exceeds the critical 10 year horizon.

Council seeks a commitment from the State Government to build the rail tunnel within at least the time frames stated in the EWLNA, and a concurrent commitment (including overlapping construction timeframes) to electrify the line to Melton such that it will be completed immediately after the tunnel. The residents of this corridor have gone for too long without the basic standards of transport that most of Melbourne enjoy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, LeadWest supports the EWLNA recommendations as a package, realising of course that given the cost of the proposals the package will have to be delivered over a longer time frame.

However there needs to be action now, particularly on the planning of the larger projects and short term measures to allow the existing networks to function more effectively until the major projects are brought on line.

LeadWest emphasises the key strategic issue is to provide transport flexibility in the Western Region transport infrastructure as an alternative to the Monash-City Link – West Gate corridor and to create employment and other facilities in Principal and Transit Activity Cities in the west to reduce travel demand.

Whilst LeadWest appreciates that the State Government is also looking at a broader metropolitan transport strategy we would not like this to be at the expense of the transport imperatives facing the west and any watering down of the key EWLNA pillar projects would be vigorously opposed.

The critical issue of the upgrade of the metropolitan passenger rail system is addressed in the EWLNA recommendations and we commend those recommendations to the Government.

Finally LeadWest sees the EWLNA recommendations as critical to transport planning, not only for the success of Melbourne 2030 in the Western Region of Melbourne, but reflecting the basic needs for Metropolitan Melbourne.

APPENDIX 1.

The Importance of EWLNA in Repositioning Melbourne's West

The Multiple Benefits of Improved Transport

LeadWest considers that, while the EWLNA proposals are necessary to meet the transport needs of the region; they represent much more than transport infrastructure alone and will deliver major social and economic benefits to Melbourne's Western Region and the greater Metropolitan area.

As a package, the EWLNA proposals will help address a much wider range of economic, social, health, educational and wellbeing challenges confronting Melbourne's Western Region and provide a return on investment much greater than the limited cost-benefit returns estimated the report.

This will reduce the future drain on public services, making the Western Region community more independent and resilient and delivering them a more prosperous future.

EWLNA projects will make a major contribution to regional development in Melbourne's West:

- They will accelerate the renaissance and repositioning of the region;
- They will help bridge the "East-West divide" that has so characterised Melbourne's development for decades; and
- They are consistent with and will help deliver on many parts of LeadWest's Western Agenda.

Agenda for a Globally Competitive Region

Cities and regions compete with each other to attract economic activities.

To be successful, cities and regions must be globally competitive. This involves not simply economic growth for its own sake: a much broader, holistic approach is necessary in order to be truly competitive.

Being globally competitive means more than just the efficient production of goods and services and moving goods cheaply – it means well-connected, vibrant, socially inclusive communities. It means ensuring the community's social capital is effectively utilised, that there is an effective labour market in which the skills are available and that people have access to employment and education facilities.

If this does not occur, the benefits of economic growth are not shared equally, causing social exclusion, whereby some groups become increasingly disadvantaged, leading to problems such as high unemployment, poor health, vandalism, elevated crime rates crimes and urban decay. These problems, while impacting directly on the lives of people in the community, also impose a burden on

the economy.

LeadWest, as the lead regional organisation for Melbourne's West, is committed to developing the full potential of our region and its people – economic prosperity, social cohesion, health and wellbeing, cultural richness, ecological sustainability and physical attractiveness.

Benefits of Investing in Regional Infrastructure

Research undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning demonstrates that infrastructure projects generate a wide range of economic, social and cultural benefits, including significant non-user beneficiaries, or “knock-on” benefits.

As just one example, improved road and rail linkages between centres can significantly improve health outcomes by lifting accessibility to remedial and preventative health care. The benefits of improved health outcomes are widely shared across the community, including local businesses, which enjoy superior productivity.

Failure to invest adequately in regional infrastructure can retard local, regional and state-level economic performance. A large and growing body of literature indicates that the relationship between economic growth and infrastructure is not only correlated, but that infrastructure investment actually kicks off additional rounds of productivity enhancement. Ongoing US research suggests that a dollar investment in public infrastructure leads to overall economic output increases of between \$1.70 and \$3.90. The benefits can vary, including:

- Induced investment through the formation of new businesses related to or dependant on the primary businesses benefiting from the infrastructure; sometimes this will be investment that would never have occurred, sometimes it will be bringing forward investment.
- Generating activity which can stabilise a critical mass of population and businesses in an area, thereby enabling continuing use of sunk infrastructure resources including existing roads, schools, shops hospitals and police stations. This more efficient use of infrastructure saves the cost of new investment in similar facilities elsewhere.
- Improved social cohesion and stronger communities, with demonstrable impacts on labour productivity and reduced social expenditures such as health care, policing and family support.

Previous infrastructure investments such as the West Gate Bridge and the Western Ring Road have played a significant role in the renaissance of the Western Region, triggering an explosion in residential, industrial and logistics development.

The Links Between Transport Infrastructure and Social Exclusion

Transport plays a key role in keeping communities connected, in ensuring that people have access to employment, education and cultural facilities. Conversely poor transport links can result in isolation, unemployment, poor quality of life and increasing inequality.

Lack of transport accessibility makes it harder for people to gain access to employment, health services, education, shopping and recreation. This contributes to social exclusion, which is more prevalent in the Western region than other parts of Melbourne.

Groups typically more vulnerable to social exclusion include the aged, children and youth, people with disabilities, low income and unemployed persons, Indigenous people; and new migrants and refugees. Most of these groups are heavily over-represented in the Western region.

Research by Janet Stanley (of the Brotherhood of St Lawrence) and others indicates that:

- Lack of accessibility to transport is a major factor preventing the long-term unemployed from getting a job.
- There is a strong link between accessibility (good transport) and social capital, community strengthening and wellbeing.
- Lack of transport is a stumbling block for people obtaining social support, education, social networking and pre-school attendance (the latter of which is linked to better educational attainments especially for disadvantaged children).
- Low educational achievement in turn is linked to poor access to the labour market, higher youth unemployment, poor general health, depression, risk of ongoing social exclusion in adulthood and reduced wellbeing.
- The larger and more diverse an individual's social network, the more access they have to functional social relationships, and the more potential benefits there are likely to be for health.
- While State and Commonwealth governments spend substantial money on social programs in disadvantaged areas, the potential contribution of transport to the achievement of social, educational, health and wellbeing goals has been largely ignored and the full potential benefit of improved transport (especially public transport) is under-estimated.

LeadWest believes that the EWLNA transport proposals have the potential to deliver significant benefits that respond to the following specific challenges facing the Western Region:

- 1. Rapid population and urban growth;**
- 2. The need to restructure the regional economy;**

3. **The region's social disadvantage and dysfunction;**
4. **The skills and education challenge; and**
5. **The inadequacies of the region's existing transport system.**

1. Rapid Population and Urban Growth

With a population of 650,856 (June 2007 estimate) the Western Region accounts for around 16% of the population of metropolitan Melbourne and 12.5% of Victoria's population.

Since 1991 the West's population has grown at double the rate for Victoria, including the remainder of the metropolitan area. The current population growth rate for the region is 2.83% - almost double the Victorian average of 1.5%.

At current trends the West will significantly increase its share of metropolitan population from 16% in 2005 to 26% in 2031. The region's population will grow by 38% from 616,000 persons in 2005 to over 850,000 persons by 2031.

Of Melbourne's six highest-growth municipalities, Wyndham ranks first both numerically and in growth rate - with a 2006-07 annual growth rate of 6.2% - and Melton ranks third both numerically and in growth rate - with a 2006-07 annual growth rate of 5.8%.

Of Melbourne's three growth corridors (northern, south-eastern and western), the West ranks number one for both numerical population increase and growth rate. The growth rate for 2006-07 was 6% - more than double that of the north (2.5%) and south (3.2%).

2. The Need to Restructure the Regional Economy

In 2001 there were 177,400 jobs in the Region. The region is projected to contain 260,332 jobs in 2031, an increase of 47% from 2001.

The fundamental structural problems facing the Western Region's economy are as follows:

- **Journey to Work and Reliance of Inner Melbourne Job Market**

The Western Region is highly dependent on the inner Melbourne job market and has a much less well-developed and sophisticated range of employment opportunities and locations compared to Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs.

This imbalance needs to be redressed in the interests of the region's economy and the pressure this places on an already overcrowded transport system.

The under-provision of jobs in the West compels workers to commute to areas with large numbers of

jobs, in particular inner Melbourne: 31% of workers living in the West journey to work in inner Melbourne (and a much higher percentage from Melton and Wyndham) and many others travel to work in the East. There is a strong synergistic relationship between the West and Inner Melbourne – yet the transport links between the two regions are extremely inadequate.

The implication of this workforce movement pattern is that, combined with the high level of car-based commuting, inadequate public transport and the limited number of access points to inner Melbourne, inter-regional through routes are regularly congested, reducing the efficiency of freight movements that are vital to the Western region's (and Victoria's) economy.

- **Need to Attract Knowledge-Based and Professional Jobs**

The region has 12.3% of the State's manufacturing and transport jobs, but only 6.5% of the State's knowledge-based services jobs (ie technical business services, health, education, communications, finance and insurance sectors). There is a dominance of manufacturing and an absence of service-based industries in the region. We need to focus on attracting knowledge based industries and professional jobs. The region is not economically robust or sustainable in its present form if it continues to only attract transport, logistics and manufacturing jobs.

In this regard, a key initiative outlined in the Western Region Employment and Industrial Development Strategy (WEIDS), is creation of a "Principal Activities Cluster": a core of leading-edge innovative manufacturing and engineering enterprises, linked to product and design development. The PAC will facilitate creation of new higher-value employment opportunities, skills and services.

- **Population Outstripping Job Growth**

Rapid population growth in the west is outstripping job growth. Ten years ago the region had 8% of Melbourne's population and 12% of the jobs, but now the situation is reversed - 12% of population but only 8.5% of the jobs, with consequent impact on the transport system and economic leakage out of the region. (For example, 80% of Melton's workforce travels to jobs outside this LGA);

Rapid growth means the gap between numbers of people and numbers of jobs is widening. The region's current rate of jobs provision remains low (315 jobs per 1,000 population) compared to the metropolitan average of 458. Specifically Melton, Brimbank and Wyndham have very high labour force to jobs provision ratios.

- **Growth in the Intermodal and Logistics Sectors**

The region already has the highest concentration of intermodal freight and logistics facilities, with

more growth planned. There is potential for this to be further developed into a “logistics cluster” or rail-focused inland port of international standing and major importance in the Pacific region, based on research by Victoria University.

LeadWest firmly believes that improved transport infrastructure will:

- Enable improved and more convenient travel to a wider range of jobs.
- Encourage location of high value added businesses to the west because skilled people from other parts of Melbourne will be able to access the region.
- Assist in overcoming gridlock, which imposes a significant cost on business and the economy.
- Stimulate the creation of additional jobs and investment. This growth to the region’s economy is vital in order to redress the imbalance with population growth, reduce escape expenditure, reduce dependence on the Melbourne CBD for jobs, increase peoples’ sense of self worth, reduce poverty, crime and social dysfunction, reduce dependence on welfare and community support services, with less cost to government.
- In particular, the proposed road and rail tunnels and the new Tarneit line will stimulate economic growth and the relocation of new businesses to the west, particularly the inner west. This will broaden the region’s economic base and enable a larger number and range of jobs to be offered to the region’s people.
- The seamless connection from east to west (via the new rail and road tunnels) will facilitate the movement of businesses and employees across Melbourne: some businesses based in the east will be encouraged to relocate to the west while still enabling managerial staff to live in the east (an important locational factor for business) but opening up more professional and higher-order jobs for Western region residents.

3. The Region’s Social Disadvantage and Dysfunction

Compared to other regions, the West’s health and community services are significantly under-funded, our people suffer from poorer health and reduced wellbeing, and there is a shortage of doctors, higher unemployment; and large concentrations of disadvantaged people and newly arrived migrants. Strengthening our communities is paramount.

There are concentrations of people with low socio-economic status, high unemployment and low skill levels. These groups include newly arrived migrants who often feel disenfranchised and disengaged from the community, generating racial hostility and tension.

Around 35% of families in the Western region speak a language other than English in the home (compared with 20% for Victoria). There are over 90 different nationalities represented, including

Vietnamese, Italian and Maltese; and in recent times large influxes from Africa and Burma.

The Region's unemployment rate is 5.5% - about 25% higher than the Victorian level of 4.3% and the metropolitan rate of 4.6%. Brimbank and Maribyrnong record considerably higher levels of unemployment than the rest of the region (11.1% and 8.3% respectively). The region has the highest rate of youth unemployment.

Western Region human services are under-funded compared to other metropolitan regions. The high rate of population growth - and especially the number of new families with young children - is placing added demand on family services. The region suffers from a history of under-funding of HACC services compared to other regions. The region has fewer non-government human services organisations than other Melbourne regions.

The health of the Region's population is poorer than other regions as evidenced by a number of indicators. Diabetes and obesity feature strongly. The poorer health status will over time impose a significant cost burden on governments and individuals unless the issues are addressed.

There is a lack of doctors and specialists: the lowest number of GPs per head of population and some specialist services such as psychiatric services are non-existent, due to medical professionals preferring to live in the inner and south-eastern suburbs.

Problem gambling is a significant issue for the community. There are high concentrations of poker machines; and the lack of publicly funded community centres in the region results in gaming venues becoming de-facto community gathering places.

There is a shortage of public/social housing in the region.

The lack of transport (especially public transport) has significant community development implications. There are few links to employment nodes, education centres, shops and entertainment nodes, reinforcing car dependency, which impacts heavily on family budgets and traps people at home.

LeadWest believes that improved transport infrastructure will:

- Help improve community wellbeing, health and reduce social exclusion by providing improved accessibility to jobs and services, raising community morale.
- By improving links between the Western and Eastern Melbourne regions, it will help attract urgently needed medical and health professionals to the region.
- Reduce isolation and poverty and enable access to services.

4. The Skills and Education Challenge

In the West we have significant challenges in skills and education:

The skills base of the region's residents is low, leaving them ill equipped for the jobs emerging as part of the 'new economy' and less able to adjust to changes in the workplace. The skills shortage results in many Western region firms having to draw employees from outside the region, with consequent added demand on the transport system and economic leakage. The west imports knowledge at the rate of about 2.8 billion dollars a day.

Residents of the West have lower levels of education and qualifications compared with the metropolitan area. Just under 70% of the region's population have completed Year 12 or below and we have the lowest rate of tertiary qualified graduates in metropolitan Melbourne. 38% of Western region residents went on to university compared to 45% for metro Melbourne.

School retention rates are the lowest in the metropolitan area with many young people dropping out of school prior to completion of Year 12, with the consequence the rate of youth unemployment in the Western Melbourne Region is higher than in other parts of Melbourne.

There is a lower proportion of persons employed in the advanced knowledge service sectors (ie managers and administrators, professionals and para-professionals); and a correspondingly higher proportion of residents employed in intermediate transport and production, elementary clerical, sales and service and labouring occupations, compared to the State average.

Lower rates of use of computers and the internet within the region – the proportion of people using the internet is 15% lower and the proportion using a computer is 12% lower in the Western Region than in the metropolitan area as a whole.

Poor public transport makes it difficult for western region students to access universities and tertiary colleges.

Apart from the Moonee Valley area, many parts of the region lack choice in primary and secondary education.

The region has no university-based "innovation hub" to attract entrepreneurial, research and innovative activities, limiting growth of high-order professional, commercial and research services.

LeadWest's aim is to equip our people for jobs in the new economy, raise education levels and choices, improve access to education, increase school retention rates, grow the number of tertiary graduates, expand private school offerings, increase internet and computer usage, deliver high speed

broadband and foster lifelong learning.

LeadWest believes that improved transport infrastructure will:

- The improved transport infrastructure will facilitate access for students to university and college campuses.
- Providing better access to education will, over time, raise skill levels, enable access to new higher paying jobs, increase peoples' sense of purpose and self worth, reduce poverty, crime and social dysfunction, equip people to look after themselves better and adopt healthier lifestyles, reducing dependence on welfare, health and community support services, with less cost to government.
- The proposed Footscray to Caulfield rail tunnel would connect Victoria University (at Footscray) with Melbourne University (at Carlton), Monash University (CBD and Caulfield) and the State's major medical and research institutes (in the Parkville precinct). This will strengthen synergies and innovation diffusion between the various institutions and provide Western region residents and businesses improved access to tertiary education and research facilities.

5. The Inadequacies of the Region's Existing Transport System

Most of the arguments are already well developed in the Western Agenda document and in Brett Miller's draft submission.

Some points that might be worth emphasizing include:

- Growth in Port and Logistics Traffic: Freight traffic through the Port of Melbourne is expected to triple in volume during the period to 2030. How will we cope with this?
- The proposed Tarneit rail line is particularly important in improving the poor intra-regional and cross-regional linkages, and helping balance the radial focus of much of the existing transport infrastructure.
- The region's level of connection to the CBD and other parts of the metropolitan area is significantly less than Melbourne's other regions. This "disconnection" is a product of historical and geographical factors, such as the barriers created by the Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers, the major railway yards and other features. This "disconnection" has contributed to the region's isolation, social dysfunction and social disadvantage. The region has an under-developed and unbalanced economy and a significantly under-developed transport system, with an inadequate number of routes and connections, compared to other regions of Melbourne.

- EWLNA has correctly recognised that the region risks being isolated in the event of a major failure in the West Gate Bridge, which could render immense economic damage to the State as well as the region.
- Public and road based transport in the region does not currently provide a good enough access network between employment & activity centres and residential areas. Deficiencies in the road network are most evident in the inner west and deficiencies in the rail network are evident throughout the region.

“TICKING ALL THE BOXES”:

Potential Direct and Indirect Benefits of EWLNA Transport Projects

- ✓ Help address a wide range of economic, social, health, educational and wellbeing challenges confronting Melbourne’s Western Region, thus delivering a significantly greater return on investment than estimated from a “transport only” perspective.
- ✓ Help make the Western Region community more independent and resilient, delivering a more prosperous future and thus reducing the future drain on welfare expenditure.
- ✓ Make a major contribution to regional development in Melbourne’s West, accelerating the renaissance and repositioning of the Region and improving its global competitiveness.
- ✓ Help bridge the “east-west divide” and disconnection between east and west that has so characterised Melbourne’s development for decades; and begin to redress the imbalance between the West’s under-developed transport network compared to other parts of Melbourne.
- ✓ Essential for the region to cope with current and projected population and jobs growth.
- ✓ Enable improved and more convenient travel to a wider range of jobs.
- ✓ Assist in reducing road congestion gridlock, which imposes a significant cost on business and the economy.
- ✓ Accommodate expected growth in Port of Melbourne traffic and further development of logistics as a regional specialty.
- ✓ Stimulate creation of additional jobs and new business investment. This in turn will:
 - Broaden the region’s economic base and enable a larger number and range of jobs to be offered to the region’s people;
 - Redress the imbalance of jobs to population;

- Reduce escape expenditure;
- Reduce dependence on the Melbourne CBD for jobs;
- Increase peoples' sense of self worth;
- Reduce poverty, crime, social dysfunction, dependence on welfare and community support services, with less cost to government.

✓The seamless connection from east to west will:

- Facilitate the movement of businesses and employees across Melbourne;
- Encourage location of high-value-added businesses to the West through improved access from the eastern suburbs;
- Open up more professional and higher-order jobs for Western region residents; and
- Facilitate further growth in Western region tourism.

✓ Provide faster journey times, both within the region and across Melbourne.

✓The proposed rail tunnel in particular will transform Footscray by:

- Changing its image and perception (and indirectly the Western region);
- Changing the socio-economics of the location;
- Attracting new, higher-order professional and specialised businesses;
- Transforming Footscray into a more natural component of the inner Melbourne economy;
- Linking Victoria University with Melbourne and Monash Universities and the Parkville health/medical research precinct.

✓Over time, the increase in job range and reduced journey-to-work times will deliver flow-on benefits, worth millions of dollars per working day, including:

- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Reduced noise pollution;
- Reduced travel distances;
- More time available to spend with family or for leisure, or for new business opportunities; and
- Reduced escape expenditure.

✓The road tunnel will, in particular:

- Facilitate movement between the inner west and the inner east;

- Create and strengthen synergies between businesses in the Western and Eastern regions, delivering more diverse job opportunities to Western region residents;
- Reduce reliance on the West Gate Bridge as the primary access route to the West, and consequent risk to the economies of Western Melbourne, Geelong and the entire State in the event of failure.

✓The proposed Tarneit rail line will:

- Provide additional opportunities for rail to serve new industries;
- Provide rapidly developing residential areas with a rail service;
- Broaden the focus of rail services from the current radial pattern; and
- Relieve pressure on Werribee line services.

✓The improved transport infrastructure will improve educational opportunities for Western region residents and businesses by:

- Facilitating better access for students to university and college campuses;
- Linking Victoria University with Melbourne and Monash Universities and the Parkville health/medical research precinct, which will strengthen synergies between the institutions and provide improved access to tertiary education; and
- Providing Western region businesses better access to research and innovation.

✓Providing better access to education will, over time, raise skill levels, enable access to new higher paying jobs, increase peoples' self worth, reduce poverty, crime and social dysfunction, equip people to look after themselves better and adopt healthier lifestyles, reducing dependence on welfare, health and community support services, with less cost to government.

✓Improved transport and accessibility will reduce the level of disadvantage suffered by Western residents by improving access to jobs, health and community services. This in turn will:

- Improve community wellbeing and health;
- Reduce social exclusion and isolation; and
- Raise community morale.

✓Improving links between the Western and Eastern Melbourne regions will help attract urgently needed medical and health professionals to the region.