

Newsletter November 2008



LeadWest Western Region Telecommunications Forum Highlights Broadband Inadequacy

Over a hundred key stakeholders within Melbourne's Western Region attended LeadWest's Telecommunications Forum on Thursday 30 October. Key speakers included the Federal Minister for Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Senator Stephen Conroy, Telstra Group Managing Director for Public Policy and Communications, David Quilty and Ms Judy Anderson from IBM Australia & New Zealand. The Forum was chaired by Ms Rosemary Sinclair from the Australian Telecommunications Users Group (ATUG) and included a panel from major developers in the west.



Minister Conroy acknowledged that a lack of high speed broadband was a problem right across the nation. Thanks to funding assistance from the State Government, LeadWest commissioned a detailed report that examines 'Telecommunications in Melbourne's West'. This report is available from our website www.leadwest.com.au. LeadWest's Telecommunications Forum reinforced the need for high speed broadband access, as it is essential in improving the West's education and skill base and creating an environment conducive to creating new jobs.



LeadWest's Views Being Sought by Media

Heightened media interest in the key issues facing the west of Melbourne is becoming increasingly evident by the level of coverage in major daily newspapers. Covering a broad array of infrastructure themes, social and community imperatives and general development related growth pressures, LeadWest is becoming increasingly front of mind for comments pertaining to the key issues facing the western suburbs.

Victoria University & Victorian Government Partnership to Deliver Additional Vocational Training Places Across the West

LeadWest member and the West's principal education services and training provider, Victoria University, has the potential to add up to 2,500 new vocational training places at the Diploma and Advanced Diploma Level across the west. The extra training places are thanks to additional funding from the Victorian State Government, in an effort to create more TAFE places as a means of addressing the skills shortage.



The allocation would be demand driven and would offer more places for the disciplines facing most unmet demand. Additionally, the Victorian Government has also pledged \$52 million over 4 years for Victoria University to work with local industries in retraining workers.

From a LeadWest perspective we see the imperative of equipping the residents of the West with the skills necessary to becoming active participants in the emerging new economy as amongst our major deliverables and this partnership between Victoria University and the State Government will greatly assist this quest.

Western Region Education & Skills Conference 2009

LeadWest Directors have endorsed staging a Western Region Education & Skills Conference in the second quarter of 2009 in partnership with Victoria University and other key Western Region education and training sector stakeholders.

Raising the education standards and skills within the Western Region is a major theme identified in LeadWest's 'Western Agenda'. Statistics show that the education and skills base of the West's community is low and that building a strong skills base is crucial if the Region is to keep up with the rest of the nation. The Western Region has the



lowest rate of tertiary qualified graduates in metropolitan Melbourne. In addition the west faces low school retention rates and the highest youth unemployment rate in metropolitan Melbourne. As a result of this skills shortfall, local employers are required to import approximately \$2.8 billion of high end skilled staff.

A concerted effort needs to be made to raise education and skill levels in the Region to better improve future employability and improve student access to a range of education facilities.



Leadwest to Join Grants Selection Panel on - Vision for Werribee Plains"- Stage 2

LeadWest has been invited to join the "Grants Selection Panel" to oversee the distribution of \$10mill over 3 years to promote sustainable development in Melbourne's west.

Funded by the State Government Department of Sustainability & Environment, the fund will act as a catalyst to underpin setting up projects that will deliver sustainable development outcomes for communities in the Western Region.



The scheme will be split into three tiers of funding – small (\$5K -to \$50K), medium (\$50K - \$250K) and large grants (over \$250K). The grants selection panel will meet four times per year.

LeadWest Directors Briefed on Key Brimbank Imperatives

LeadWest Directors recently toured key commercial, industrial and residential sites in Brimbank to gain a better understanding of the challenges facing one of the west's fastest growing and most vibrant communities.



Given its strategic location on major transport corridors, Brimbank is well placed to capture investor interest in new employment sectors.

"Energise. Connect. Prosper" – Moonee Valley Economic Development Strategy Launched



LeadWest participated in the formal launch of the new economic development strategy for Moonee Valley.

The visionary document charts a clear path for strong and sustainable development for the vibrant business precinct.

Themed Energise. Connect. Prosper the strategy focuses on addressing the issues of labour and skills, key infrastructure, strategic sites development and liveability. The strategy clearly recognises that in a competitive environment for investor attention, strong branding of the Region coupled with effective business support and partnerships are key elements of a successful outcomes focused strategy.

Connex Chairman Addresses Key Western Stakeholders at Wyndham

Jonathan Metcalfe, the chairman of Connex recently met with key western suburbs stakeholders and councils at a briefing held by Leadwest and Wyndham City Council on the 23rd of Sept at Wyndham Council's new Community Centre.

Connex is presently the Melbourne metropolitan rail service provider under contract to the State Government. Connex, along with other interested parties will be tendering for the new rail service contract with the State Government shortly.

Connex Introduces Hundreds of New and Extended Services

Connex, together with the State Government recently announced the introduction of 328 new and extended weekly services which commenced on Sunday, 9th November 2008. This is part of Connex's plan to address the crowding and reliability issues that have emerged from the unprecedented growth in patronage, which has jumped by an incredible 71 per cent since 1999.

Connex's challenge is to remove bottlenecks on the network and create simpler train paths to improve performance and create space for additional services.

Connex is changing the way the Werribee, Epping and Hurstbridge lines run into the city to eliminate congestion, open up tracks and improve reliability. This allows for the introduction of the additional services now, and also prepares the network for the arrival of new trains late next year.



For customers from the West, during the morning and afternoon peaks Werribee trains will run directly to and from Flinders Street without running through the city loop. Customers wanting to travel through the city loop in the morning are encouraged to change to an Epping or Hurstbridge service at Southern Cross Station. In the evening, customers can catch the Werribee train from Flinders Street or Southern Cross Station, or change trains at North Melbourne.

LeadWest at Telstra Business Awards



The Telstra business awards are a prestigious celebration of the success and entrepreneurial spirit of Victorian business. A number of western Melbourne businesses were involved and performed well over a number of the award categories.

Infrastructure Australia

The Commonwealth Government has expressed interest in fast-tracking the development of its national infrastructure audit and the development of a priority list by the end of the year. Minister Albanese released guidelines to be used by Infrastructure Australia to select projects for the national priority list, including allocations from the \$20 billion Building Australia Fund. Proposals will be assessed against their ability to lift national productivity; strengthen international competitiveness; develop cities and regions; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and improve quality of life. To find out more, go to www.infrastructure.gov.au

LeadWest Lodges Submission to Infrastructure Australia

LeadWest has lodged a submission to Infrastructure Australia in respect to the call for submissions for infrastructure projects that are of national significance from the public and community. The submission can be viewed on the LeadWest website - www.leadwest.com.au

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese and Infrastructure Australia Chair Sir Rod Eddington have requested all Australians to be part of the Rudd Labour Government's nation-building agenda. Submissions were required by 15 October and open to any member of the public and business community. Project ideas to Infrastructure Australia would be evaluated with

possible inclusion on the National Infrastructure Priority List - the first of which will be handed to the Council of Australian Governments in March 2009.

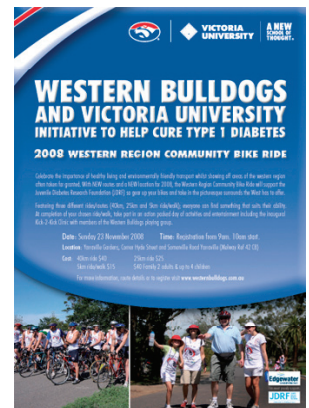


The Federal Government want both industry and the community to be partners in the long term effort to fix and modernise the nation's critical economic infrastructure: our roads; railways; ports; water and energy utilities; and telecommunications. In making a submission the Government requested that people look beyond their own street or neighbourhood and to put forward ideas and suggestions that will strengthen the national economy. Sir Rod Eddington said one of the goals of Infrastructure Australia is to facilitate public discussion of how the nation can better plan, finance, build and use major infrastructure. Continuing investment by both the public and private sectors must be based on a sound understanding of strategic national priorities including economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Infrastructure Australia's immediate tasks are to conduct an audit of the nation's transport, energy, communications and water infrastructure; produce an Infrastructure Priority List to guide future public and private investment decisions; and develop nationally consistent guidelines for Public Private Partnerships.

Western Region Community Bike Ride

The Western Bulldogs and Victoria University with sponsorship from Delfin Edgewater have joined in an initiative to help raise money for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) to cure Type 1 Diabetes.



The Western Region Community Bike Ride, now in its fourth year, will commence at the Yarrville Gardens at 9am on Sunday the 23rd November 2008 and is looking for participants. Further information and registration details can be accessed by visiting the following website – www.westernbulldogs.com.au

Participants can partake in a 40km ride, a 25km ride or a 5km walk or ride, aimed specifically at family involvement. Activities have also been organised for after the event. We encourage you to participate and support this worthwhile cause which encourages healthy living, shows off areas of the western region that are often taken for granted and helps raise money for this important research.

LeadWest Secures New Team Member to Drive Regional Projects

LeadWest has secured Ms Sarah Diamond formerly an adviser to the former premier, The Hon. Steve Bracks, as its Project Manager to assist with driving key 2008/2009 business plan imperatives. Given the breadth and complexity of the issues facing the communities in the West, the new role will be both stimulating and rewarding and offer great challenges to Sarah in the future.



Wyndham Civic Centre Opened



LeadWest and other key regional stakeholders and community leaders attended the official opening of the prestigious Wyndham Community Facility & Civic Centre. This major redevelopment will serve the

Wyndham community extremely well and incorporates state of the art community and meeting facilities.

LeadWest attends Victorian Freight Strategy Forum

As part of LeadWest's advocacy for the Regions transport and freight imperatives, the CEO attended the Victorian Freight Strategy Forum held on 24 September 2008. Minister Tim Pallas encouraged those in the West that saw benefit in the Eddington recommendations to continue to actively participate in the ongoing debate.

Victoria's transport and logistics industry represents the largest single sector in our State's economy. To ensure the long term prosperity and liveability of our State, it is essential that we consider how we can continue to improve the efficiency and productivity of our freight network.



The purpose of the forum was to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to learn more about Victoria's increasing freight task, outline the current planning process and participate in a discussion on how we can best improve the productivity of freight in Victoria. The formal release of the State Governments freight strategy document will be the end of November 2008.

LeadWest Attends Moonee Valley City Council Business Briefing & Celebration

LeadWest attended a gala celebration of business achievement and growth hosted by MVCC. The event was attended by over 150 key regional business leaders and was officially opened by Martin Pakula MP. The keynote speaker for the evening was the chief economist from the ANZ, Mr. Saul Eastlake who spoke about the present credit crisis impacting upon world markets.

Western Melbourne Tourism Secures State Government Support

Western Melbourne Tourism has secured \$50,000 in State Government support to underpin tourism growth in Melbourne's western suburbs. Wade Noonan, State member for Williamstown has championed this initiative which will contribute to an image building campaign for the region.

LeadWest Invited to Participate in Forum for Victorian Tourism Investment Guidelines



LeadWest and other key tourism stakeholders attended the launch of the Victorian Tourism Investment guidelines. The Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Hon. Tim Holding MP presented the keynote address to key stakeholders outlining the importance of the sector to Victoria from an employment perspective. The Minister also highlighted the Government's interest in securing more investment in this vital sector of the economy.

LeadWest Attends Peak Oil Briefing Hosted by MAV

Leadwest participated in an MAV convened discussion on Peak Oil. Given growing world energy demand and limited potential for further production gains, energy prices will continue to place severe pressures on citizens, corporations, cities and states.

Leadwest to host Climate Change Forum - Impacts for Western Melbourne Business

Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA), Maribyrnong City Council (MCC) with support from LeadWest, will hold a second climate change forum in early 2009 targeting western Melbourne businesses. The issue continues to remain a priority agenda for both Federal and State Government policy makers and is being increasingly embraced by Western Melbourne councils. It is proposed the Federal Climate Change Minister Hon Penny Wong will be the keynote speaker at this breakfast briefing

Economic Developments Inquiry

The MAV Bulletin Issue 705, reports that the State Outer Suburban/Interface Services and Development Committee has released its inquiry into local economic development in outer suburban Melbourne.

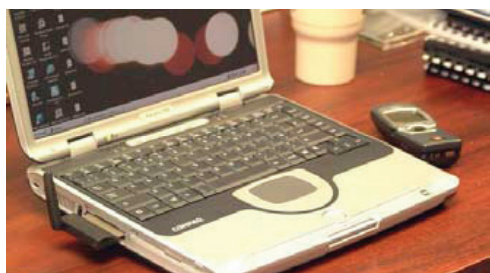
The report concluded there is no single response to ensure economic development in outer suburban areas, but that well developed programs implemented by a range of stakeholders, including multiple levels of government, are important. In particular, housing affordability and the reliance on private transport options were identified as barriers. The report also acknowledged the importance of local government economic development activities in promoting outer suburban areas. Other barriers identified include transport infrastructure, planning controls, non-transport infrastructure information and communication infrastructure and skills shortages. For a copy of the report and recommendations, go to <http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/osisd/inquiries/economicdevelopment/report.htm>



CEO Survey Finds that Broadband is Increasingly Key to Australia's Economic Success

A clear message has emerged from a survey of National CEOs undertaken by Australian Industry Group and Deloitte: the development and deployment of a high speed (national) broadband network is now seen as crucial in building the future competitiveness of both Australian companies, and the Australian economy.

Internet access has for some time been viewed as a business fundamental. However, the advent of high speed networks has increased both the business appetite for, and commercial application of, such technology. Today, as this survey confirms, broadband is being used as a tool to drive the productive capacity and innovative behaviour of many Australian firms.



The overwhelming majority of Australian businesses now have some form of internet access, but the absence of an effective and truly national, high speed broadband network has meant that many have failed to take advantage of the new applications and 'next generation' services available. Business efficiencies, productivity gains and other commercial benefits have been lost as a result.

The evidence from the global marketplace is equally clear:

- Australia's competitors are alive to the economic importance of high speed broadband networks and are taking action accordingly. Regrettably, a recent World Economic Forum report showed Australia lagging behind other developed countries in a number of crucial areas, including the cost of broadband, the number of high speed broadband subscriptions and access to digital content across a wide range of platforms.
- The Federal Government's intention to build a National Broadband Network over the next five years is recognition of both Australia's current performance, and the potential economic gains stemming from a widespread increase in ebusiness intensity. Its deployment is something that Australian industry overwhelmingly supports.

A total of 526 Chief Executive Officers, representing companies with sales revenue of more than \$82 billion, and employing around 215,000 people, responded to this survey - an additional indication of the importance Australian industry place upon this matter. The views of

Australian businesses matter; and it is hoped that the findings of this survey will help inform the wider public debate around how best to deliver Australia's National Broadband Network.

Some of the key findings from the survey include:

1. Two-thirds of Chief Executives (66%) believe their business will benefit greatly from a faster broadband network.
2. Almost three quarters of all businesses (73.5%) indicated that they were likely to upgrade to high speed broadband, if available.
3. A quarter of all companies indicated a willingness to pay a 'premium price' for their business to gain access to higher speed broadband.
4. A faster broadband network is likely to result in considerable increases in all areas of business activity for Australian firms.
5. Small firms are more likely to lack the skills and capabilities to take advantage of the commercial opportunities that will arise from a faster broadband network.

Rudd Government Allocates Almost \$6 Million for Councils in Melbourne's West

LeadWest welcomed the Rudd Government's announcement of almost \$6 million for the councils in Melbourne's West, under the Government's \$300 million Local Community Regional and Local Infrastructure Program.

LeadWest CEO, Anton Mayer said the funding highlighted that the communities operating in Melbourne's West were in dire need of support, and that the funding made available to the Western councils would bolster jobs and growth within the Region.

"This announcement illustrates that the Government recognises that to secure the future prosperity of our Western region, significant investment needs to be channelled into high population growth areas and those of real social disadvantage. From the total national fund allocation of \$300 million, the Rudd Government has distributed \$62 million dollars across Victorian councils with the criteria including population growth and the level of disadvantage," Mr Mayer said.

The funding will target projects that can be delivered quickly and provide an immediate boost to local economies such as upgrades to sports grounds, town hall refurbishments and street improvements.

