

7<sup>th</sup> February 2011

The Editor  
The Age  
655 Collins Street  
DOCKLANDS VIC 3008

Dear Editor,

#### DAVIDSON'S OFF TRACK

We read with concern Kenneth Davidson's opinion on the Regional Rail Link project (More sense, less cents for rail revamp – February 7, 2011).

Mr Davidson, relying on the stance taken by one former transport bureaucrat, dismisses the RRL as "wasteful infrastructure investment." Then, he determines there to be "much higher priority rail investments in Victoria" without detailing what they might be.

We wonder: What are these unidentified projects? Who makes them the priority?

LeadWest sees the RRL as a project of the highest priority. It serves Melbourne's west, which is now the fastest growing region in Victoria, one of the four fast growing regions in Australia, and is set to get much bigger and more populated.

The findings of respected demographer Bernard Salt were published in this newspaper last year. Mr Salt believes the west will remain Melbourne's population growth hot spot for at least the next 20 years and predicts growth of more than 120,000 people a decade.

We see potential for even faster growth off with the Baillieu government's policy of biennial urban growth boundary reviews. Quicker land releases means more people moving on roads if not on rail. Moving further out west, not near the existing Werribee line.

Melbourne's west is also the gateway to Victoria, so the RRL serves Victoria at large.

The RRL, by allowing more train services to run between Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Melbourne, opens opportunities for people from these important regional areas. If it takes cars off the road, then it also helps with efficient freight transport.

The RRL, by separating country and city lines, opens opportunities for people across the western suburbs. An additional 90,000 people each peak hour will be able to ride trains east rather than drive cars over the West Gate Bridge. Again, less cars, less congestion, faster freight movements.

The RRL, by running a route through the fast growing outer western suburbs, serves to fill the transport gap created when the urban growth boundary was shifted west. No RRL and they're stranded out there with road congestion between home and workplace.

The RRL, as it runs through the inner and middle-western suburbs, opens opportunity for urban renewal, economic revitalisation and smarter land use. It unlocks 10 hectares of underdeveloped government-owned land surrounding Sunshine Station that could be used for development. It would create major opportunities for urban renewal and a brighter future for Sunshine. It would also underpin the Footscray renewal.

The RRL brings a great deal of economic and social benefit. It is certainly not to be dismissed as wasteful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anton Mayer', written in a cursive style.

Anton Mayer  
Chief Executive Officer  
LeadWest Ltd