

Newsletter August 2008



Leadwest Board endorses East West Link Needs Assessment Report

LeadWest welcomed 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.



Although LeadWest regarded the EWLNA report as having some shortcomings, it nevertheless saw it as a seminal report of exceptional importance for the future of Victoria, metropolitan Melbourne and especially the western region of Melbourne.

However, LeadWest felt that an opportunity had been lost to address the rapid growth taking place in the Caroline Springs – Melton corridor and that serious consideration should still be given to the electrification of the rail service to serve this rapidly developing growth corridor.

In its submission, LeadWest acknowledged that Melbourne's west was 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 threats to the region's economic, social and environmental sustainability.

At their 9th July Board Meeting, Hon Ralph Willis, the chairman of LeadWest, noted that "...making up around 16% of Melbourne's population and containing two of the three fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, the current under investment in the West's transport infrastructure is an issue that will ultimately limit the entire Victorian economy if it is not addressed".

Anton Mayer, the CEO of LeadWest, welcomed the broad findings contained in the study and said that "you need to look at multi modal solutions to such complex issues as exist in the west".

Mr Mayer felt that the report recognised that the transport challenges facing the west would require bold initiatives if they were to be overcome. He added that 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 LeadWest submission supported initiatives by the State Government that provided better access between the east and west, reduced the divide between the east and west, identified the transport imperatives of the west and recommended solutions to a number of these.

The key recommendations supported by LeadWest for the western region were:

- 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 supported the rail tunnel and associated stations should be a priority project from EWLNA. LeadWest welcomed the additional capacity a new line and associated facilities would 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 was seen as a vital east – west transport link that would provide

an alternative to the West Gate Bridge and was needed because of the growing demand for cross city travel, 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 would 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 catered for residential expansion in Tarneit and served 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 identified projects is seen as a fundamental prerequisite in successful delivery.
- Support the Victorian Government pursuit of a 'whole of government' approach to the funding of transport. LeadWest encouraged the State Government to advocate for Commonwealth funding for public transport, sustainable transport and freight projects.

LeadWest believed that the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure was a vital prerequisite and acted as a key driver of a sound economy, a well connected and liveable society and a quality urban environment. The Western Region was, 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 EWLNA had wide ranging implications for Melbourne’s west. The road and rail infrastructure and associated projects would fundamentally change the transport and land use arrangements in the western region and offered the real potential to facilitate the second phase of strong development and jobs growth in the west which would have significant social, economic and environmental implications.

The LeadWest Submission on the EWLNA can be viewed on its website - www.leadwest.com.au

LeadWest Website Update – www.leadwest.com.au

Leadwest Directors have approved the new look and feel of the LeadWest website. The new site is designed to offer a higher level of functionality for users as well as improve access to new information contained on the site. Overall the site now offers LeadWest an effective marketing instrument as well as a store of information for members and casual visitors alike.

LeadWest and Victoria University to champion Western Region Education & Skills Conference in 09

In recognition of the importance placed by LeadWest on the critical nature of the Education & Skills agenda in Melbourne’s west, LeadWest and Victoria University will stage a major Education & Skills Conference in mid 2009.

Business leaders, the Government, unions and other key stakeholders will be drawn together to progress key initiatives to address the western regions shortcomings in this critical area of need.



LeadWest supports Brimbank and Melton Councils rail improvement imperatives

LeadWest participated in a stakeholder forum in Deer Park organised by Brimbank Council to support the quest to secure, as a matter of priority, the electrification and duplication of the Deer Park to Melton rail line. Seen as a major shortcoming of the EWLNA, the need to complete this piece of public transport infrastructure is seen as vital in addressing the transport pressure being experienced by residents in this rapidly growing development corridor.



LeadWest adopts 08/09 LeadWest Business Plan

LeadWest Directors endorsed the broad thrust of the 2008/09 LeadWest Business plan. Key elements and activities focus on the pillars imbedded in the LeadWest "Western Agenda" and cover:

- Western Region Telecommunications Forum.
- Key Stakeholder Visit programs.
- Development of a Western Region Investment Attraction brochure.
- Developing key projects drawn from the WREIDS report.
- Ongoing advocacy for Transport infrastructure imperatives particularly those imbedded within the EWLNA.
- Work in partnership with key regional bodies to further the common agenda. eg. HealthWest, Western Melbourne Tourism etc.
- Continue to support carbon reduction initiatives by western businesses and support climate change awareness campaigns.
- In partnership with Victoria University, hold an Education & Skills Conference in 2009.
- Refine and develop the LeadWest web site as a proactive marketing and information tool.
- Roll out the Leadership for the West initiative.

LeadWest to input into future role of Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees

LeadWest will provide input into the creation of Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia, The Hon Gary Gray, announced that the present Area Consultative Committee Network would become Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees.

The proposed role of individual RDAs and the network as a whole, from 1st January 2009, will be:

• **Advisory**

- Advising on community infrastructure needs.
- Advising on regional issues and opportunities.
- Advising on local implementation of specific Commonwealth initiatives in the region, as requested.
- Advising on adequacy of service delivery in regions.
- Advising the government on social inclusion issues.
- Advising on ways to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and coordination of Commonwealth regional initiatives.

• **Facilitating economic development planning and investment attraction including:**

- Identifying any unique local attributes that would favour the development of new and innovative industries.
- Promoting initiatives to retain and expand skills and local businesses and industries.

• **Acting as an agent of the Government**

- Disseminating information about Commonwealth programs.
- Undertaking ad hoc consultations on behalf of Federal agencies, where a regional network is required.
- Building networks and relationships with other levels of government and key stakeholders in the region.

Parliamentary Secretary Gray has requested consultation with key stakeholders about:

- Their views on the proposed role of RDA and invite their ideas.
- Committee structure and membership – how many committee members should each RDA have? Should they have a particular background or qualification (eg. member of a state regional



development organisation, or local councillor)?

- Governance – management and administrative arrangements: the process for selecting Chairs of individual RDAs, role of the Board and legal arrangements (such as establishment as a Statutory Authority or retain current arrangements).
- Boundaries: What should they be? Would there be benefit in aligning RDA boundaries with state planning or regional boundaries? Are there other 'regions' that make sense.
- Reporting requirements – how can RDA best report to the Government.
- Priorities for ways to improve communication between the Australian Government and the region. eg. how can the Government be informed of regional issues and priorities and how can the Government best consult with the regions regarding new and existing services.
- The services currently or previously provided by the ACC.

LeadWest New Members Recruitment Drive

In order to build its base of strong advocates for the Western suburbs, a business networking luncheon "Achieving Leadership for the West" was organized as a LeadWest membership drive with the venue being the Moonee Valley Racing Club.

Key western region businesses will be encouraged to engage and add their voice in supporting positive change and developments so important for the 650,000 residents that live in Melbourne's western suburbs.

Good interest has been received from western region organisations in partnering with LeadWest to achieve common goals.

Major Western Region organisations interested in supporting LeadWest should contact info@leadwest.com.au

LeadWest briefs Minister Pallas on Strategic Transport Issues For the West

LeadWest CEO joined CEOs and Mayors from Melton, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Moorabool and Hobsons Bay in providing the Hon Tim Pallas, Minister for Roads and Ports with a comprehensive briefing on the transport imperatives in Melbourne's western suburbs. In addition, a thorough review of the EWLNA was undertaken and the State Government welcomed the important input into the debate by key western region stakeholders.

Logistics City in the west to act as catalyst for jobs growth

LeadWest Directors have welcomed State Government financial support for Victoria University to examine areas to further improve Victoria's strong export record and creating jobs for the freight and logistics industry.

A plan for a future Logistics City was the basis of an innovative study to be led by the Institute of Logistics and Supply Chain Management at Victoria University. Overseen by its Director, Prof. Pieter Nagel, Victoria University also felt that the investment in a Logistics City would generate jobs in education and training, financial and information technology services as well as logistics roles in packaging, handling, delivery and customs.

Already a strong generator of jobs and economic growth, Melbourne's west offered significant strategic advantages to business being located in the centre of



Victoria's air, sea, rail and road links. With other recent announcements of multi-million dollar investments into the West, the regions appeal and popularity as one of the best credentialed regions for the transport and logistics industry in Australia had been reaffirmed. The abundance of available and relatively competitively priced industrial land has, and will continue to facilitate this growth.

LeadWest appreciates the ongoing commitment by the State Government to grow the economy in Melbourne's west and create jobs. The funding to upgrade the Westgate/ City Link/Monash corridor and improvements in the Melbourne to Sydney rail line, Australia's busiest rail freight corridor, will be of lasting significance.

Clock is ticking on tackling climate change imperatives

The Australian Government recently released its policy paper on the emissions trading scheme and associated measures, which has been re-branded the 'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme'.

The Green Paper canvassed options and preferred approaches on issues, such as which industry sectors will be covered and how emission caps will be set. It also included ways to address the impacts on Australian households, emissions-intensive trade-exposed industries and other strongly affected sectors.

Key points include:

- cent-for-cent liquid fuel excise offsets;
- assistance to seniors, middle and low income households; and
- some assistance to the coal-fired energy industry.

From commencement, the scheme will include emissions from stationary energy, transport, industrial processes, waste, and fugitive emissions from oil and gas production. A decision on whether agriculture may be included will be made in 2013.

"The recently tabled Garnaut report on the impacts of climate change on the Australian economy should act as a wakeup call for all of us to take actions and change the way we live our lives" said Anton Mayer the CEO of LeadWest. "All of us must re evaluate the things that we regard as important to us and what sort of legacy we want to leave future generations and doing nothing is not an option" he added.



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As Prof Ross Garnaut points out, the potential cost of inaction on climate change would far outweigh the costs associated with tackling it.

Australia has amongst the highest levels of per capita emissions in the world and the Australian Government needs to show resolve and courage in addressing what has become the most critical public policy problem of the new millennium.

Looking at the business landscape in Melbourne's west, we face many challenges in coming to grips with the realities on an emissions trading regime. LeadWest in partnership with the City of Maribyrnong held a business

briefing for western Melbourne businesses on the 13th August at Moonee Valley Racing Club at which policy specialists touched upon the implications this new policy scenario will have on business.

LeadWest participates in HealthWest Summit

The CEO and Chair of LeadWest participated in the recent HealthWest Summit. LeadWest and HealthWest both share a common vision to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities on Melbourne's west.

The west has an acute incidence of chronic disease and has a need to attract additional funding support to address this health inequality and achieve greater social inclusion. Health and wellbeing are one of the 6 pillars identified in the LeadWest "Western Agenda" as being of high priority.

LeadWest supports Victoria University delivery of Leadership Program

Victoria University is developing a Leadership program for delivery to both the business and broader community that will build capacity and capability for our future regional leaders.

Whilst initially developed for and rolled out in Wyndham, the course was seen as having regional appeal and applicability with the active engagement of the west's key education provider, Victoria University. LeadWest believes that such an initiative has broad application across the entire western region as a means of addressing the regions overall education and skill shortcomings.

Melbourne's Rail Renaissance

LeadWest Directors recently attended a briefing with the Chairman of Connex entitled "Melbourne's Rail Renaissance".

Melbourne's rail system has been under huge pressure in the face of a drastic increase in patronage on the network. Increasing fuel prices, a rapidly growing population coupled with the growing dominance of Melbourne's CBD as the catalyst of jobs creation, have led to an unprecedented growth in rail network usage that will require a major re think on government investment into this key piece of infrastructure.



City West Water briefs LeadWest Directors on Water Recycling initiatives in the West

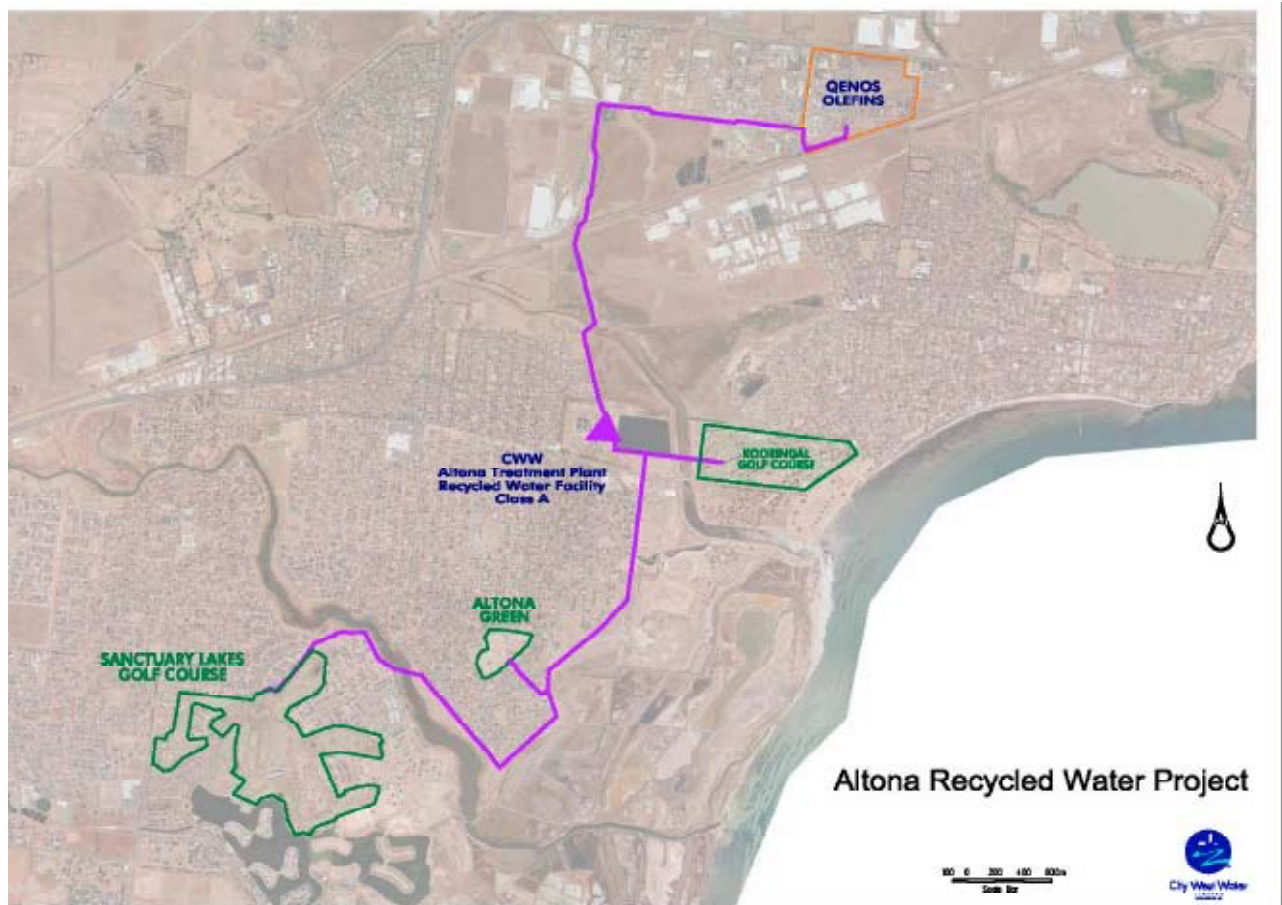
LeadWest Directors were given a briefing on the key recycled water projects being undertaken by City West Water executives. A number of major projects are being rolled out in the west in partnership with Councils and project developers which will achieve a more sustainable future as the west's population grows and economic development and jobs growth continues.

LeadWest joins other Western Stakeholders at State Government Transport Roundtables

A number of LeadWest Directors participated in a number of the recently convened Transport Roundtables hosted by key State Government Ministers

Addressing the key transport imperative, in response to the huge growth pressures confronting greater Melbourne, is very much front of mind for the Brumby State government.

Leadwest directors used the roundtables as a platform to continue to advocate the transport issues facing the western suburbs and reinforce the importance of a number of the Eddington report recommendations



TeleCommunication Issues For the Western Suburbs firmly on LeadWest's Agenda

In partnership with the Victorian Department of Industry, Innovation and Regional Development, LeadWest, along with other key western region stakeholders, are planning to hold a Western Region Telecommunications Forum on the 30th October to progress the vital regional imperative of access to broadband telecommunications.



It goes, almost without saying, that having access to world class broadband would deliver significant benefits to both industry and the community at large.

Regrettably, Australia continues to lag well behind most other

developed economies in the provision of high speed broadband and this has the real potential to stifle future economic growth and Australia's international competitiveness.

The Federal Government's recently released tender for the provision of fibre to the node network is intended to underpin the roll out of a national service designed to deliver much faster broadband speeds in an environment of equitable access.



Whilst the proposal at this stage is for an \$8 billion plus national network that is hoped will reach up to 98% of the population, given the vast stretches of our country and the enormity of the issues involved in reaching our regional and rural communities,

the ultimate cost may well exceed of our these initial projections.

Stakeholders across the broad spectrum of our community in the west agree that this enhanced technology will have hugely positive impacts on areas such as education, health, professional services and employment. Businesses and the community at large have a lot at stake if we get this roll out wrong. To remain internationally competitive and develop businesses that will be globally competitive in the new millennium, we must have access to and embrace this vastly improved infrastructure.

The national broadband network must facilitate real competition in the telecommunications sector via open access arrangements that will support a range of

service providers having access to the network on equitable terms.

From a local perspective, Melbourne's western suburbs continue to suffer from substandard services with regard to broadband coverage and access to its businesses and the residents at large and have the lowest of penetration and uptake of quality high speed telecommunications.

If the Melbourne west is going to be able to create more sustainable jobs within in its community to support its rapidly growing population, then access to this enhanced infrastructure is a critical prerequisite.

Four Hundred jobs lost as Don Smallgoods closes Altona plant

More than 400 Victorian workers will lose their jobs, with smallgoods manufacturer Don KRC announcing the closure of its Altona plant from 2010.

Don Smallgoods has been operating in Altona since the 1950s with most of the workers having been at the Altona plant between 15 and 30 years. More than 90% of the workforce speak English as a second language with most having arrived in Australia in the 1970s and went to work there as their first or second job.

Administrative jobs including marketing, IT and sales would remain at the Altona plant but all manufacturing would cease as of September 2010.

Don KRC chief executive officer Mel Sutton said it had been a sad day for the workers and the business.

This is indeed a distressing announcement for the workers and their families and is another reflection of how tough things have become in the manufacturing industry. It represents a real challenge for both business and government to do something about creating new sustainable businesses that create job opportunities and remain viable into the future.



Population Growth Putting Pressure on Services

Premier John Brumby has called for a pause in the growth of Australia's migrant intake, as Victoria struggles to cope with its population boom.

The State Government is seeking solutions to Melbourne's road and public transport congestion, as well as pressure on housing affordability brought about by Victoria's population growth rate of 1.6% - or about 1500 people a week.

Mr Brumby emphasised, however, that the State Government did not want to "stop population growth", and was proud of its record in making Victoria a magnet for migrants.

Victoria has increased its share of Australia's skilled migrant intake from 17.6% in 1998-99 to about 27% now.

The State Government wanted to keep skilled migration at about that level, but did not believe Victoria needed to keep accelerating its intake.

The Director of Monash University's Centre for Population and Urban Research, Bob Birrell, said most previous Premiers had seen the health of the Victorian economy as intimately linked to population growth because of the impact on housing, infrastructure and other industries.

But Dr Birrell said the 1.6% growth the state was experiencing was too much, and "... what got us here". According to Dr Birrell, "here" means an overcrowded state with too much pressure on infrastructure, housing and transport that threatens Melbourne's famed livability.

It is important that our entire infrastructure is adequate - from hospitals to roads to public transport to schools - before we drive and encourage strong population growth.

It is vital that we adopt a more sustainable population growth model. Growing population pressures, particularly on transport, had put Victoria at close to its growth limits.

Australia's 2008-09 Migration Program has 190,300 places, an increase of almost 20% on the previous year. The Humanitarian Program has 13,500 places.

While Victoria's population is booming, most new

Victorians come from overseas. According to the Bureau of Statistics, Victoria grew by 82,430 in 2007. More than half of that growth - 49,006 people - came from overseas, while 36,513 came from "natural increase", that is, births.

Among residents moving interstate, 3089 more people left Victoria than arrived, with most apparently heading to Queensland. The Sunshine State attracted 25,647 people from its neighbours, particularly NSW, which lost 24,028 over the year.

From 1998 to 2002, Victoria drew more people from other states than it lost, but that has not happened here since.

LeadWest Inputs Into Moonee Valley Economic Development Strategy - **energise.connect.prosper**

LeadWest participated in the consultation phase and provided feedback and ideas to the development of Moonee Valley's Economic Development Strategy - '**energise.connect.prosper**'.

The vision for the strategy is "to create a city that is a leading destination for people to live, work, invest and prosper and an economy that is vibrant and sustainable". The vision is underpinned by the following seven key strategic directions -



- marketing,
- skills development,
- investment and job attraction,
- infrastructure improvement,
- strategic site development,
- business support, and
- partnership building.



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Victorian Government Innovation Statement

Last week the Premier and Minister for Innovation launched the *Innovation: Victoria's Future* Statement, which commits \$300 million in new funding for innovation-related initiatives.

It includes \$20 million for *VicFibre LINKS* to increase the supply of Next Generation Network telecommunications infrastructure and services to priority regions and towns including runs from Bendigo to Mildura via Echuca, and Swan Hill and Geelong to Warrnambool. In addition, \$15 million was announced for the *Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund* (CIIF) to accelerate the use of next generation Information and Communications Technology (Web 2.0).

The CIIF program will enable business, government and community organisations to develop innovative ways of working in Victoria's environment, health, education, local government, emergency services, community and industry sectors. It will operate as a competitive grants program, with a call for applications later this year. For further details, go to www.business.vic.gov.au/innovationstatement.

Broadband could support an increasing take up of Teleworking

300,000 of Victoria's 480,000 small businesses now operate from home (Small Business Victoria data). Sensis also carry out consumer and small business research and June's survey of 1800 small businesses across the country revealed that 61 per cent operate from home.



This alone emphasises the importance of broadband – these businesses need access to high-speed internet to remain productive and to be able to compete on the same stage as their city-based counterparts. Unfortunately, however, there are households in Melbourne's western, eastern, northern and southern fringes – and parts in-between – that can't access ground-based broadband (such as ADSL). Suburbs like Point Cook, Narre-Warren and Doreen and also Bundoora and Keysborough have had known ADSL-access problems in recent times. This is due to the fact that many developments have been

built without giving due consideration to broadband infrastructure. It was assumed that the copper network would provide fast internet access, when in-fact it runs out of capacity when more connections to households are bolted onto its backbone.

Whilst the immediate solution to this situation may well be wireless broadband, we accept that ground-based broadband is also desirable. And, indeed, the National Broadband Network – constituting \$4.7b of government funding – will see improvements made to these blackspot areas.

Blackspots aside, current broadband speeds provide enough online grunt for the majority of people to work away from the CBD and we believe bigger businesses have a key role to play in the promotion of teleworking.

I contend that sometimes employees desire flexible work arrangements for a range of reasons. We should all strive wherever possible to support flexible working arrangements and businesses should be encouraged to proactively search for opportunities to introduce more flexible work arrangements that may be offered to current or new employees. They should equip many of their employees with telco gear to work away from the office - laptops, mobile phones and remote broadband access, for example.

Generally, there is an increasing understanding in the business community of the benefits of teleworking. Twenty-two per cent of the businesses surveyed by Sensis reported that teleworking was having an overwhelmingly positive effect on their business – it improves flexibility through the ability to access information from anywhere, anytime.

The strong adoption of mobile technologies and the increase of businesses having virtual private networks (VPNs) over the past year has enabled teleworking – 60 per cent of mobile email users surveyed by Sensis said their usage was mostly for work (up from 38 per cent).

Interestingly and disappointingly though, the demonstrated shift to teleworking and the acknowledgement of broadband as important infrastructure hasn't led to a change in most people's thinking in small business.

Sensis' research also revealed that while concerned about the environment, small businesses are yet to make the linkage with telecommunications opportunities to lessen their environmental impact: when asked what businesses should be doing to help the environment the top three responses were to be more efficient with energy and water, have recycling bins and reduce pollution.

And as I mentioned at the outset, there's a glaring omission of any broadband reference in the increasing number of climate change reports being drafted. The recently released Garnaut Review Report for example fails to mention broadband – it's not even identified in the R&D incentives for low-emission technologies.

LeadWest to promote virtues of de-centralised business districts

Another concern I'm hearing from business and community leaders on people movement in Melbourne's west, for example, surrounds the high number of people who cross-town for work (Vic Uni has research on this). When people from the west travel east to work, the economic activity obviously centres around their work base in the east. And, of course, these people occupy road and public transport space.

In looking at a solution for this, interest groups and chambers in the west are eager to attract large businesses, but this requires heavy new investment. A message ringing true is that solid fibre-broadband foundations established in the west will help attract business to establish their premises there.



Photo by Daniel Vogel – www.melbournepictures.net.au

The next extension of this is the notion of de-centralised business districts. We should all be looking at options to look at the establishment of suburban-based 'business barns', where people travel short distances to plug into hot-desks with rapid broadband speed and video-conferencing facilities.

It seems there is an acceptance of inevitability that people must travel every day to work. And it seems that too few policy makers are thinking outside the square and raising the concept of taking work to people.

It goes without saying that broadband is critical infrastructure for Melbourne's future. We have some way to go in Melbourne, as the blueprints I've seen for Melbourne ahead of 2030 don't raise broadband infrastructure much at all.

Perhaps the solutions of de-centralised business districts and teleworking when considering climate change and transport congestion can be neatly demonstrated by the simple physics that it takes a lot less energy to move a packet of data than a packet of objects or people.

One of the most promising avenues for decreasing fuel costs lies in new technological developments with the transport substitute of telecommunications allowing many of us not to visit the library (Google), banks (online banking), shops (online shopping), etc.

Reducing urban congestion and family fuel costs will probably depend on how quickly the broadband

infrastructure network takes market share away from rail, road and airport networks

Relocating government offices out of the city could substantially reduce government expenditure, have significant environmental benefits by decreasing carbon emissions and improve Melbourne's traffic gridlock.

The Victorian government could demonstrate real leadership by looking into the viability of decentralising Melbourne's CBD.

Over 10% of Melbourne's office space is taken up by the Victorian Government. A relocation of some of these departments to selected suburban locations such as Footscray, Sunshine, Moonee Ponds & Werribee are likely to have a direct impact on the number of private vehicles travelling into the city on any given day.

Approx 80% of travel undertaken in Melbourne on an average weekday is by private vehicle.

We in the west are acutely aware there is a significant issue with traffic congestion heading to Melbourne particularly over the WestGate Bridge, and travel times in peak hour have slowed to their lowest levels in over a decade which imposes huge economic and social costs onto the community.

I believe we have now reached the point in Melbourne's growth, in particular at the outer fringes, where serious consideration should be given by government in reviewing the location of its offices / employees. Such moves could also act as a catalyst to drive the State governments aim of developing key transit cities and underpin positive urban redevelopments particularly into Melbourne's west.

From an economic point of view, we could see the pressure on CBD rentals decrease as government frees up office space for other businesses and maintaining Melbourne's competitive position globally.

There could also be significant taxpayer savings as arterial infrastructure may be more efficiently utilised and government employees could be located in less expensive office locations.

From an environmental perspective, less people stuck in traffic, and more people living closer to their relocated workplace would potentially save significant amounts of greenhouse gases.

Social Gap Widens From Outer to Inner Melbourne

SUBURBIA is bearing the brunt of rising fuel prices and extreme mortgage stress, a major study of Australian cities has found. Governments must step in to provide outer suburbs with better public transport or risk extreme social breakdown, it warned.

The report, **Unsettling Suburbia**, for the first time combines the 2006 census figures on car use, mortgage levels and income.

Half of all first-home buyers reside in the outer suburbs and have been hit hard by the 12 interest rate rises since 2002. These outer suburban households are under the greatest stress from petrol prices and mortgage levels as a percentage of income, according to the Griffith University's urban planning unit report.

Melbourne's outer suburbs were far more vulnerable to rising fuel prices than the middle and inner suburbs, it warned.

"The households that will have the greatest (problem) coping with higher transport and housing costs are among those with the least resources and weakest access to local infrastructure," authors Jago Dodson and Neil Sipe said.

They warn of a greater social divide between inner Melbourne, which has better access to public transport, and outer suburbs where residents have little option but to drive. Residents of inner and middle suburbs use their cars less and take far shorter trips, the study found.

In 1998, Australia's housing debt was \$139 billion. By 2008, it was \$448 billion, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The report advocates that the same public transport options in inner and middle suburbs should be made available to outer Melbourne.

State governments, including the Victorian Government, were focused on "big-ticket" solutions such as underground rail tunnels. But these would merely strengthen the transport advantages of inner-city residents.

Vulnerable growth corridors in Melbourne include:

- Frankston, Cranbourne, Berwick, Glen Waverley, Narre Warren and Knox Park in the south-east.
- Broadmeadows, Thomastown, Epping, Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn in the north.
- **Sunshine, Sydenham, Deer Park and Hoppers Crossing in the west.**

Inner-eastern residents in areas such as Hawthorn, Toorak, Fitzroy, Collingwood and St Kilda had higher incomes, access to better infrastructure and were less reliant on cars.

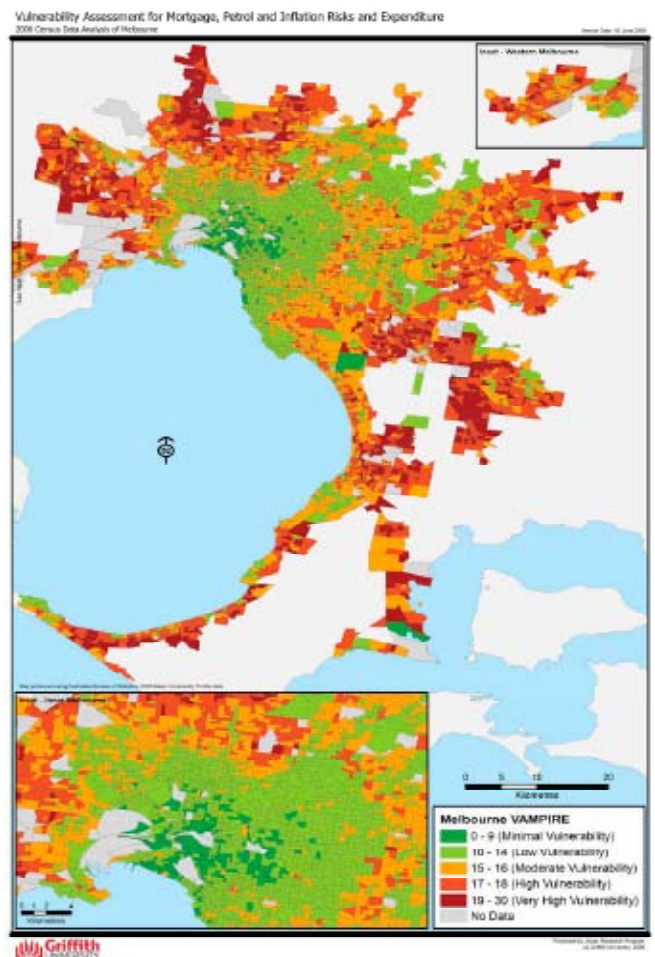
"Residents of these areas are typically wealthier than average and are far more likely to use public transport, walk or cycle, because these areas have some of the best public transport," the report said.

It criticised state governments in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland for proposing "grossly expensive" rail projects to combat transport problems.

In Melbourne, Sir Rod Eddington has proposed a \$7 billion rail tunnel from Footscray to Caulfield. Feasibility studies into a \$7 billion CBD rail underground have begun in Brisbane and a \$12 billion metro is planned for Sydney.

"These schemes direct new investment to central and middle suburban areas — the zones already well served by high quality public transport," the study found. Infrastructure funding should be re-directed to the outer suburbs, the report advised.

"Modest extensions to existing suburban rail networks, combined with comprehensively planned and high quality local suburban bus services, would be a cheaper and more sustainable option."



Oil and mortgage vulnerability in Melbourne, 2006.

www.griffith.edu.au

Urban Research Program

A time to rethink our Economic Growth Model for Australia

For more than a decade, Australia has been locked into an economic paradigm of growth at all costs enabled by cheap energy, cheap fuel and cheap debt.

In 2008, global warming, spiralling oil prices and the credit crisis mean this paradigm is no longer sustainable. With carbon priced at \$19 a tonne, petrol prices pushing towards \$2 a litre and average public debt climbing to 78% of GDP, Australia needs to radically change the way we use our human, intellectual and financial resources.

We need a new economic culture where –

- collaborative business models allow value to be created, rather than extracted;
- advanced communications and transformed workplace practices which allow Australians to integrate work with their lives – and we have full workforce participation; and
- environmental cost is built into every transaction.

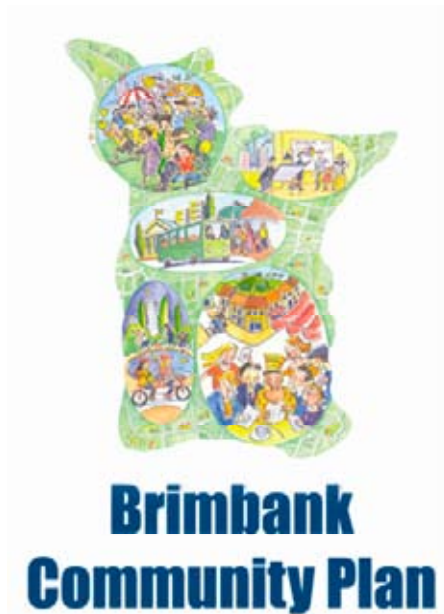
The enablers of this future already exist. New technologies, business models, means of collaboration and sources of innovation are available to help Australia transform its fossil fuel-based economy and create sustainable prosperity.

LeadWest believes it is now critical for policy makers to undertake a broad review of the cultural, educational and commercial changes required for Australia to evolve in this way.

There is an alternative future where Australia has 'recapitalised' and holds an important niche in the global bio-tech and clean tech industries – an Australia that is home to a new generation of global entrepreneurs with a secure, integrated position in the global economy and with collaborative relationships encircling the world.

Spotlight On Brimbank

Brimbank is home to around 170,000 people with a residential population growth rate of 1% per year. Investment in Brimbank continues at a strong pace with the development of a number of greenfield sites for the transport and logistics sectors in Derrimut together with major retail developments in the Watergardens Town Centre and Taylors Lakes. The significant investment activity combined with residential growth and planned improvements to major infrastructure (the Deer Park bypass) will continue to accelerate Brimbank's economic growth.



In order to manage the direction of Brimbank's growth Council is developing a Community Plan. The Brimbank Community Plan will be Council's primary strategic planning document. It will set out a vision for the municipality and a set of goals the Council and the community wishes to achieve.

The Community Plan will be divided into two parts. Part One will relate to Brimbank as a whole and will set out the Council and community's 20 year vision for the municipality while Part Two will comprise Local Area Plans for each of Brimbank's five local planning areas and set priorities and plans for local neighbourhoods.

The final Community Plan will be adopted by Council in early 2009 in time to inform the 2009/10 Council Plan and Budget.

