Infrastructure Victoria’s 30 Year Strategy

Latrobe City Council’s Submission to:

1. Victoria’s 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016; and

October 2016
1.0 Executive Summary

Major project investment identified by the State should lever the inherent advantage that Latrobe City has in regional Victoria due to its proximity to Melbourne, Latrobe City’s role as Gippsland’s Regional City centre and the unique mix of industrial, agricultural and natural environments which are yet to be fully realised.

Latrobe City Council is also of the view that significant investment in critical infrastructure upgrades will play a central role in addressing the opportunities and threats which are to be faced by Latrobe City in relation to the future energy market.

Latrobe City has the opportunity to again become a reference point for government and industry representatives. The resulting recognition of Latrobe City’s Major Regional City status within such institutions will, to greater and lesser degrees, influence both the municipality’s and the region’s future. There is an expectation that this thinking should cascade down to regional priority setting by Infrastructure Victoria and resultant state government funding. The key functions of Victoria’s four Major Regional Cities, in attracting and servicing Victoria’s growing population, will need to be supported by processes that facilitate coordinated planning between all levels of government.

It must, however, be acknowledged that Latrobe City’s historical narrative is not one of gradual evolution, rather, of reaction to outside intervention on a major scale. That is - the establishment of the power industry and relocation of workers; the deregulation of the power industry and sometimes pervasive negative impact on local people; and the amalgamation of shire councils. Most recently, interventions such as the demonisation of brown coal, introduction of a carbon price, and the drafting of ‘transition’ plans and road maps by state and commonwealth governments all recognised that Latrobe City is in transition. As in history, bold policy and major infrastructure investments will be required to support this transition, however the local community must be afforded greater opportunities to participate in this process than what has previously been provided.

Considering the above, Latrobe City Council provides a submission which aims to draw attention to the following aspects of Infrastructure Victoria Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016:

1. Acknowledge the importance of state infrastructure and service investment required to meet Latrobe City’s critical role in the region now and in the future;
2. Acknowledgement of increasing pressure on Health Care;
3. Support the recognition of Latrobe City as one of Victoria’s four major regional cities; and
4. Creation of a diverse economy in a lower carbon future

Latrobe City Council welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the Victoria’s Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016.
2.0 Introduction

Latrobe City understands that Infrastructure Victoria was established in late 2015 as an independent statutory authority to provide expert advice and guidance to decision making on Victoria’s infrastructure needs and priorities with three key roles:

1. Prepare a 30 – year infrastructure strategy for Victoria
2. Provide advice to the Victorian Government on infrastructure matters
3. Publish research on infrastructure matters

The priorities of Infrastructure Victoria are likely therefore to site at the strategic state level. On this basis, the future infrastructure needs and opportunities identified and supported by Latrobe City Council within this submission are provided in this context.

The submission is set out in the following four sections with attachments:

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Victoria’s draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy
4. Value Capture – Options, Challenges and Opportunities for Victoria Policy Paper

Latrobe City Council understands that this is the last stage in the engagement process and respectfully requests feedback from Infrastructure Victoria on how our submission has been considered. Latrobe City Council is happy to be involved in any relevant discussion within the infrastructure planning sphere.

It is noted that due to the tight timeframes and the release of the report during caretaker period, this submission has been prepared by Council Officers and has not been formally endorsed by Council resolution.

Should the committee have any questions regarding this submission, please contact Lorrae Dukes, Senior Strategic Planner on (03) 5128 5462 or via e-mail Lorrae.dukes@latrobe.vic.gov.au.
3.0 Victoria’s Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy

Latrobe City Council has reviewed Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016 and is generally supportive of the range of initiatives put forward by Infrastructure Victoria. However, Latrobe City Council’s offers the following suggestions in which these needs can be strengthened.

3.1 Acknowledge the importance of state infrastructure and service investment required to meet Latrobe City’s critical role in the region now and in the future

In Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016, Need 1 – Address infrastructure demands in areas with high population growth and Need 2 – Address infrastructure challenges in areas with low or negative population growth it appears that Latrobe City Council as a Major Regional Centre is not recognised or have any recommendations which address support for the growth of Gippsland Region.

As provided within our previous submission, The Gippsland Regional Growth Plan acknowledges that ‘historically, growth has occurred without adequate consideration of infrastructure needs which can frequently result in existing infrastructure being inadequate or undersized’. It further notes, ‘the major constraints that appear common across most Gippsland local government areas are the availability of funding for existing and new infrastructure’.

The Implications of Population Growth on Infrastructure and Resources in Regional Cities (Essential Economics 2012) identified the need to ensure infrastructure updates (including community infrastructure) occur sequential with development. The report identified that strong population projections (under any of the growth scenarios), require significant additional infrastructure and resources in Regional Cities to support population expansion, business growth, employment and liveability.

Whilst Latrobe City Council acknowledges that our projected and current growth rates are not as high as Bendigo, Ballarat or Geelong, our growth rate is significant enough to warrant inclusion in Need 1. Plan Melbourne 2014 is State government policy includes also includes a direction to ‘rebalance Victoria’s population growth from Melbourne to rural and regional Victoria over the life of the strategy’.

In particular, Latrobe City Council would like to see recognition placed in the description of Need 1 and the in recommendation 1.1.1, Development in established areas. Also, the inclusion of
recommendation of 12.2.4 – Regional Rail upgrades and 12.3.3 Regional rail eastern corridor in 1.3 – Provide transport infrastructure to support high growth greenfield areas.

Latrobe City requests that Infrastructure Victoria:

- Include Latrobe City as a Major Regional City in Need 1
- The inclusion of recommendation 12.2.4 and 12.3.3 in section 1.3

3.2 Acknowledge the increasing pressure on Health Care

Across the broader region, the health sector presently generates the largest number of jobs in Gippsland. The ‘Residential Care and Social Assistance Services’ sector – which includes aged care services - contributes more than 4,700 of the health sector jobs and has grown from 2,600 jobs since 2001 or by 180% (Census 2011). As the region’s population grows, the demand for health services will increase, as too will health related employment. Further, the aging population may provide emerging opportunities for health, as well as aged care facilities to meet the future needs of the Gippsland region.

Latrobe City’s major health facilities will need to continue to expand, to meet an increasing demand which would see further increases in health related employment as well as a number of jobs during construction. The location of such services and facilities should be considered alongside land use planning ensuring these occur in appropriate locations and meet the future needs of residents. The Traralgon Growth Areas Review (TGAR) identifies opportunities for a future employment precinct within proximity to the regional hospital (and airport), and will need to be supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Therefore, Latrobe City Council is supportive of Need 3 and recommendation provided within.

3.3 Support the recognition of Latrobe City as one of Victoria’s four major regional centres

As stated in our previous submission dated June 2016, recognition and acceptance by all levels of government and the broader community of Latrobe’s status as a “Major Regional City” is imperative in leveraging investment associated with this status, such as regionally significant industry and infrastructure.

*Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016,* states as **Need 10 Meet growing demand for access to economic activity in central Melbourne and Need 12 as Improve access to jobs and services for people in regional and rural areas.** Latrobe City Council supports the recognition of Latrobe City as a Regional City in the context of Need 10 but would like to see
subsequent recommendation in this section give reference to specific Latrobe City examples not just generic reference at the start of the chapter.

**Rail**

Latrobe City Council views improvements to rail infrastructure is significant in supporting opportunities for growth and expansion within the region. The V/Line train services are a key element of the public transport mix for Gippsland. V/Line data for Gippsland notes that there were 2,003,752 trips for the 2013/14 financial year, which was up from 1,893,156 in the previous year. It is believed that significant upgrades are required to enable the expansion and faster passenger services on the corridor between Sale, Traralgon and Melbourne.

There are already serious congestion and capacity issues on peak hour V/Line trains, and there is an urgent need for additional carriages, services and improved reliability. Many of the people moving into the region are commuting to the city for work each day and this will exacerbate this need (Gippsland Regional Plan).

Latrobe City Council supports Infrastructure Victoria not including the Gippsland – Pakenham rail shuttle as one of the recommendations in the *Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016*. It is neither necessary nor an efficient means of providing the required services. It is also completely inequitable and would further disadvantage already disadvantaged Gippsland commuters.

Opportunities for local V/Line connections to be introduced between Warragul and Sale would offer support for greater accessibility to health, retail, government and other services located within Latrobe City’s main towns. As provided in the Gippsland Local Government (GLGNs) submission, Latrobe City Council is supportive of a ‘Latrobe Metro’ system to support passenger movements along the corridor.

The three main stations of Traralgon, Moe, and Morwell are requiring updates to outdated infrastructure, only single platforms, and bus/coach/taxi interchanges. Latrobe City Council would support a recommendation that we improve facilities that are currently being provided. (could we add the Rail Document and Rail Submission as an attachment?)

**Freight**

The private siding east of Morwell Railway Station runs to the Australian Paper intermodal facility at Maryvale, near Traralgon. Council advises that Australian Paper currently moves an estimated 2250,000 tonnes per annum of product by rail from its siding to Melbourne for domestic and export purposes. This is the biggest non grain freight commodity volume on the Victorian rail system.

The Latrobe Valley and East Gippsland Rail Freight and Supply Chain Task Assessment identified significant opportunities for further bulk commodities from the region should the utilisation of water, land and mineral assets of Latrobe City and the broader Gippsland region be expanded. This would
generate a significant freight task to support emergent export markets; potentially limited only by the extent of the supporting transport infrastructure network.

The development of the Gippsland Freight Strategy (2013) identifies a range of actions that will facilitate the efficient movement of the Gippsland freight reinforcing the GLGN and Victorian Government’s directions for growing regional freight, as stated in the Transport Solutions Framework 2010-11, Gippsland Regional Plan 2010 and included within the Gippsland Regional Growth Plan and the Victorian Freight and Logistics Plan.

Improvements to the Gippsland Regional Rail Link will be essential for the growth of the region. The close connection to prime agricultural land, a skilled workforce, and the Port of Melbourne makes it vital that trade is not deprived by insufficient rail infrastructure linking these assets.

Latrobe City has been influential in the development of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct, which is expected to enhance rail related freight trade and services to Melbourne. The project has the full support of rail authorities, and state and local governments. The 64 hectare Precinct includes a rail siding and a master plan to develop a logistics hub that will mix rail and non-rail freight supply chains.

Latrobe City Council is supportive of the inclusion of the Freight Consolidation Centres (FCC) in the Options Book, Version 2 into the draft strategy. The inclusion of rail freight recommendations is also supported by the GLGN’s submission to Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016. Please find attached GLGN’s submission for your reference.

Latrobe City requests that Infrastructure Victoria:

- Recognise Latrobe City as a Major regional City in Need 12 (as it is in Need 10) and include specific examples.
- 12.3.3 Regional rail eastern corridor, be included in section 10.4 of Need 10.
- Rewording recommendation 12.3.3 to give greater importance and timeliness than it is currently afforded. Currently, recommendation 12.3.3 has short timeframe for only the Dandenong rail corridor and a longer term (15-30 years) for any consideration of other upgrades. This item should be classified within the short term as providing this critical infrastructure and necessary transport system change is critical if the Gippsland regions strengths and competitive advantage are to be fully realised.
- Including a recommendation in the strategy for the ‘Latrobe Metro’ from Warragul to Sale.
- Include a recommendation to provide updated facilities to Traralgon, Morwell and Moe rail way stations in accordance with approved Master Plans.
- Including a recommendation in the strategy on Freight Consolidation Centres (FCC) as provided in the Options Book, version 2.
3.4 Support a diverse economy in a lower carbon economy

Latrobe City Council recognises the need to transition to a lower carbon future as recognised in Need 18 of the Victoria’s Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy October 2016.

Live Work Latrobe Background Reports 2016 states that ‘Electricity generation is significant to the economy of Latrobe City, based on direct / indirect employment and Gross Regional Product. Recognising the potential restructures of the power generation sector and preparing for a transition to a lower carbon economy are important for Latrobe City’.

The need for the State Government to consider the impacts on Latrobe’s economy is imperative in delivering this recommendation. Therefore, the omission of options in the Options Book, Version 2 such as the potential for Coal – fired Electricity plant conversion to gas – fired plant is disappointing.

Latrobe City requests that Infrastructure Victoria:

- Place more emphasis in recommendation 18.2.1 on how the effects of any proposed transition will affect Latrobe City Council and any support that needs to be provided to ensure diversity and sustainability in the Gippsland Region is achieved.
4.0 Value Capture – Options, Challenges and Opportunities for Victoria

Changes to State Government funding will have a significant affect upon Latrobe City. In the past four years an average of 16% of our annual capital spend is provided by State Government funding.

It can be said that Council will most likely have difficulty funding new infrastructure into the future given the introduction of rate capping. While it is accepted that councils have the ability to apply to the Essential Services Commission (ESC) for a higher annual rate increase, this is unlikely to be acceptable to the ratepayer. The ESC is likely to force councils into taking on higher levels of debt to fund such projects into the future, which will further restrict Council's ability to maintain existing infrastructure. Increased debt servicing costs will also cause strain on Local Government Authorities.

Latrobe City Council is therefore generally supportive of measures to ‘value capture’ funds in increases to land values and through development contribution etc. However, Latrobe City Council is cautious about measures to ‘value capture’ and how this would work in a regional context. It must be ensured that the amount of development contribution, betterment levy etc required would not make a development unviable or difficult to develop within a regional area.
GIPPSLAND RESPONSE TO IV DRAFT
30 YEAR STRATEGY

Baw Baw Shire
East Gippsland Shire
Latrobe Regional City
Wellington Shire

OCTOBER 2016
Executive Summary

This Submission has been prepared in response to the Draft 30 Year Strategy issued by Infrastructure Victoria in October 2016.

The Submission is presented on behalf of four Gippsland councils that have been working together to identify some common infrastructure needs. In particular they have recently undertaken the Gippsland Rail Needs Study, that closely reviewed our rail and connecting coach needs against the requirements of servicing our population centers and rural areas with regard to access to jobs, education, health services and the need to offset social isolation.

We welcome the goal of achieving an integrated 30-year Infrastructure Strategy for Victoria and commend IV for the work that has been done. We applaud the three themes of managing travel demand through road pricing, reducing emissions and enhancing housing affordability.

However, we are very concerned that the infrastructure needs of the Gippsland region are not adequately identified or well-articulated in the Report. We wish to supplement and in some instances correct and augment the proposals in your report as they affect Gippsland.

Baw Baw Shire Council

East Gippsland Shire Council

Latrobe Regional City Council

Wellington Shire Council
## Contents

Executive Summary ............................................. 1  
Looking 30 Years Ahead ........................................... 3  
Population Growth and Rail Capacity......................... 4  
The Dandenong Rail Corridor ................................. 5  
Modernizing the Gippsland Railway......................... 6  
Gippsland - Pakenham Rail Shuttle ......................... 7  
Highway Upgrades and Maintenance......................... 8  
A Latrobe Metro .............................................. 9  
South East Metropolitan Airport.............................. 10  
Gippsland Rail Freight....................................... 11  
Transit Oriented Redevelopment .............................. 14  
Local network for Cycles, Pedestrians and Mobility Scooters.... 15  
Bus, Coach, Tram and Train Research, Design and Construction.... 16  
New Stations ................................................. 18  
New Tourist Routes and Hubs ................................ 19  
Summary of Gippsland transport disadvantage... 20
A 30 Year Strategy must look 30 Years Ahead
We believe a 30-year Strategy should not begin with minor short term investments, but articulate the infrastructure we will require to be in place at the end of the 30 Year period.

For our Region, we would expect the following infrastructure to be in place in 2046:

- An alternative rail corridor developed and implemented for Gippsland trains between Dandenong and Melbourne to provide rapid and unimpeded access from our region to Southern Cross station. This critical issue is explained in detail in the following Section
- A double line railway from Dandenong to Sale, capable of supporting 160 to 200 km/h operation on both tracks to overcome excessive journey times in the region and provide access to jobs, education and health services
- Highways that carry connecting coaches in the region upgraded to an agreed standard (such as wide carriageways with edge sealing, minimal roughness and no permanent speed restrictions below the normal applicable speed limit)
- Significant progress toward the development of the South East Metropolitan Airport, with protected corridors for rail and road access from east and west
- The LaTrobe Metro implemented from Drouin to Sale
- Bulk produce from the region (such as log traffic or mineral ores) conveyed by train from Bairnsdale to a designated port by rail rather than on the highway system
- Significant redevelopment of obsolete housing in the region to create new neighborhoods connected in such a way as to support the use of mobility scooters by the increasing aged cohort in our populations, and to support safe cycling and walking by all community members, and to allow for a variety of housing types suited to changing household structures
- Connectivity between neighborhoods, community centres and stations by local public transit, scooter, bike and pedestrian paths
- We would like to see the growth of bus, coach, tram and train design and construction, and the creation of a research centre into advanced public transport technology and its relationship to urban redeveloped established in our region, following competitive bids from tertiary institutions – leading to implementation of some pilot projects in advanced public transport. This would support transition of our region towards new technology jobs and facilitate needed urban redevelopment.
As noted in the Draft 30-year Strategy, Victoria’s population is projected to grow 82% to 10.1 million in 2051. This will be a massive change in the number of people who call Victoria their home, where they want to work, and where they need to travel. The scale of this change is unprecedented in Victoria.

The most recent growth projections for Victoria were published in July 2016. They assume that the population imbalance between Melbourne and regional Victoria will be greater by 2051 than now. Councils support the views recently submitted by the Rail Futures Institute that population growth needs to be re-balanced from Melbourne to regional Victoria and that investment in faster, more frequent and more reliable rail services is essential to enable and lead regional growth. Notwithstanding considerable supporting evidence, this view does not appear to be reflected, or even seriously considered in the Draft 30 Year Strategy.

Even on the official “business as usual” population projections, the combined population of the four LGAs represented in this submission will reach 231,800 in 2031 and assuming very conservative 1% annual growth thereafter, will be approaching 300,000 by 2051. With the modest stimulation of a significantly upgraded railway and other complementary policies, today’s combined population of approximately 212,000 could easily reach between 350,000 and 400,000 by mid-century along the linear corridor from Drouin/Warragul, through the Latrobe Valley and East Gippsland, to the NSW border. Gippsland’s ample natural resources, particularly water and highly productive land, can readily accommodate this level of population, most of it within existing town boundaries.

Our call for added rail capacity on the Dandenong Rail Corridor, sooner rather than later, separately to that achieved by a combination of Melbourne Metro and the current Cranbourne/Pakenham Rail Project, derives from the essential requirement to reduce journey time for Gippsland commuters and those from the outer south-eastern suburbs in Casey and Cardinia. The Draft Strategy appears to ignore this issue. Perversely, it seems likely that completion of these projects, leading to the progressive ramping up of peak period services between Dandenong and the CBD to 24 trains per hour or more, will further degrade the already slow and inadequate services for Gippsland travelers. This is unacceptable.

Our contention is that the aggregate benefits derived from additional track capacity and travel time savings of between 20 and 30 minutes per day for the many thousands of current and future rail users on the Cranbourne, Pakenham and Gippsland lines will easily rival the benefits typically used to justify lesser, limited duration and more problematic time savings from road capacity enhancements on the M1 and other freeways. Wider economic benefits, including anticipated population shift inducement, will further add to these benefits.
The Dandenong Rail Corridor

The current Draft Report dismisses implementation of a four track Dandenong Rail corridor as something for beyond 2046 and subject to unspecified trigger points. This approach does not deal with the pressing needs for connectivity of Gippsland and burgeoning suburbs south east of Dandenong, nor does it respond to official expectations of population growth in these regions. Official growth projections for Melbourne's south-east and Gippsland indicate that rail capacity (in terms of train path utilisation) will be reached by 2030. Further growth will presumably be accommodated in higher capacity trains. By mid-century, the combined population of Drouin/Warragul, Latrobe City and East Gippsland could exceed 400,000. A concrete plan is required now, so that structures and installations to be built are "future proofed" and do not have to be demolished later, and so that provision is made for the corridors and connections that will be needed. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that such planning is occurring.

Irrespective of when capacity will be reached, the need to provide faster journeys needs to be addressed. The current Skyrail project makes only "passive provision" for quadruplication. However, the plans released by the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) indicate that quadruplication cannot be accommodated within the existing rail reservation, at least between Caulfield and Oakleigh, and would therefore involve extensive property acquisition, as well as the major costs and disruption of a further period of construction. Creation of high quality parkland beneath the elevated tracks, even within the wide reservations through Clayton and around Noble Park, may further inhibit provision of additional tracks in the present rail corridor. It therefore seems that a tunnelled solution or adoption of a completely new alignment will be required for the additional tracks. Arguably the costs of quadruplication under these scenarios could be prohibitive, and the implication is that this has been deferred indefinitely.

We believe a comprehensive independent review should be appointed now to look at all issues pertaining to the provision of extra rail capacity between Dandenong and Melbourne both for peri urban, Gippsland, and freight rail users. Such a study should look both at options for enhancing capacity within the existing corridor and by alternative approaches, such as re-routing express trains via a new railway, possibly elevated over the Princes Highway between Caulfield and Westall, serving Monash University and Chadstone.
Modernizing the Gippsland Railway

While the Draft Strategy appears to broadly recognize the need for shorter term incremental improvements to the Gippsland corridor and other regional lines, in Councils’ opinion, it fails to develop a vision, or even a generalized view of the infrastructure needed to support an increase of over 4 million in Victoria’s population by mid-century, let alone making sensible “future proofing” provision for further growth and development beyond that time.

Having been the poor relation in terms of Victoria’s rail modernization, much better Gippsland line services are increasingly fundamental to the region’s economic efficiency and the social inclusion of its population. Gippsland’s poor rail service is proving to be a barrier to access to good jobs, especially high value CBD-based jobs, and anticipated further employment challenges arising from rationalization of the power industry will further exacerbate this trend. Gippsland also has a higher than average aging population for whom a good train service is vital.

Therefore, in the short term, we are advocating completion of the former Regional Fast Rail project to bring the entire corridor from Pakenham to Traralgon to 160km/h standard and for progressive completion of full duplication to Traralgon together with other complementary projects that will underpin greater service frequency, reliability and journey time reductions. Similarly, we are proposing that the line between Traralgon and Bairnsdale should also be brought to a better standard to allow new rolling stock to operate at higher speeds. There is also an urgent need to re-build the decrepit Avon River Bridge at Stratford. When completed, these works will bring the overall Gippsland rail corridor to a level that comparable rail networks in many other first world countries achieved decades ago.

Looked at from a point 30 or more years hence, it is not unreasonable to consider a more sophisticated railway supported with new technologies that further entrench safe operation, further enhance capacity and enable medium-fast speeds of around (say) 200km/h that would still be compatible with the requirements of a regional railway. We note that the Draft Strategy makes much of possibilities associated with driverless cars and other road-based technologies but says nothing about the potential for driverless trains or non-polluting energy sources for rail applications, technologies that are already well established and are being applied quite widely on railways elsewhere. The final strategy needs to fill this gap.
Gippsland – Pakenham rail shuttle

Gippsland Councils are unanimous in firmly rejecting this option. Whilst the suggestion as a means of providing increased service frequency may have been well intended, it is neither necessary nor an efficient means of providing the required services. It is also completely inequitable and would further disadvantage already disadvantaged Gippsland commuters.

This option is unnecessary because we are led to understand that the operational plan for both the Cranbourne-Pakenham Rail Project and Melbourne Metro provides for 24 train paths per hour in the peak direction between the CBD and Dandenong, and that two of these paths have been reserved for Gippsland trains. In other words, Gippsland can be provided with four services during each AM and PM peak period and presumably, this level of service could also extend into the shoulder peaks until about 10am and from 3pm, respectively. Shuttle operations would also significantly impinge on the effective working of Pakenham station.

In terms of peak period service frequency, while still less than that enjoyed on other regional corridors, four peak direction services, suitably scheduled, are likely to meet the reasonable expectations of the Gippsland community until such time as journey times can be reduced by the provision of additional tracks within the metropolitan network.

Off-peak Gippsland services already operate on an approximate hourly frequency which is acceptable in the short term and needs to be increased to 40 minutes and later to 30 minutes once the necessary supporting infrastructure is in place. We understand this will not cause any difficulty for train pathing through the metropolitan area.

The Draft Strategy suggests that termination of Gippsland services “would benefit a large number of metro passengers through additional services between Pakenham and the city.” However, the option is also described as “maintaining existing through services to Melbourne and adding a shuttle between Gippsland and Pakenham”. Three Traralgon peak period services currently arrive in Melbourne between 7am and 9am and depart between 4pm and 6pm. Is the Draft Strategy therefore seriously suggesting that the non-addition of the planned fourth peak service in each direction, thus providing 45 instead of the 44 paths to be available over two hours, will be of noticeable benefit to metropolitan passengers?

Elsewhere, we explain the disadvantage from slow and unreliable services already suffered by Gippsland rail users and the critical need for infrastructure investment to underpin service improvement. We also detail the issues associated with access to jobs and education and the large and rapidly growing proportion of aged people in our region – people who would be further impacted by increased journey times, travel on crowded metropolitan trains (especially coming from Melbourne) and the physical demands on the elderly of interchange at Pakenham.

Finally, the Draft Strategy mentions that this option “was recommended by the regional citizen jury.” We request that this statement be qualified by noting that Gippsland residents were not represented on this citizens jury.
Highway upgrades and maintenance to enhance safety and efficiency of V/Line bus operations

V/Line connecting coaches and PTV supported bus operators form a critical component of the public transport system in Gippsland, as in other parts of the state. However, it is important that highways on which regular coach connections are offered are safe and fit for purpose.

In Gippsland there is substantial road transport of logs and other heavy loads that can leave little pavement width on the highway for large passenger coaches. As well, consultations with coach operators have disclosed that these heavy road freight vehicles often damage road pavements and create potholes that can be difficult to avoid, particularly during night operations, in rain or in heavy traffic. However scheduled coaches must operate in all these conditions.

A safe and fit for purpose operating environment for regular coaches should include highways that:

- Have adequate pavement width
- Are edge sealed and graded to restrict water retention and
- Are regularly maintained to remove potholes and other damage and
- Have surfaces that offer minimal roughness to avoid passenger discomfort and damage to vehicles

As Gippsland is provided with very limited train services compared to other regions, adequate road maintenance is a critical part of needed public transport investment. A targeted program on improving the safety on highways used by connecting coaches is required.
A Latrobe Metro

The Metro concept, recently applied in Bendigo, is even more suited to the needs of Gippsland than it is to Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong, because the largest settlements in Gippsland are polycentric but connected to the Gippsland railway. There are many passenger movements along the corridor from west to east and east to west that are essentially local in character. They include:

- Several thousand workers daily “exported” from the peri-urban centre of Warragul/Drouin to employment in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon;
- Some 1,200 people travel daily from Sale to employment in the Latrobe Valley, most of whom do not presently have a suitable public transport option;
- Secondary school children travelling east and west because a range of school offerings meeting their preferences is arrayed along the line – with a variety of government and private schools, high schools, technical colleges and specialised campuses such as Kurnai College for the indigenous community;
- Tertiary students travelling to various specialised campuses of Federation TAFE, and university students travelling to Federation University at Churchill as well as Monash;
- Hospital patients, their carers and family travelling to Latrobe Regional Hospital and specialist services surrounding it including the Latrobe Cancer Centre;
- Welfare recipients travelling to Centrelink and many other support services including Gamblers Help located at Morwell and elsewhere;
- Visitors to Fulham Prison in Sale (it is understood that prison authorities in the past have raised the possibility of a platform being located near the prison for this purpose).

Local bus services provide coverage of many of these needs but even former local bus operators have privately expressed the view that a rail service could perform this task more efficiently. Likely requirements could include:

- A 20-minute peak and 40-minute off peak train service between Drouin and Sale, starting sufficiently early in the morning to cater for the needs of workers and students starting and finishing at normal working hours. (Similar to the Bendigo Metro concept).
- Level crossing and signalling improvements in the region to ensure safety in view of the added frequency of services.
A South East Metropolitan Airport
Gippsland, the Latrobe Valley and south east metropolitan Melbourne is disadvantaged by being distant from Tullamarine and Avalon airports. As greater Melbourne develops towards 8 million people and Gippsland toward 400,000 in mid-century, the proposed south eastern metropolitan airport will need to have been developed. A comprehensive Master Plan is needed. There must be identification and protection of rail and road corridors to the Airport from west and east.

Best international practice is to connect rail systems through major airports, allowing rapid access to and from them from the cities and regions in their catchment. Identification of the site for a third airport in Melbourne’s south east is an important issue so that corridors can be protected in planning schemes and longer term plans can be made for road, rail and other infrastructure.

Development of this infrastructure can be expected to bring extensive employment opportunities to the region, both during construction and operations. It will also provide export capacity for high value horticultural and manufacturing industries located in south east Melbourne, the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland generally.

At this stage there is a need for a high level strategic study to examine the need and timing for such a project, as well as governance arrangements and the need for special zoning and land protection.
Gippsland Rail Freight

Rail freight gets little exposure in the Draft 30-year Strategy apart from questions surrounding intermodal terminals and the movement of containers to port. Victoria’s and particularly Gippsland’s rail freight business has been declining for many years due to a combination of:

- approval of bigger and heavier trucks to operate throughout the state
- limited interest in Victorian regional rail freight services by national rail freight companies based in Sydney and Brisbane primarily focused on interstate coal and minerals business
- inadequate rail investment
- transfer of locomotives and wagons to more lucrative traffic opportunities interstate
- upgraded interstate, regional and urban road links
- inadequate law enforcement enabling truck drivers to speed, overload and drive unsafe hours and in some instances, to drive while drug affected
- complex and costly regulatory and administrative processes for freight train operators
- reduced open access terminals for freight train operators
- scrapping rather than sale of surplus locomotives and wagons which has prevented new rail freight business being developed by lower cost freight train operators
- cessation of production of some commodities (e.g. hardwood timber for house framing and briquettes).

Rail freight is most effective carrying large loads and in this sense it is a “numbers game”. If significant exports of brown coal products from the Valley, copper ore from Benambra, or logs from East Gippsland have to be transported substantial distances to port, a rail solution will likely emerge and the location of the Bairnsdale line running through the region should offer the potential to capture such traffic.

At present however there is no capacity to offer freight services beyond Sale owing to the state of the Avon River Bridge at Stratford; there is no traffic on offer to utilize the GIFT terminal at Morwell, there is no brown coal or mineral traffic using the railway, and log traffic from East Gippsland has been lost to road transport.

The sole remaining rail freight operation in Gippsland is the daily train from the Australian Paper mill at Maryvale operated by Qube Logistics which conveys some 30,000 containers per year with paper products for both export and domestic consumption. Qube has shown considerable initiative as relatively recent operators of the service. The company has invested in new locomotives and rolling stock to improve the efficiency of the service, and has worked with government to improve the axle load capacity of some sub-standard parts of the mainline. By arrangement with the operators, the train accepts third party container traffic at Maryvale, although this is small in volume. It is understood that this traffic has included containers of sawn timber from a Latrobe Valley sawmill.

Councils believe the following requirements must be met for rail freight to play its role in Gippsland’s economic and social development:
There must be proactive commitment from state and local government to encourage rail freight development.

The existing Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS), a temporary state government subsidy to intermodal train operators (including some containers on the Qube Maryvale service), needs to be extended on a 5 to 10 year basis to provide firmer investment horizons for rail and intermodal operators and their customers. The subsidy recognizes the external economic benefits offered by rail freight.

Rail freight facilitation and marketing must be innovative and entrepreneurial and take place at central and local level. At state level, a need has been identified for several years for the creation of a Rail Freight Facilitation Unit within state government to advocate for needed investments and planning for the rail freight system. Instead, recent years have seen the reduction of rail freight expertise within state government to a bare minimum.

At the local level, successful marketing of rail and intermodal services requires effective entrepreneurs who can do business with local producers and freight forwarders, and who can build up train loads to effective levels by meeting their needs for reliable schedules and just in time warehousing, despatch and export. Such entrepreneurs have emerged over recent years in Mildura, Horsham, Warrnambool and Ettamogah near Albury.

Once the rail infrastructure in the Gippsland region, including the Avon River Bridge, is restored to a fit-for-purpose standard, a franchise for providing intermodal services east of Maryvale could be offered by public tender, including rights to operate GIFT and the railyards at Sale and Bairnsdale.

There is potential for the return of quite substantial rail freight volumes to the main Gippsland railway including:

- Recapture of log traffic from East Gippsland to Geelong, especially if this can no longer be accepted at the Port of Eden. This requires the re-opening of the Bairnsdale line to freight traffic, contingent on the replacement of the Avon River Bridge at Stratford.
- Development of a regular intermodal train conveying export containers from Bairnsdale, GIFT and/or Maryvale to the Port and receiving import containers directly from the Port. This requires an entrepreneurial, private sector enterprise, possibly franchised by government.
GIPPSLAND RESPONSE TO THE IV DRAFT 30-YEAR STRATEGY

- Development of traffic in brown coal or brown coal products from Latrobe Valley to port. This depends on commercial market developments as yet unrealized.

- Development of copper ore exports from Benambra. This depends on the development of the mine, copper prices, and the establishment of the preferred logistics chain if commercial scale development ensues.

- Development of a “garbage train” to take putrescible waste from Melbourne for deposit in abandoned open cut mining or quarry locations. This model has been adopted in Sydney, Los Angeles and New York and provides a path to open cut reclamation as well as addressing the scarcity of landfill sites. The Sydney garbage train, operated by Veolia Environmental Services, involves payment of $2 per tonne royalty to the receiving community. Receiving waste from a number of Sydney Councils through dedicated transfer stations, it has so far conveyed nearly 5 million tonnes of waste to the abandoned Woodlawn open cut mine near Canberra. The Los Angeles model involves a 100 year horizon project. Such a project could be designed for Gippsland with benefit both to the region and to Melbourne. Infrastructure Victoria should consider recommending a feasibility study of such a proposal.

Overall, rail freight currently plays a small role in Gippsland’s economy though it has substantial potential. The investments needed to upgrade the passenger railway will also enable rail freight services to again be offered along the whole length of the corridor to Bairnsdale. Because enhanced rail freight services can operate at night, they are not as constrained as passenger services by the inadequacies of the Dandenong Rail Corridor.
Significant portions of the housing stock in parts of the Latrobe Valley, including public housing were constructed more than sixty years ago to accommodate a growing new work force associated with power industry construction and operation.

In older areas of the Latrobe Valley there is the opportunity through planning, zoning and proactive redevelopment to give new life to these areas as Transit Oriented Development.

The Transit Oriented Development concept is well understood internationally and there are many successful examples in Australia and overseas. Its key principles are:

- Place-Making – focusing a community around a strong public urban design with inbuilt car-free mobility via the public transport corridor
- Housing Choice – rebuilding communities to offer more diversity in housing styles to cater for different income levels and family structures
- Supporting Independent Aging – by good design, senior citizens in a transit oriented development can remain independent longer than in a dispersed community
- Boosted Property Values – have been noted across the world, from the Gold Coast to Texas and London when transit oriented development is implemented
- Higher density around stations and city cores support vibrant urban centres
- Car parking space and car operation costs for residents are reduced
- Enhanced public transport patronage supports better and more frequent services
- Better sustainability, as air is cleaner with reduced car use, and energy, land and resource consumption is less than in dispersed suburban development

The Transit Oriented Development Concept was implemented in Greater Dandenong by Vic Urban (now Places Victoria), in the Revitalizing Central Dandenong project, resulting in a redesign of Lonsdale St, office and commercial developments, and medium density housing around the station precinct on the site of the former sale yards. A similar development in the Latrobe Valley could create urban renewal, employment and enhanced neighborhoods and property values.

**Transit Oriented Development**

A transit-oriented development is a mixed-use residential and commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport, and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership while dissuading the ownership of automobiles. A TOD neighborhood typically has a center with a transit station or stop, surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center. TODs generally are located within a radius of one-quarter to one-half mile from a transit stop, as this is considered to be an appropriate scale for pedestrians, thus solving the last mile problem.
Local Mobility for Cyclists, Pedestrians and Mobility Scooter users

Regardless of whether planned urban redevelopment of older areas of Latrobe Valley communities is implemented, as suggested in the previous section, there is substantial scope for improving local safety for cyclists, pedestrians and mobility scooter users by redesigning and rebuilding road spaces and verges to better cater for users of road space other than car and truck drivers. -

- Promotion of cycling and walking is conducive to good health, reduces emissions, reduces traffic congestion and reduces the extent of car parking that must be provided
- Provision of safe places to use mobility scooters allows senior citizens to maintain mobility and access shopping, medical and recreational services and visit local friends and family without needing either to use a private motor vehicle, taxi, or carer-provided transport services.

A program for the accelerated construction not only of safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians but also for the safe use of mobility scooters could provide useful local employment whilst improving the sustainability and safety of the community.

With a rapidly increasing cohort of persons aged over 65 in most Gippsland communities, provision of safe mobility scooter access and safe walking routes is an important issue.
Bus, Coach, Tram and Train Research, Design and Construction

Over the next 30 years, with the doubling of Victoria’s population, and an emphasis on less car-dependent settlements that are more sustainable and involve better public transport, walking and cycling, there will be a constant and increasing demand for cutting edge bus, coach, tram and train design and construction, as well as research into advanced forms of public transport provision.

The Victorian Government through its public transport procurement has supported local train design and capacity at Bombardier in Dandenong, who supply trams and trains not only for Victoria but also for other Australian markets. (New tram and light rail systems are being built in several states and the ACT). There is currently a substantial tram and train design team in place at Dandenong. Volgren in Dandenong is also a major supplier of Australian coachwork on imported bus chassis. It is important that this capacity is maintained.

The IV 30 Years Draft strategy makes reference to driverless cars, however driverless operation has been a reality in light and heavy rail for many years. Notable examples include the Docklands Light Railway in London, and the use of driverless iron ore trains in the Pilbara – which are also cutting edge in that they are the world’s heaviest and longest trains.

There are many other cutting edge technologies in the public transport field, including wireless trams, Maglev and monorail systems etc. that, like conventional advanced trams and trains, offer significant market opportunities for Australian companies and could provide employment growth in Dandenong and Gippsland.

To grasp this strategic opportunity, we urge IV to recommend that Advanced Public Transport be a key investment strategy for the state to provide the transport infrastructure needs of the state over the life of the 30-year strategy, and that key elements be-

- Recognizing advanced public transport design and construction as a regional strength of the Dandenong-Gippsland area (similar to the assignment of defence construction projects to South Australia)
- Establishment by competitive tender of a Research Centre into Advanced Public Transport at a university campus in the Gippsland region
- Continued State support of train design capability in Dandenong and Gippsland through the assignment of priority to Victorian sourced procurement of publicly owned rail and bus fleets
GIPPSLAND RESPONSE TO THE IV DRAFT 30-YEAR STRATEGY

- Investigation of advanced public transport pilot projects in Gippsland, (such as the implementation of the Gippsland Metro, with associated feeder routes into Gippsland towns and suburbs needing connection to the main line)
- Pro—active involvement by Victorian Government with the Commonwealth and other state governments to emphasise the value of locally sourced public transport vehicles rather than those fully imported from overseas
- Recognition that this initiative is a tangible strategy to assist Gippsland’s skilled workforce to transition from the power industry to new sustainable employment.
New Stations at Traralgon, Moe and Morwell and a Latrobe Central Station

The railway stations at Traralgon, Moe and Morwell are centrally located, and provide transport hubs where people change modes to buses, coaches, taxis and private cars. In many locations overseas, such hubs are developed as vibrant city gateways, well-lit and active, with attractive architecture and urban design, staffing throughout operating hours, commercial co-location and attractive connections to the retail and commercial centres of their cities.

EYESORE TO LANDMARK – HOW ONE STATION WAS REDEVELOPED TO A MAJOR ATTRACTION

The old station at Uelzen in Germany is an example of an old station made new. The main focus was to change the station to be "environmentally and culturally oriented". The first step of the redesign, completed in 1997, was to install photovoltaic cells on the roof of the station. Further additions included the removal of the unused tracks and rail yard areas.

On December 16, 1999, the developmental concept put forth by Bahnhof Uelzen e.V. was publicized for the worldwide Expo 2000. In addition to various local authorities, the project was supported by the Deutsche Bahn. The focus of the project was the transformation of the building and the platforms following the plans of the Viennese architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

On November 25, 2000, the new station was ceremoniously dedicated. Since then, it has become a tourist attraction and welcomes over 450,000 visitors every year. It formed part of the State of Lower Saxony’s program “Lower Saxony Goes by Train!”, a developmental program promoted by the federal government and the State of Lower Saxony between 2006 and 2007.

Uelzen, in Germany, where the need to replace an old station provided the opportunity for outstanding design. A functional and attractive drawcard replaced the aging and dysfunctional infrastructure of the outmoded previous station.

The three main stations in the Latrobe Valley are well past their use by date, with outdated infrastructure, only a single platform, and bus/coach/taxi interchanges capable of much improvement. A Master Plan has been developed for Traralgon, while the other stations will also need replacement soon.

As well, the opportunity exists to create a fourth station – perhaps a Latrobe Central Station in the mid-Valley area – that would cope with population and urban development -but could also embody best practice architecture, design and functionality. A station at this location could be the subject of an outstanding design that would in itself attract visitors to the area. An example of this is the reconstructed station at

In considering the transport infrastructure needs of Gippsland over the next 30 years, the creation of these four new stations represents the opportunity to create outstanding and functional transport hubs that will help rebrand the region.
New Tourist Routes and Hubs

Gippsland offers many stunning attractions for international tourists and local holidaymakers alike. These range from natural and ecological tourism through to fine dining, hospitality, and local crafts and produce. Visits to attractions including the Tarra Valley, the Baw Baws, the Buchan Caves, Walhalla and many other locations used to be supported by public transport infrastructure and marketing, but such support no longer exists.

As well, the region offers two major opportunities for connected rail and coach journeys that are currently unavailable due to inadequate and uncoordinated services, lack of marketing and the absence of infrastructure such as all weather coach stops and interchanges at Bairnsdale and Cann River. In particular, the possibility of integrated rail and coach travel by the “coastal” route from Sydney to Melbourne and vv, and the possibility of rail/coach travel by the Great Alpine Road through the High Country on the route Melbourne-Bairnsdale-Bright-Wangaratta-Melbourne, are currently not available to tourists.

New tourist infrastructure needs to be created at Bairnsdale, Cann River, Omeo and Wangaratta, including sheltered and comfortable rail/coach interchanges at all interchange locations.

Significant opportunities to promote domestic and local tourism, in and through the region are being lost for lack of infrastructure and services.
Summary of Gippsland Transport Disadvantage

The Gippsland line is the poor cousin in rail modernization, setting back economic efficiency and social inclusion in the region.

- it has been neglected compared to other regional mainlines in Victoria
- infrastructure is inadequate
- service levels are poorer in regard to journey times, reliability and frequency
- our passenger trains operate at the lowest average speed of any Victorian mainline
- This will only occur with substantial and rapid investment in rail infrastructure to support faster and more frequent rail services.

Gippsland has received no benefit from around $5 billion in State rail investments over recent years

- Gippsland has been by-passed by game changing projects like the. Regional Rail Link, the North Eastern line rebuild and investments in upgrading the Ballarat and Bendigo lines.
- Gippsland was short changed even by the original Regional Fast Rail project in Gippsland, where only one of the two lines was upgraded, and that not completely.
- Gippsland has ample capacity to absorb population growth and enable long range commuting from areas with excessive unemployment to areas with well paid jobs.
- A much improved Gippsland railway can reduce pressure on Melbourne’s outward growth, provide access to affordable housing and high quality jobs, and help distribute economic and social benefits.
- Gippsland trains average speeds nearly 30 kmh speeds slower than the Bendigo line, and journey times CBD to Warragul are now substantially slower than in 2000.

Gippsland’s poor rail service is a barrier to good jobs and good health for its residents.

- a population with excessive car dependency, many of whom struggle to meeting car operating costs, and presently reflected in avoidable obesity, health issues, and road trauma
- job seekers forced to travel to areas offering employment, typically in Melbourne or its nearer surrounds
- Gippsland youth who particularly find it difficult to secure employment in their home towns
Gippsland needs its share of high value CBD based jobs.

- Gippsland’s poor share of these jobs, compared to other V/Line corridors is directly correlated to the slow and unreliable train service
- Gippsland residents require effective public transport access to areas where jobs are available and growing while remaining in their homes and providing multiplier benefits by injecting their living costs back to Gippsland businesses. This includes better access to:
  - High value knowledge economy jobs in the Melbourne CBD and surrounding areas
  - Manufacturing jobs in the south eastern manufacturing zone around Dandenong and
  - Residential construction employment opportunities in Casey and Cardinia as well as apartment construction in the Melbourne CBD and surrounding areas.

Gippsland has a higher than average aging population, for whom a good train service is vital

- Senior citizens need the choice of using public transport rather than being car-dependent to access leisure activities, family visits, medical and health care and social activities critical to their social inclusion.
- Improved rail services are needed for access to health services such as cancer treatment at Peter MacCallum or surgery at Monash Medical centre, or to visit friends and relatives having such treatments, while remaining in their Gippsland homes.

Good trains are the key to good education access – which Gippsland’s kids need for secure futures

- Rail services play an important role in transporting secondary and tertiary students to their schools, colleges, TAFEs and universities.
- For students living at home, (often a necessity in view of the high cost of renting alternatives) the quality of available public transport services will determine the extent of the educational opportunities open to them.
- Journey time for students from Traralgon or Sale, to Churchill, Chisholm Institute Dandenong, Monash Clayton Campus or Monash Caulfield Campus. are unacceptably long.

GIPPSLAND COUNCILS CALL UPON INFRASTRUCTURE VICTORIA TO:

- FOCUS ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MUST BE IN PLACE IN 2046
- LOOK AT THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF OUR REGION IN TRANSITION, OUTLINED HERE
- REJECT THE NOTION THAT OUR RAIL CAPACITY IS ADEQUATE TILL 2046, AND IMMEDIATELY RECOMMEND AN INVESTIGATION AS TO HOW THE DANDENONG RAIL CORRIDOR CAN BE EXPANDED TO GIVE THE SERVICE WE NEED