



Western Highway at Melton looking South-East

Invest in the West





Wetlands Centre concept image, credit Grimshaw Architects, Hobsons Bay

About LeadWest

LeadWest is an advocacy alliance comprising the western metropolitan municipalities of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton and Wyndham. It represents the shared interests of its members to:



Extending from the vibrant and established inner-west suburbs of Footscray, Yarraville and Williamstown to the diverse growth areas of Wyndham Vale, Tarneit and Rockbank on the western fringes of Greater Melbourne, LeadWest municipalities represent more than 17% of Melbourne's population.

The region is home to more than 840,000 people and is expected to grow exponentially to over 1.5 million people by 2051, which makes it one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. That 2051 figure is similar to the current population of Adelaide.

Melbourne's West is a vibrant economic powerhouse with a unique and enviable mix of growth areas, inner-city renewal prospects and green-field sites coupled with established state significant industrial precincts, priority precincts, metropolitan activity centres and national employment and innovation clusters. Our visitor economy is buoyed by access to open spaces and parklands, rivers and waterways, from our rural areas to the west to Port Phillip Bay in the east. The median age of our communities is lower than that of Greater Melbourne, meaning we have the space, the workforce and the will to drive Melbourne's prosperity.

Cooperation between all three levels of government is required to cater for the current population and for future growth. Only through such cooperation in the areas of strategic planning and investment in infrastructure and community services can we ensure our growing and established suburbs are well connected, liveable and sustainable and to provide adequate jobs, housing and community services, now and into the future.

Melbourne's future lies in the West and we are seeking state and federal government support, cooperation and funding to strengthen our local economies so our communities can continue to thrive.

LeadWest has identified three pillars needed to support our goal of a vibrant, diverse, well-connected, healthy and sustainable region.

- **Future Economy:** Support a skilled workforce by leveraging infrastructure investments and employment clusters to create local jobs and improve education and skills training.
- **Transport, Connectivity and Community Services:** Deliver a more connected region that will reduce congestion, drive productivity and facilitate greater mobility for people to access jobs, critical services and social activities.
- **Liveability and Sustainability:** Strengthen the region's social, cultural and economic future through arts, creativity and appropriate cultural offerings. Reduce emissions, ensure sustainable growth, increase green space and protect natural resources.





Werribee South Beach



Active Transport, Melton



Freight rail



Sunshine Priority Precinct vision image, Brimbank

Key initiatives

A regional mental health program

Our ask: \$200,000 from the State Government with a co-contribution from each LeadWest council for project management, governance, and consultancy to lead the engagement and co-design aspects of a tailored mental health program.

Youth mental health is in crisis in Melbourne's western suburbs and many of our young people are missing out on the help they need to reach their potential. According to North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network, western councils have some of the highest avoidable mortality rates. The 2022-2025 Health Needs Assessment report highlighted that Melbourne's West stands to benefit the most from investment into mental health support.

The purpose of this project is to co-design with young people innovative solutions to strengthen the prevention and early intervention of the youth mental health system in Melbourne's West. By embracing the voices of young people with lived experience in Melbourne's West, we will be able to provide tailored youth-led and place-based solutions and investment recommendations to support the redesign of the youth mental health system over the next five to 10 years.

Active and public transport networks

Our ask: We want to work with State Government departments to review, plan and implement a whole-of-region active and public transport network that delivers real benefits to our western communities.

An interconnected cycling, walking and bus network is critical to improving accessibility to a wide range of services and employment opportunities. A safe and connected local active transport network is important for recreation and commuter use. In combination with an integrated and safe strategic bus network it will provide a viable and more cost-effective option to private vehicles. This is particularly important in the western region which suffers from a lack of investment in public transport and little to no investment in cycling corridors.

This project will deliver on a range of federal, state and local government policy objectives across health and wellbeing, reducing congestion, encouraging modal shift and addressing climate impacts. At a time when cost of living is high and there is a need for immediate action on initiatives at all levels of government to achieve emission reduction targets, this is the right time to promote a regional, interconnected active and public transport package.

Outer Metropolitan Ring (Road and Rail)

Our ask: State and Federal government funding for the Construction of the full Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR) including freight rail, passenger rail and the eight-lane freeway.

The OMR is the north-south connection from the Hume Freeway to Werribee and onto the south west regions of Victoria. It will create better connections between key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport, the Port of Geelong, the Commonwealth Inland Rail and Western Intermodal Freight Terminal.

A funding commitment for the OMR is critical and timely, as it will deliver additional road capacity to the Western Ring Road which is at capacity with 140,000 vehicles a day. It will also provide passenger rail delivering fast rail connection between regional centres, growth areas and the Melbourne Airport, and a critical freight rail north-south connection, from the Commonwealth Inland Rail project directly to 50 percent of all freight customers that already operate in the West. This will take road freight away from inner west roads, reducing congestion and increasing productivity. The OMR will attract commercial investment to create significant jobs to the West.

A business case has already been co-funded by the State and Federal governments, so now a commitment to further plan, design and construct the project is required. Given the exponential growth in the outer western suburbs with a population of 1,000,000 residents by 2051 between the cities of Wyndham and Melton, there is no better time to secure this critical transport corridor.

Sunshine Precinct

Our ask: \$500million from the State and Federal Governments to implement all nine key ideas of the Sunshine Station Masterplan as well as \$200million to upgrade the Albion Station.

While the State and Federal Governments have each committed \$5billion to the rail component of the Melbourne Airport Rail (MAR), the State Government's Sunshine Precinct Opportunity Statement acknowledges that investment in rail engineering alone will not be enough to realise the potential of Melbourne's West. A significant investment is therefore necessary to achieve this Opportunity Statement.

Melbourne's West has a unique opportunity to break the cycle of inter-generational unemployment and disadvantage by maximising the benefits that the MAR will provide for the local community. The Sunshine Station redevelopment and precinct activation has also been added to Infrastructure Australia's priority list of projects.

Sunshine is the only location in Melbourne that the State Government has declared a Metropolitan Activity Centre, a National Employment and Innovation Centre (NEIC), a Priority Precinct and a Transport Super Hub. The State Government is leading the precinct planning for Sunshine, with its Sunshine Precinct Opportunity Statement declaring that 'Sunshine will be the centre of Melbourne's booming west' and outlining an aspiration for an additional 29,000 jobs and 43,000 new residents. Underpinned by fast transport connections to Melbourne's CBD, MAR, the Suburban Rail Loop and the regional rail network, the Sunshine Precinct will leverage from the \$20billion infrastructure investment in Melbourne's West. In addition, Albion Station is long overdue for revitalisation. This will unlock major urban renewal land parcels surrounding the area along Ballarat Road, known as the 'Albion Quarter'.

Investment in the Sunshine Precinct will unlock one of Melbourne's largest urban renewal opportunities and up to \$8billion in private economic development opportunities and attract businesses, creative industries and tourists into the western region.



Wetlands Centre concept image, credit Grimshaw Architects, Hobsons Bay



Creative West concept image, Maribyrnong

Wetlands Centre

Our ask: A state and federal government joint investment of \$11million to build an innovative, sustainability-focused, interactive Wetlands Centre in Hobsons Bay. Hobsons Bay City Council has committed \$5 million towards this regional wellbeing and eco-tourism centre.

Urbanisation is putting increasing pressure on the environment, with the Australian State of the Environment Report 2021 stating that ‘biodiverse urban areas are valuable not only for the ecology that lives within them, but for the identity, health and wellbeing of urban citizens’. The wetlands of Port Phillip Bay’s north-western shoreline, including the Ramsar listed Cheetham Wetlands, are critical eco-systems supporting diverse plant and wildlife communities. Over 150 species of birds have been identified at the Cheetham Wetlands and up to 65,000 migratory waders visit in summer.

The Wetlands Centre will cater for all ages, stages and abilities by featuring a wetlands viewing tower, exploratory accessible walking trails and boardwalks, hands-on learning laboratories, research and visitor facilities, nature and water-based play spaces, and an ephemeral wetland.

The centre will be a premier destination and a unique visitor and learning experience for immersive teaching and learning from Prep to PhD, a leading environmental research facility and will promote ecotourism and community participation in nature.

Creative West

Our ask: \$3million from the State Government, which will be matched by Maribyrnong Council, for the preparation of a detailed business case and schematic designs for a new performing arts and cultural hub in central Footscray - Creative West.

Significant strategic planning work is currently underway across all levels of government for the designated Footscray Business Precinct. Through this work, a creative arts and industries precinct is emerging based on a range of creative industries and cultural facilities that already exist in Maribyrnong. The scale of this project, the diversity of creative industries and accessibility of the precinct provide an opportunity to address the inequity currently experienced by the western region with respect to the availability of arts and cultural facilities as well as creating diversity in employment.

The proposed development will include a large-scale flexible performance and events venue with 500-800 seats, a library and civic open space, integrated spaces for arts and community groups and gatherings. The project will provide the community, artists and creatives with access to the latest technology for learning, artistic and cultural pursuits.

Hobson’s Bay, Maribyrnong looking east.



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