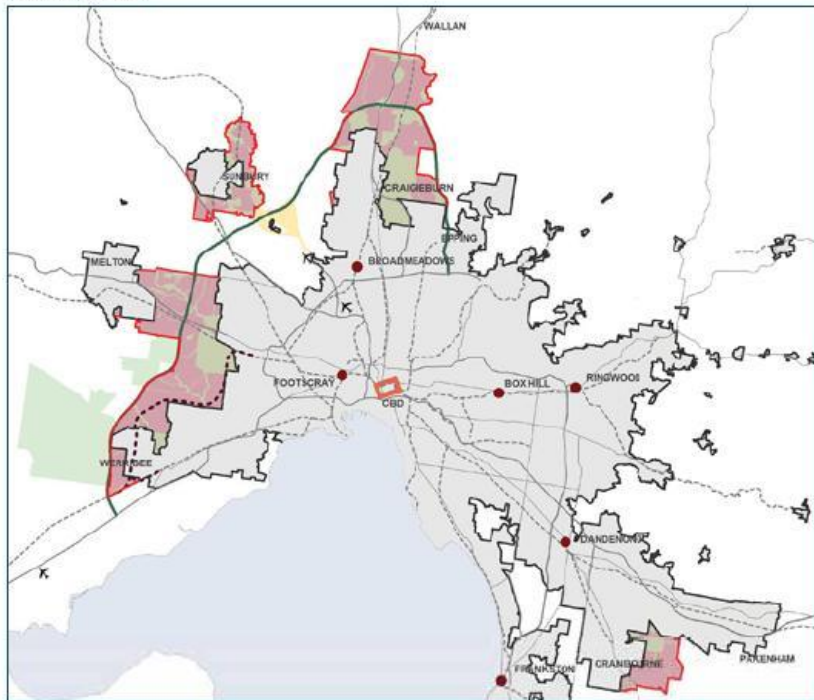


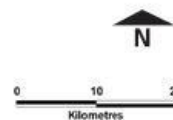
Submission to the Growth Area Authority – Revised Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary

OVERVIEW MAP



- | | |
|--|--|
|  Urban Area |  Proposed Urban Growth Boundary |
|  Land Suitable for Development |  Urban Growth Boundary |
|  Significantly Constrained Land |  Roads |
|  Development Subject to Delivery of Biodiversity Outcomes |  Rail Line |
|  Proposed Grassland Reserve |  Proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor |
|  Investigation Area: Outer Metropolitan Ring/E6 Transport Corridor Link Road to Airport |  Regional Rail Link (west of Werribee to Deer Park) |
|  Central Activities Districts | |

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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 from the organisational / business members (Victoria University, Nufarm Ltd, Moonee Valley Racing Club & City West Water) and an independent chairperson Hon Ralph Willis.

Overview

LeadWest welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the State Government's Draft Review of the UGB and commends the Government on its vision and foresight in laying the foundation for supporting a growing population within Melbourne whilst safeguarding our liveability.

Being able to offer our growing population a choice of affordable housing options, delivering on the complex and multi faceted transport needs of people and businesses and creating sustainable and meaningful employment opportunities will be vital in supporting communities.

Delivering all this, whilst protecting our highly valued open space and biodiversity and ensuring infrastructure and services are in place and ready to support communities as they grow, will be a key challenge indeed.

The Challenge

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 were seen as the greatest threats 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.

In part, the delivery of the proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road and the Regional Rail Link will significantly improve this historical constraint. However, LeadWest would again like to propose that the electrification and duplication of the rail service out to Melton be fast tracked in order to support the significant growth predicted in the Caroline Springs – Melton corridor.

Melbourne’s Western Region has entered a phase of significant economic and industrial development that accelerated with the opening of the West Gate Bridge and the Western Ring Road. This 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 three major industrial nodes in Melbourne.

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 is 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 has been largely derived from manufacturing, comprised of:-

- growing 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 for the West of Melbourne is to build 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 will deliver significant economic and employment benefits to the region, through provision of a world-class productive cluster.

The Western Region's resident population is predicted to well exceed 850,000 people by 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. LeadWest has recognised the challenges and opportunities that substantial population growth poses for the region's future local job requirements.

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

a variety of key infrastructure particularly telecommunications, 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 of significantly enhanced transport connectivity for the western suburbs to the rest of metropolitan Melbourne as well as high speed telecommunications.

If these key prerequisite to regional development are established then there is a significant market opportunity to develop regionally based services and employment opportunities.

In this connection, LeadWest believes there is a critical need for the State Government to facilitate new sources of employment growth and sustainable economic development by investing in and creating a diversified local employment base.

Transportation Infrastructure

LeadWest welcomes the two key infrastructure developments that underpin and support the rapid growth occurring in the west of Melbourne. Both the visionary **Regional Rail Link**, as well as the **Outer Metropolitan Ring Rd** are seen as vital prerequisites in supporting present and future development and opening up areas to accommodate the rapid population growth taking place and support the necessary fostering of commercial, business and employment districts that are so critical.

This enabling infrastructure has the potential to act as real engines of growth and will hopefully be a catalyst to attract much needed business investment into a region with very poor jobs to population ratios. Within the greater Melbourne metropolitan area, both Melton and Wyndham are experiencing the fastest population growth rates but have amongst the lowest jobs to population ratios (particularly Melton) and with areas such as City of Casey slowly running out of room, this will drive even more population growth onto the outer west, potentially worsening this situation.

In this regard it is most pleasing to see that considerable attention is being devoted to supporting future development at the strategically positioned “Werribee Employment Precinct “. With existing facilities such as Victoria University as well as other researched

based organisations this precinct offers enormous scope to become a key employment centre for the region.

LeadWest also believe that similar initiatives to the one for Werribee need to be developed for firstly, the Melton growth corridor as it this area that has the greatest need given its poor jobs to population ratios and secondly in and around Sunshine and St Albans leveraging off the Victoria University facilities at St Albans as well as the major redevelopments associated with the Western Hospital at Sunshine and its training & research facilities.

Employment Corridors

Whilst LeadWest supports the concept of “**employment corridors**” linking key activity districts, as was highlighted in “Melbourne at 5 Million”, we believe however that the three employment corridors proposed for metropolitan Melbourne are inadequate to support the delivery of a more decentralised jobs structure, particularly in the rapidly growing west.

The only designated employment corridor for the west is the Avalon–Werribee–Melton Melb Airport – Donnybrook corridor. This initiative is regarded by LeadWest as critical as it will underpin much needed local jobs creation and support the development of the important **Werribee Employment Precinct** , however LeadWest would strongly contend that given the rapid growth taking place particularly in the area from Sunshine out to Melton that serious consideration be given and planning commence for an additional such corridor between Melton–Sunshine–Footscray–Nth Melbourne.

Given the Central Activity District status of Footscray linking this with the major developments taking place in and around Victoria University at St Albans, the significant redevelopment at Western Hospital at Sunshine (potentially a future Parkville precinct) as well as the redevelopment of the precinct around Sunshine station would support the rapid population growth taking place between Caroline Springs and Melton and provide much needed local jobs development.

Transformation of the Regions Industrial Base

To a large extent another key challenge for the Western Region (as identified in the WREIDS Report) is to transform its traditional manufacturing, engineering and

construction trades base to a form of higher value, knowledge driven and innovation-led industry. And LeadWest believes that a targeted, customised approach to nurture and grow these sectors is required, particularly in the outer west.

The proposed pathway for sustainable employment creation in Melbourne's Western Region is to build on its historic and recognised strengths and to interface these with innovation, marketing and research to produce new world class products that address national and regional needs. This way new niche industries of world class expertise and product development will evolve in Melbourne's Western Region, increasing and diversifying the area's employment base.

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.

Education and Skills Levels

The outer Western suburbs of Melbourne continue to experience relatively high levels of unemployment, especially youth unemployment. One of the main agenda items for LeadWest is to try and raise the level of education and skills across the region in order to equip its residents to become more active participants in the new economy. A key aspect in achieving this outcome is to increase both the number and range of jobs and industries, especially in the advanced knowledge services sectors, that residents can aspire to become involved in. This, I believe, reinforces the need to diligently work towards providing greater jobs choice and jobs opportunity into the rapidly growing outer western region.

Central Activity Districts

LeadWest welcomes the concept of a Polycentric city structure for the greater Melbourne metropolitan area and is supportive of the proposal to establish Central Activity Districts (CAD) around Melbourne's CBD. It is LeadWest's understanding that these CAD's, which are at the apex of the planning hierarchy, will be the key regional centres for employment creation especially in the tertiary / services sector. In addition LeadWest also welcomes proposals such as the development of "Werribee Employment Precinct" as critical imperatives to support the creation of jobs where people live.

Under 'Melbourne at 5 Million' it would appear the **four** CAD's are designated in Melbourne's East at **Frankston, Dandenong, Ringwood & Box Hill**, **one** CAD located in the North at **Broadmeadows**, and **one** CAD in Melbourne's West located at **Footscray**.

Whilst LeadWest is most supportive of the logic underpinning this concept and supportive of Footscray designated as a CAD, we are most firmly of the view that when one takes into account the very rapid growth in population taking place in the outer west, in particular Melton and Wyndham and the extremely poor jobs to population ratios in those areas, serious consideration must be given to an addition CAD in the West. This aspect was also strongly made within the WREIDS report commissioned by the State Government in 2007.

All available data covering jobs to employment ratios and journey to work statistics all suggest that an additional high order activity centre that can act as a centre for tertiary /

service sector employment is vital. At present the West of Melbourne has escape expenditure of over \$2 billion p.a. in professional service etc and this represents a real opportunity to create a more diverse employment mix for the West's rapidly expanding population.

In addition, given the East of Melbourne's limited longer term capacity to continue to support further population growth eg City of Casey, further impetus will be forthcoming to drive even more population growth into the outer western region.

The Local Jobs Imperative

LeadWest would contend that if Victoria, in particular greater metropolitan Melbourne, is to continue to support sustainable growth, far greater attention is going to have to be focused on "local" jobs creation initiatives and a much more decentralised business district structures need to be supported and promoted.

The growth of more jobs locally will need to be in part, on the back of vastly improved infrastructure, particularly telecommunications. A clear message that emerged from a recent survey of Australian business leaders was that the development and deployment of a high speed (national) broadband network is now seen as crucial in building the future competitiveness of both Victorian companies, and the Victorian economy.

Ensuring that these new designated growth areas around Melbourne have high quality Internet access will support increased mobility of business from a "locational" perspective and support jobs creation and investment attraction initiatives well outside the traditional CBD Melbourne scenario.

The overwhelming majority of Australian businesses now have some form of internet access, but the absence of an effective, high speed broadband network, particularly outside the CBD, has meant that many have failed to take advantage of the other locational advantages that outer metropolitan locations have to offer.

Another point worth stressing is that effective, high speed Telecommunications could play a significant role in the whole climate change debate, particularly in the transport issues area that is presently the big agenda item being considered by Melbourne’s business, community and government leaders. Of particular relevance were issues such as Teleworking and the promotion of the de-centralised business district – moving work to people not just people to work.

Teleworking

An often overlooked fact is that 300,000 of Victoria’s 480,000 small businesses operate from home (Small Business Victoria data). Sensis also carries out consumer and small business research and June’s 2008 survey of 1800 small businesses across the country reveals 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). This is due to the fact that many developments have been built without giving due consideration to broadband infrastructure; an assumption 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.

LeadWest believes that DPCD should champion the deployment of FTTH into the new growth areas as a means of supporting more decentralised business precincts.

De-centralised Business Districts

Another concern I’m hearing is 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. 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.

The next extension of this is the notion of decentralised business districts. We should all be looking at options for 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 LeadWest has seen for Melbourne both ahead of 2030 and the revised UGB don’t raise broadband infrastructure 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.

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 and Werribee etc 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, particularly at the outer fringes, where serious consideration will have to be given by government to reviewing the location of its offices / employees. Such moves could also act as a catalyst to drive the State Government's 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 to other businesses, 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.

The decentralisation of State Government employees/services out of the Melbourne CBD may be an opportunity for a well informed, responsible State Government to advance as part of a considered, controlled and managed approach. Such measures may hold an unavoidably high cost initially, but could be cost-effective over the long-term, providing wide ranging benefits for the tax payer and the State Government alike.

It is hoped that this research will provide a stimulus to the Victorian Government to fully explore the potential for the decentralising of its services as part of a ‘whole-of-government’ approach. Melbourne @ 5 Million and Melbourne 2030 are going to require a complete rethink as to the creation of jobs outside CBD locations.

Serious consideration should be given to the decentralisation of State Government services and to fully explore the potential decentralisation has to reinforce and advance the job creation opportunities as close to Melbourne’s “growth areas “ as possible.

At all levels, Government support and leadership is paramount to the success of decentralisation. There have been numerous historical accounts of professed support by Governments for the decentralisation of population and economic activity, yet its direct involvement has been restrained. The synthesis of short term political direction and long-term planning goals is vital to the sustainable growth of Victoria, and the Victorian Government should grasp the opportunity to provide leadership on this issue.

Government Support

Whilst LeadWest supports the Governments intentions with the UGB facilitated by vastly improved enabling infrastructure, one key element that needs to be reinforced is the need for initiatives to support local jobs. Proper planning and zoning to create structures for more local jobs creation is a great first step, but in itself it may not be enough to drive local business growth and business relocation. Government, at both the State and local levels, needs to be more proactive in driving growth into outer areas of Metropolitan Melbourne by more direct market intervention. “Zone it and they will come” may not be enough and a more interventionist approach may be needed.

At the State level consideration could be given to more direct measures such as “Payroll Tax” concessions to businesses relocating into growth areas as well as looking at Government agencies being relocated to support jobs growth eg TAC relocation to Geelong is a prime example. For local government, issues such as rate relief and planning support for business relocation could also be considered.

At the Federal Government level, the proposed National Broadband Network could also be rolled out into the outer metro areas, as a first priority, as these are typically where the black spots are most telling. To reinforce this we need to consider the development of a new economic culture: where collaborative business models allow value to be created, rather than extracted; in which advanced communications and transformed workplace practices allow Australians to integrate work with their lives – and we have full workforce participation; where 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.

By relentlessly reducing the cost of communications, new information technologies are taking us across a threshold into a place where dramatically more decentralised ways of organising work become at once possible & desirable.

Decentralised organisational structures will become increasingly the norm with many organisations having no “centre”, but have almost as many “centre’s” as they do people with workers having the ability to be dispersed physically but connected by technology..... putting people at the centre of business. Technology allows us to gain the economic benefits of large organisations, like economies of scale and knowledge, without giving up the human benefits of small ones, like freedom, creativity, motivation, and flexibility.

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