BusVic
Bus Association Victoria

ELECTION 2018

MOVING PEOPLE VICTORIA

10 Bus Priorities for Victoria

MOVING PEOPLE *Victoria*

2018 Election Policy Priorities

Melbourne and Victoria are growing quickly, and will undergo major population growth and demographic shifts over the next 35 years, according to forecasts. Significant growth will occur in Melbourne's fringe or Interface Councils, as well as in key regional centres along the north, east and western corridors that link with Melbourne. Many of these Interface Councils will have populations exceeding quarter of a million, with some approaching half a million residents.

The State Government will need to implement and fund key strategies to support the transition to a Victoria with more than 8 million people in Melbourne and 10 million people state-wide, to maintain the high social, economic and environmental conditions enjoyed (and expected) by Victorians.

Simply stated, a strong and growing economy, and a liveable Melbourne and country Victoria, will be high priority issues for Victorian voters at the coming election. The next State Government will be expected to address these issues, and a commitment to do so will be vital.

An efficient and integrated transport network, with the timely provision of bus services in growth areas, will need to be at the core of the State Government's approach to delivering thriving communities, along with the necessary social and economic infrastructure to house, employ, entertain, educate and stay healthy.

A commitment to the staged implementation of the objectives, recommendations and initiatives set out in this policy document will support the transition to a fully integrated transport network, and in a budgetary context will support positive economic growth and liveability, at a moderate cost to government.

Strategic Objectives

This policy priorities paper seeks to provide support and direction to all who are contesting the 2018 State election by identifying and committing to invest in strategic bus related public transport projects that will achieve economic, social and environmental benefits.

In line with a triple bottom line sustainability focus, these various priorities have been prepared starting from the value position that a city, or other region, whose land use and transport systems, and the technologies on which they depend, support the following outcomes:

a. Increased economic productivity - Increased Gross Domestic Product per capita.
b. Reduced ecological footprint – passing on a stock of natural assets that will assist future generations to meet their own needs.
c. Increased social inclusion and reduced inequality – ensuring that all people have the opportunity to live a good life.
d. Improved health and safety outcomes – an essential part of living a good life.
e. Engaged and thriving communities – inclusive development and delivery of land use transport plans and policies.
f. Integrated land use transport plans/policies – across sectors, levels of government and modes.

1. Improve Local Bus Services in Melbourne's Outer Suburbs

The variance between public transport services in inner/middle Melbourne and outer Melbourne is massive in terms of network coverage, service frequency, operating hours and integration with other modes of public transport.

This is an inequitable and untenable reality which must be addressed so the State can grow in such a way to successfully integrate a significant population whilst maintaining the social, economic, environmental outcomes that make Melbourne and Victoria one of the most liveable regions in the world.

The blue lines on ***Figure 1*** (on the next two pages) indicate the extent of route bus services in Melbourne at present. It shows clearly the 10 Interface Council areas (Mornington, Casey, Cardinia, Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Mitchell, Hume, Melton and Wyndham) do not enjoy the extent of bus services that those residing in inner and middle Melbourne do.

With Melbourne growing both in population and geographic size at a rapid rate (see ***Figure 2*** on pages 6 & 7), and to address the aforementioned inequity in service allocation, the public transport network needs to be realigned to focus on delivering services that enable people to move as effectively and efficiently as they would using personal transport.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritise the implementation of the following current service improvements in Melbourne's outer suburbs (Interface Council areas) to deliver tangible benefits to the local community:

a. Cardinia

i. Pakenham Station to Cardinia Road Station 928 bus service, improve frequency and extend to Beaconsfield Station.

ii. Pakenham to Lakeside 925 bus service, extend through unserviced estate.

iii. Improve frequency Emerald to Fountain Gate Shopping Centre via Beaconsfield and Berwick 838 bus service.

iv. Extend Dandenong to Cranbourne Loop 981 Nightrider bus service from Beaconsfield to Pakenham.

b. Casey

i. Introduce a new 20 minute frequency service from Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre to Hallam Station, Hampton Park Shopping Centre, and Lynbrook Station.

ii. Extend the bus service from Narre Warren South through Cranbourne North then on to Merinda Park Station along Thompsons Road operating at 20 minute frequency.

iii. Review services in the Berwick South / Clyde North estates to facilitate route extensions into the new estates developing along Grices Road, Thompsons Road and Soldiers Road.

iv. Extend routes 791, 795, 796, 798 and 799 to service new residential estates between Cranbourne and Clyde.

v. Extend route 898 to link Casey Fields with Cranbourne.

c. Hume

i. Undertake a whole of network review for the Craigieburn region to consider new estate developments (Cloverfield and Merrifield) and realign existing routes to provide more direct services supported by increased service frequencies and span of operating hours.

ii. Extend route 537 from Craigieburn West to Greenvale Plaza to align with new estates along Craigieburn Road and Mickleham Road.

iii. Expand the bus network to the north and west of Craigieburn into new growth areas to create links with Craigieburn Central and Craigieburn railway station.

iv. Provide direct service peak hour commuter bus services from Mandalay Estate and Merrifield to Craigieburn railway station.

d. Melton

i. Extend route 453 to service the new residential estate of Brookfield.

ii. Increase the operating frequency of route 455 to align with Melton railway station.

iii. Improve the service frequency and service span for route 456 linking Melton with Caroline Springs and Sunshine.

iv. Introduce a new Melton to Sydenham (Watergardens) service to provide a direct link between Melton with the major employment precinct in the region.

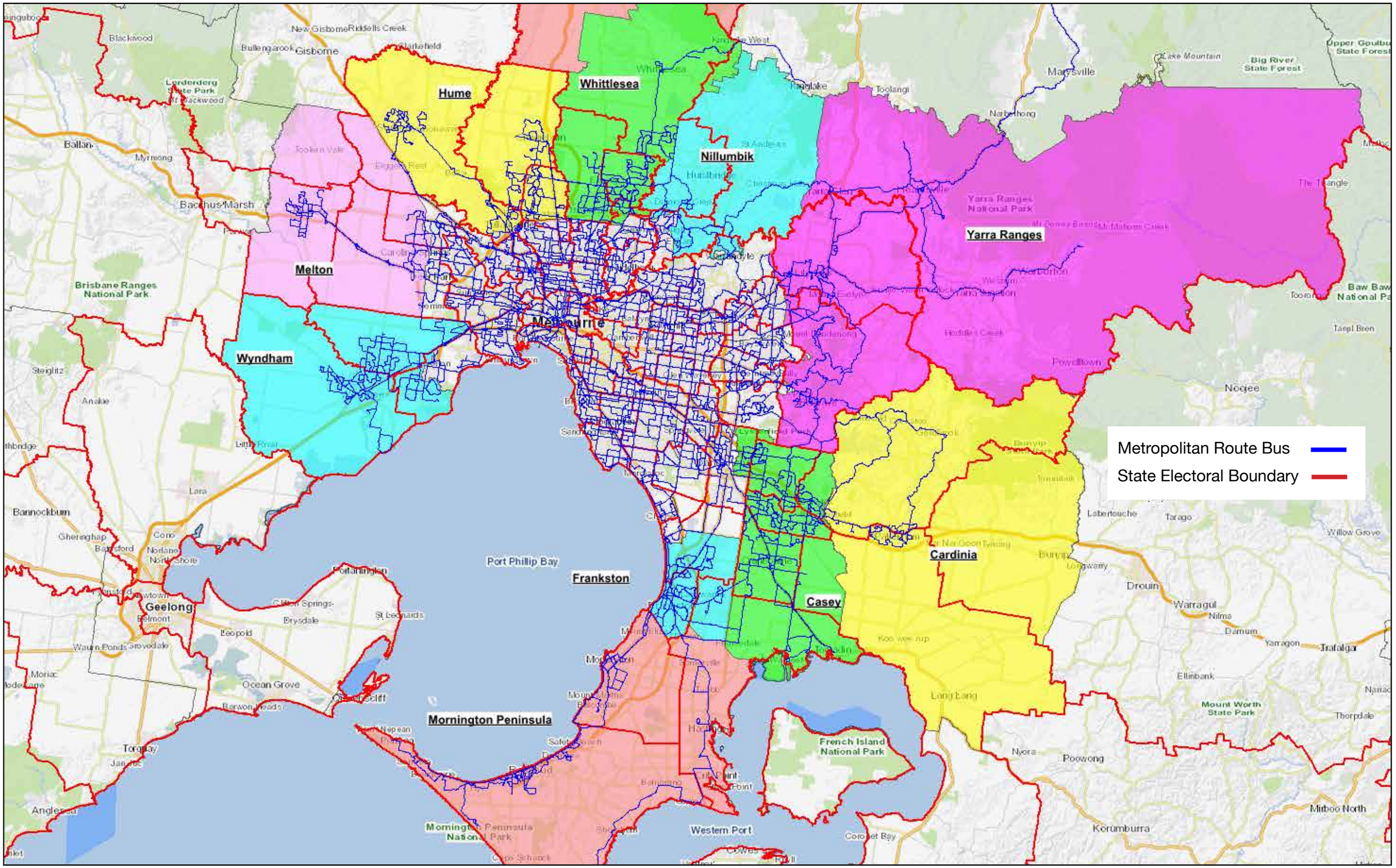


Figure 1: Current Route Bus Services in Melbourne showing Interface Councils and State Electorates

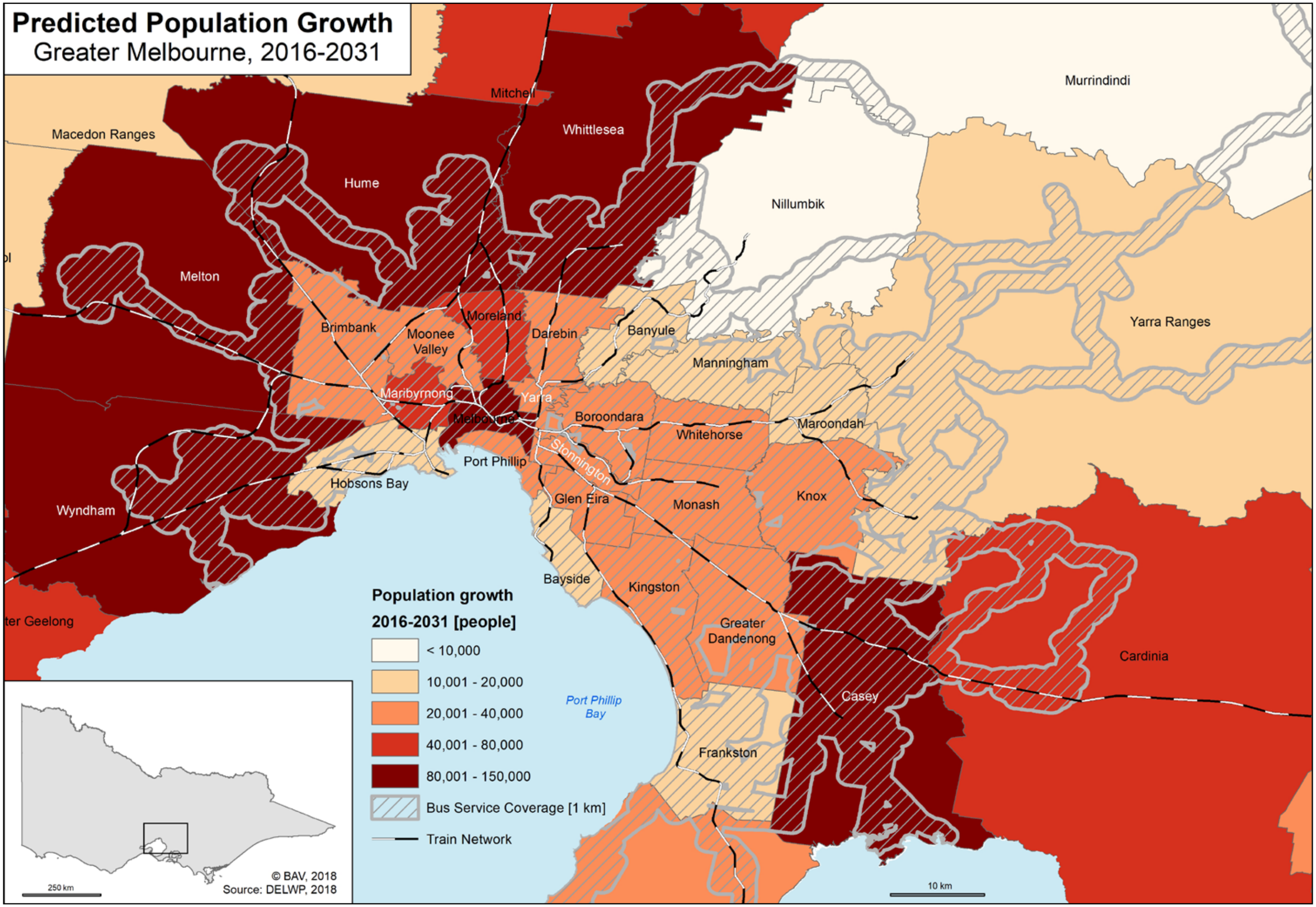


Figure 2: Predicted Population Growth, Victoria 2016 - 2031

v. Undertake a whole of network review for the Melton region to consider new estate development and establish minimum service level requirements.

e. Mitchell Shire

i. Redesign the Wallan town service into two separate services to provide direct running, reduces customer journey time, connects with new residential estates and links with the railway station.

ii. Introduce weekend and public holiday services for the Wallan town service.

iii. Redesign the Kilmore town service into two separate services to provide improved connectivity with the railway station and service new residential estates.

iv. Introduce weekend and public holiday services for the Kilmore town service.

f. Mornington Peninsula Shire

i. Extend route 783 in Hastings to connect with the Western Port Secondary College and Hastings Community Health Centre.

ii. Redesign the Mornington 781, 784 and 785 route services to incorporate the Mornington North growth corridor.

iii. Route 788 provides the trunk connectivity for the Mornington Peninsula between Frankston and Portsea. The current service has a poor frequency and inadequate operating hours that makes it unattractive for users. There is significant unmet community demand for public transport in the Peninsula to connect with activity centres, schools, employment and health facilities in the region. Improving the frequency of the 788 to run every 15 to 20 minutes during the peak period and every 30 minutes in the off peak (including weekends), whilst increasing the operating hours will create a viable public transport service for the communities in the region.

There is significant demand for commuter level bus services to link the Mornington Peninsula with the Frankston train line. A Rosebud to Baxter SmartBus service will provide a high capacity link with the proposed extension of the Frankston train line to Baxter. The SmartBus will operate a high peak frequency (15 minute), extended operating hours, limited stopping service. In the off peak, and on weekends, the service will operate at a 30 minute frequency, connecting with the train network to provide efficient services across the region. The Rosebud to Baxter SmartBus will be designed to complement the local bus network in the Peninsula.

g. Nillumbik

i. Introduce a new demand responsive bus network to service the rural townships of St Andrews, Cottles Bridge, Smiths Gully and Panton Hill linking with the Hurstbridge railway station and the route 343 bus service.

ii. Introduce weekend services for the route 343 bus service.

iii. Extend the service coverage of route 578 to Kangaroo Ground to provide public transport coverage and connectivity for commuters and students.

iv. Re-route the 582 service to capture a significant residential area (Frank St, Milbourne Crescent, and Bayfield Drive) in Eltham that is currently bypassed by the existing bus network design.

v. Re-route the 580 service onto Black Gully Road to the north of Diamond Creek to capture new residential estates.

vi. Re-route either the 517, 518 or 580 service to the residential area south of Diamond Creek incorporating Juane Park Drive, Jacaranda Drive and Kingfisher Drive.

h. Whittlesea

i. Review services that operate in the Mernda growth corridor to ensure provision of efficient public transport (including high service frequency and operating hours) that links with the South Morang activity centre, education facilities and the new Mernda Town Centre and railway station.

ii. Increase the operating hours of services (weekday and weekend) operating in Thomastown, Epping, South Morang, and Bundoora to improve connectivity with activity centres, education facilities and railway stations.

iii. Restructure routes 356, 357 and 358 to improve connectivity between Epping North and Craigieburn to provide improved connectivity for new residential estates along Craigieburn Road and link with railway stations, employment clusters and education facilities.

iv. Improve on road bus priority across Bundoora, South Morang, Epping, Epping North and Mernda to facilitate improved service reliability which is currently severely affected by road congestion.

v. Introduce a new high capacity cross town bus service between South Morang and Burnley that links a number of activity centres including RMIT in Bundoora, Latrobe University, Austin Hospital, Kew, Victoria Gardens and Burnley railway station.

i. Wyndham City

i. Increase the service frequency and operating span of hours for all services within the municipality to better align with train services and improve weekend accessibility.

ii. Improve on road bus priority measures to mitigate the impact of local area congestion on peak hour bus services in the vicinity of Williams Landing railway station, Point Cook and Tarneit railway station.

iii. With the population of Wyndham to double to more than 400,000 residents by 2040, there is a need to increase the frequency of network reviews within the municipality. It is recommended that reviews occur every two years to consider the service needs of new residential estates as well as new employment centres.

iv. Trial demand responsive transport services to improve connectivity with railway stations and offer after hours services.

j. Yarra Ranges

i. Introduce additional evening and weekend services for route 685 from Healesville to Lilydale to align with employment, medical, and education services as well as railway station connectivity.

ii. Introduce additional evening and weekend services for route 683 from Warburton and Lilydale to align with employment, medical, education services as well as railway station connectivity.

iii. Realign routes 671 and 672 in Chirnside Park to Black Springs Road to improve operational performance, safety and service reliability.

iv. Introduce new peak services in the Kilsyth area to service the industrial precinct and provide direct linkages with railway stations.

v. Undertake a whole of network review for the Lilydale area to introduce minimum service levels across the network (30 minute weekday frequency and 6 am to 10 pm span of operating hours) and demand responsive public transport services to meet the needs of those sections of the community that cannot be reached with standard buses.

vi. Introduce a new direct running peak hour service linking Healesville, Yarra Glen and Warburton with the Lilydale railway station.

2. Increase Local Bus Service Funding by $300m Annually to Realise a 'Turn Up and Go' Network

We need to mandate minimum service levels for the local bus network to bring about a 'turn up and go' public transport paradigm.

Increased frequencies and span of hours to align the bus network with the train and tram networks will make public transport more accessible across the whole of transport journey, in particular in Melbourne's growth corridors and regional Victoria.

Table 1 proposes a program to incrementally improve all Melbourne and regional bus networks to achieve a minimum service level by 2023.

BusVic estimates upgrading the bus timetables to establish these types of service levels would cost approximately $300 million over the first 3 years. The ongoing recurrent additional expenditure required to maintain these minimum service levels for the entire Victorian route bus network is estimated at $300 million per annum.

In delivering these minimum service level objectives and to complement first mile/last mile access needs, we also propose the implementation of Demand Responsive Public Transport (DRPT) as part of the public transport network to supplement service shortfalls.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduce minimum service levels for all local bus routes to align bus service offerings with train and tram services, as well as providing service coverage to reflect actual user needs.
2. Fund the implementation of these minimum service levels with $300m over three years then once implemented, $300m annually.
3. To improve last mile access from Melbourne's train stations, in particular in Melbourne's outer suburbs, flood the market with demand responsive public transport.

	Weekday Services		Weekend Services	
	Frequency	Span	Frequency	Span
Inner / Middle Metropolitan Suburbs	15 min	5.30am - 10.30pm	20 min	6.30am - 10.30pm
Interface Suburbs	20 min	6am - 10.30pm	30min	6am - 10.30pm
Major Regional Centres	30 min	6am - 9.30pm	45 min	7am - 9.30pm
Regional Victoria	30 min	6am - 7.30pm	60 min	8am - 7.30pm

Table 1: Proposed Minimum Service Levels For Local Route Buses

3. Increase Investment in On Road Priority for Buses

Sydney, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide have invested in prioritising the operation of their bus network and have received significant service reliability benefits. Victoria however is lagging behind. On road priority measures include:

- Peak periods bus lanes for high occupancy vehicles and permanent bus lanes.
- Intersection priority for buses
- Bus jump lanes at intersections
- On street parking management during peak periods
- Shared corridors with trams where practical

The State Government should work with operators, local councils, VicRoads, PTV and TfV to identify and invest in infrastructure upgrades along transport corridors that give priority to on-road public transport so as to improve the reliability of the service. To achieve ongoing benefits, an infrastructure upgrade program should be a recurring budget item linked to an agreed network enhancement strategy for the bus network.

To support the implementation of this priority, we recommend the creation of a broader congestion management strategy of which public transport is a key cornerstone of the solution. As is currently being demonstrated by a number of European cities, congestion management needs to be an integrated approach involving many facets, of which public and active transport are critical components.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish an on-road implementation steering committee to identify and implement an on-road priority program for public transport.
2. The State Government to fund a recurrent capital expenditure program of $40 million per annum for 5 five years to target low hanging fruit infrastructure upgrades such as bus jump lanes at intersections, introducing peak period high occupancy vehicle lanes along congested sections of corridors, bus priority signals at intersections, and improved management and design of on street parking.
3. Develop a strategy to manage the growing impact on Melbourne's road network, including the allocation of public transport corridors on all new and upgrade projects for the arterial road network in Melbourne's Interface Councils.

4. Invest More in High Capacity Buses and High Capacity Bus Services That Link Employment and Activity Centres

We need to continue the expansion of high capacity buses and high capacity bus services to improve the interconnectedness of the public transport network and enable commuters to better move across Melbourne. These services need to link population centres with employment clusters and activity centres, augmenting other existing high capacity public transport (rail) services. The Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) and university shuttle routes in recent times are good examples of the concept.

High capacity bus services are best implemented in Melbourne's outer and middle suburbs, in particular where rail services are not available, and to assist in managing the growing issue of road network congestion in car dependent areas. The high capacity bus network should not be at the expense of local bus services, rather, should be an addition so that people can rely on a fully integrated and efficient public transport network across all modes.

The Government should establish a 5 tiered, integrated bus network to support the improved customer service objectives detailed above:

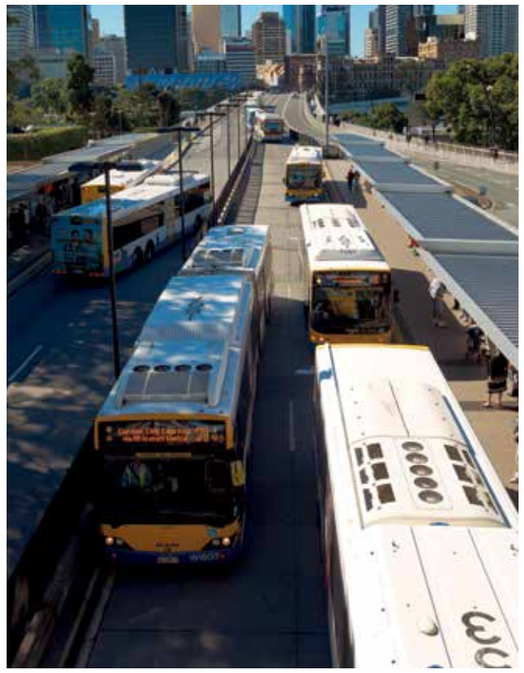
- Bus Rapid Transit - high capacity routes in Melbourne's growth corridors to provide rail equivalent service levels with a turn up and go service frequency that are anchored at key activity centres.
- SmartBus - cross town, high frequency, extended operating hours.
- Trunk bus services - high frequency local services that link key activity centres with major transport and residential hubs (i.e. rail connections, university shuttles, services to shopping centres).
- Local bus services - lower frequency service that provide accessibility at a local level and connect with high frequency services and community activity centres.
- Demand Responsive Public Transport (DRPT) – demand responsive smaller bus services that are myki enabled to improve first mile/last mile accessibility and connectivity.

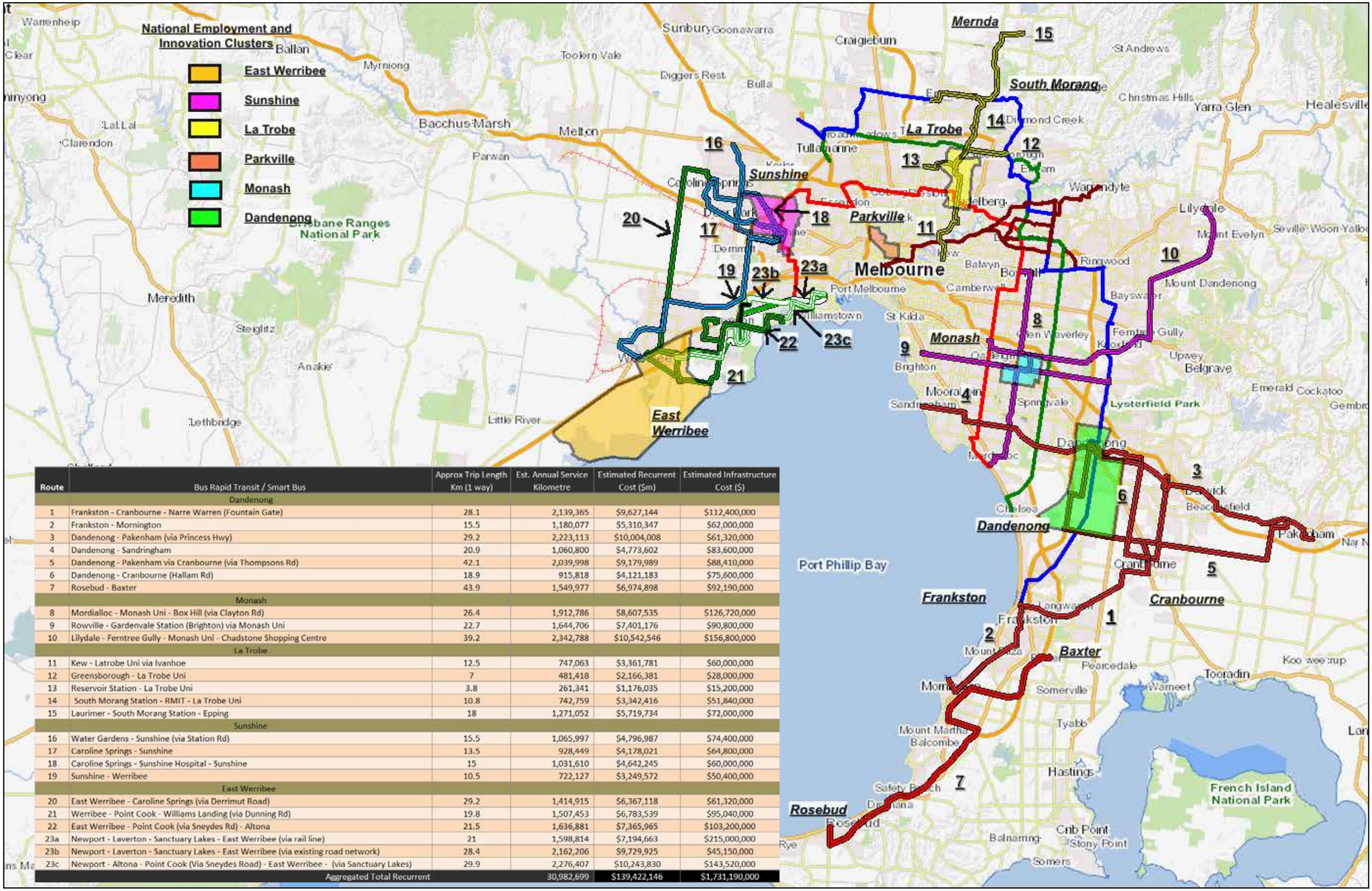
The 5-tiered bus network should be underpinned by minimum service levels that feed into trunk public transport services, with the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network designed to offer turn up and go frequency.

BusVic recommend 23 new BRT and SmartBus Services (refer pages 12 & 13) that will deliver a high capacity cross town public transport network linking with activity centres and railway stations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a BRT implementation steering group to formulate a scope of works and funding program.
2. Allocate planning and development funding for a new BRT network in Melbourne, prioritising the implementation of the following corridors in Melbourne's growth areas:
    - Frankston to Narre Warren via Cranbourne.
    - South Morang to Latrobe University via RMIT.
    - Werribee to Caroline Springs.
    - Rosebud to Baxter.
3. For existing high capacity bus services:
    - Enhance SmartBus services - review network to reflect customer travel patterns and be more efficient in the allocation of resources.
    - Connect with employment clusters and activity centres.
    - Improve connectivity with local bus services (blend of local and commuter networks) to support the Plan Melbourne 20 minute neighbourhood concept.
    - Expand SmartBus for middle and outer Melbourne, in particular cross town services.
    - Invest in on-road infrastructure to improve performance and reliability.





Route	Bus Rapid Transit / Smart Bus	Approx Trip Length Km (1 way)	Est. Annual Service Kilometre	Estimated Recurrent Cost ($m)	Estimated Infrastructure Cost ($)
	Dandenong				
1	Frankston - Cranbourne - Narre Warren (Fountain Gate)	28.1	2,139,365	$9,627,144	$112,400,000
2	Frankston - Mornington	15.5	1,180,077	$5,310,347	$62,000,000
3	Dandenong - Pakenham (via Princess Hwy)	29.2	2,223,113	$10,004,008	$61,320,000
4	Dandenong - Sandringham	20.9	1,060,800	$4,773,602	$83,600,000
5	Dandenong - Pakenham via Cranbourne (via Thompsons Rd)	42.1	2,039,998	$9,179,989	$88,410,000
6	Dandenong - Cranbourne (Hallam Rd)	18.9	915,818	$4,121,183	$75,600,000
7	Rosebud - Baxter	43.9	1,549,977	$6,974,898	$92,190,000
	Monash				
8	Mordialloc - Monash Uni - Box Hill (via Clayton Rd)	26.4	1,912,786	$8,607,535	$126,720,000
9	Rowville - Gardenvale Station (Brighton) via Monash Uni	22.7	1,644,706	$7,401,176	$90,800,000
10	Lilydale - Ferntree Gully - Monash Uni - Chadstone Shopping Centre	39.2	2,342,788	$10,542,546	$156,800,000
	La Trobe				
11	Kew - Latrobe Uni via Ivanhoe	12.5	747,063	$3,361,781	$60,000,000
12	Greensborough - La Trobe Uni	7	481,418	$2,166,381	$28,000,000
13	Reservoir Station - La Trobe Uni	3.8	261,341	$1,176,035	$15,200,000
14	South Morang Station - RMIT - La Trobe Uni	10.8	742,759	$3,342,416	$51,840,000
15	Laurimer - South Morang Station - Epping	18	1,271,052	$5,719,734	$72,000,000
	Sunshine				
16	Water Gardens - Sunshine (via Station Rd)	15.5	1,065,997	$4,796,987	$74,400,000
17	Caroline Springs - Sunshine	13.5	928,449	$4,178,021	$64,800,000
18	Caroline Springs - Sunshine Hospital - Sunshine	15	1,031,610	$4,642,245	$60,000,000
19	Sunshine - Werribee	10.5	722,127	$3,249,572	$50,400,000
	East Werribee				
20	East Werribee - Caroline Springs (via Derrimut Road)	29.2	1,414,915	$6,367,118	$61,320,000
21	Werribee - Point Cook - Williams Landing (via Dunning Rd)	19.8	1,507,453	$6,783,539	$95,040,000
22	East Werribee - Point Cook (via Sneydes Rd) - Altona	21.5	1,636,881	$7,365,965	$103,200,000
23a	Newport - Laverton - Sanctuary Lakes - East Werribee (via rail line)	21	1,598,814	$7,194,663	$215,000,000
23b	Newport - Laverton - Sanctuary Lakes - East Werribee (via existing road network)	28.4	2,162,206	$9,729,925	$45,150,000
23c	Newport - Altona - Point Cook (Via Sneydes Road) - East Werribee - (via Sanctuary Lakes)	29.9	2,276,407	$10,243,830	$143,520,000
	Aggregated Total Recurrent		30,982,699	$139,422,146	$1,731,190,000

Figure 3: Proposed Bus Rapid Transit and High Capacity Bus Network 2018

5. Improve Regional and Rural Public Transport Connectivity

We need to improve public transport services in regional and rural Victoria to achieve the following outcomes:

- Better connections between rural towns and regional cities to access services, education, employment, retail, health, and facilitate social engagement.
- A better public transport network across regional Victoria.
- A public transport system based on the travel needs of the local community.
- Make better use of existing assets and infrastructure.
- Support the growing regional tourism industry.

We recommend the following 5 initiatives be implemented to achieve these objectives.

a) Fix our Country Roads

The standard of Victoria's country road network is of a concern to regional communities across the state, particularly in west and south-west Victoria.

Investment focus continues to be on the main highways at the expense of key local roads under the control of local government. This approach has significant safety and commercial impacts on Victoria's regional communities. From a safety perspective, the below standard roads directly lead to increased accidents, whilst also adding to the wear and tear on vehicles which, in turn, reduces their performance. There is also additional fatigue on drivers having to drive for longer and have more focus on keeping the vehicle on the road. There is also the increased risk associated with impatient drivers due to additional travel times caused by reduced speed limits.

Commercially, the below average condition of the overall regional road network has significant operational impacts for school bus, V/Line coach and charter bus services. Poor road quality condition increases driver fatigue, increases travel times, increases operating costs (driver wages, fuel, maintenance, bus downtime), and reduces the operating lifespan of buses. The longer term impact of this is increased contract service delivery costs for essential public transport services in regional and rural Victoria and poorer connectivity between bus and train services.

We need a targeted upgrade of the country road network that is prepared and implemented in conjunction with the local communities and coordinated with regional councils to deliver efficient road upgrades across the network. This program should be independently funded from the overall road network budget with a forward budget of 10 years that is reviewed on a regular basis.

Victoria's south west road network is of particular concern to industry and we recommend that this area be prioritised from a funding perspective to improve safety and productivity for the region.

b) Maximise the Value of the School Bus

Victoria's school bus network provides an opportunity to improve mobility options for rural and regional communities that have inadequate public transport services. Many rural and regional school buses lay idle outside of school travel times and some social and economic activity being foregone because of eligibility requirements of non-students' use of school buses.

The 'opening up' of the school bus to non-students would see more efficient use of scarce resources and improved mobility options provided to many an isolated resident, continuing the tradition of the school bus being the life blood of the local community. To improve accessibility for students across all levels of education as well as improve the utilisation of school buses to facilitate personal access in regional Victoria, BusVic recommend the following:

- Relaxing the 4.8 km distance criteria for rural students attending non-regional-city rural schools. Students who travel further than a reasonable walking distance should be entitled to access a rural dedicated free school bus service.
- Improve access for non-primary and high school students to improve accessibility to post secondary and training facilities in major regional centres.
- Open up access for non-students for employment and other opportunities.
- Simplify the State's student fare regime. Having different eligibility criteria and fares between modes and within the same geographic area makes understanding, administrating and complying to such regimes problematic.
- Working with local communities and school bus operators to introduce off peak bus services which link isolated communities with regional centres to complement existing public transport services.

The majority of the above actions can be delivered at little or no cost to government and provide enhanced mobility to regional Victorians, with additional services being able to be delivered at marginal costs as the asset is already being funded through the school bus contract.

c) Demand Responsive Public Transport

Demand Responsive Public Transport (DRPT) is an evolution of the old community transport model that seeks to: fill the gap between public and private transport; offer last mile connectivity to and from high capacity public transport services in Melbourne; provide public transport services in low population and difficult geographic locations in Melbourne's outer suburbs; provide public transport services in regional and rural Victoria when needed, and; provide the link between rural Victoria and regional centres. Where cost has seen the sustainability of the old community transport model erode over time, DRPT has become commercially viable within a social transport context through the development and proliferation of on-line based booking and scheduling programs that optimise the service offering to provide optimum service levels to customers at a commercial return to the service provider.

The ConnectU trial in Warrnambool has been an industry led social enterprise that has demonstrated an unmet demand for transport services by people who are unable to access public transport and have no other means of personal transport. The ConnectU service delivery model is a form of DRPT, providing passengers with access to volunteer-based vehicles, and where practical public transport, to access particular journey needs, and has been delivered in conjunction with local not for profit agencies and health care providers. ConnectU has shown that the service has grown and responded to meet the travel needs of the community in and around Warrnambool, with the cost per journey to provide the service reducing in line with the increased demand for the service.

The service is now at capacity and is about to become an online DRPT system which will enable the expansion of operations to support enhanced transport accessibility for the broader south western region. The DRPT solution seeks to integrate all non-public transport service offerings through a shared on-line platform that will provide customers, community service providers, councils and government agencies, access to an on-demand, flexible, accredited, and low cost transport solution. The service will be interlinked with the local public transport networks to ensure the most effective coverage for the community.

We need to roll this system out in more regional and peri-urban centres and Myki should be made available on these services to better integrate the model into the mainstream public transport system and improve accessibility and connectivity in these areas.

d) Give Regional and Rural Coach Customers a Better Ticketing Solution

Regional and rural public transport commuters have endured a third-rate ticketing system for decades. It's hard to believe that in 2018 we are still faced with such an inequitable reality.

The optimal solution to this is for the entire State to have one ticketing solution: myki. Such a measure would dramatically improve the customer experience and streamline both operators and governments front and back of house administrative requirements.

In the event that the state-wide proliferation of myki is unaffordable or just not possible, there is an alternative. There is an opportunity for V/Line coaches to have one system-wide fares and ticketing system.

The current ticketing systems on V/Line coaches are inconsistent and in most cases, manual, clunky and archaic. Drivers are required to ask what type of ticket the passenger needs (full or concession fare), where the passenger is going, look up the price manually, calculate and process the fare and take cash only, give the passengers change, hand write the date, departure point, destination, ticket type and how many people travelling on the ticket, and do manual load counts.

The disadvantages of the current system are that:

- there is no possibility of paying your fare by credit or debit card, or even over the phone;
- customers who cannot pay by cash are allowed to travel on the coach and pay when they reach the rail station. This just adds to fare evasion;
- customers do not receive any confirmation of V-Net booking numbers, which again just adds to fare evasion;
- it increases the likelihood of over loading or getting a seat on the train as the manifest does not include tickets sold since manifest was printed;
- the actual time required to physically process and write the tickets increases the chances of the coach missing the train connection;
- coach drivers are storing too much cash which creates driver safety and security issues;
- there is no real time load counting which has emergency management implications for both operators AND V/Line, now the procurer is in the chain of responsibility.

To address this, regional and rural passengers should be afforded the same degree of amenity as metropolitan passengers and myki should be rolled out state-wide. In the event that a state-wide rollout of myki is not possible, V/Line should invest in a ticketing system that has:

1. A point of sale device and printer on each coach with the ability to process electronic payments;
2. Wi-fi on each coach;
3. GPS positioning on each coach;
4. An interface allowing data flows to/from V-Net to facilitate the recording of all point of sale on-bus electronic ticket sales to replace current hand written tickets and pre-booked VNET tickets;
5. An improved link through to V/Line website so passengers can buy coach tickets on-line;
6. On board automated announcements;
7. Driver duress alarms;
8. Operator, state and customer real time tracking of bus;
9. Passenger counting by customer type;
10. Reporting capability.

There are numerous benefits of having a V/Line coach system-wide ticketing system as outlined above: the customer experience would improve markedly; the coach would meet more trains; on-time running would improve and patronage would most likely improve.

BusVic can deliver on all of these requirements for the government for $11,000 per coach in up-front capital expenditure, then $5,600 per coach, per annum, in recurrent service/maintenance costs.

e) Quick and Easy - Regional Route Bus Service Upgrades

- Geelong - increase frequency of appropriate services to align with train timetable, and increase weekend span of operating hours on all services.
- Great Ocean Road - Anglesea, Torquay, Lorne, Apollo Bay, Warrnambool - supplement the existing V/Line service.
- Stawell - link the town route service with Halls Gap.
- Introduce a new route service between Torquay and Anglesea.
- Paynesville to Bairnsdale - additional morning and afternoon weekday peak services.
- Kilmore town service - extend the coverage of the service, increase weekday frequency, and introduce a weekend service.
- Buloke Shire - improve public transport linkages through additional morning and afternoon peak services to connect Donald and Birchip with Ballarat, and Wycheproof with Bendigo to improve access to employment, health and education services.
- Wangaratta - introduce a new service to connect growth areas to the public transport network and expand Saturday operating hours.
- Yarrawonga - introduce a school special and upgrade the current adhoc service to a dedicated town service.
- Charlton - fund the upgrade to the local road network to allow the PTV approved extension of the Charlton service to Wooroonook to be implemented.
- Moe - expand operating hours of Route 11 and 15 services to align with train services and improve connectivity with other services.
- Morwell - Extend the coverage and span of hours for Route 20 to provide public transport access to the manufacturing site that will produce components for the High Capacity Metro Trains project.
- Mornington Peninsula - Introduce a SmartBus service between Rosebud and Baxter to connect local communities with the proposed Frankston train line extension. The service will offer a 15 minute, limited stopping, peak period service, with a 30 minute off peak and weekend frequency, and operating hours linked to the Frankston line train service.
- Corangamite Shire - Extend the route bus service that operates between Camperdown, Cobden & Timboon through to Port Campbell to provide a public transport option for the local community.

We estimate these service upgrades would cost $22m over four years.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Introduce minimum service levels for public transport to improve connectivity with economic and social outcomes.
2. Implement programs to improve underutilised bus resources including school buses in regional and rural areas to provide improved connectivity with regional centres.
3. Introduce Myki enabled DRPT to provide the first mile/last mile links as well as fill in service gaps on the Victorian public transport network.
4. Establish an ongoing road maintenance fund for the regional road network that encompasses both local and state managed roads.
5. Implement Regional Accessibility Committees as identified in the RNDP.
6. Allocate $5 million funding per annum for 4 years to roll out DRPT services in 5 additional key locations in Victoria, ideally Latrobe Valley, Shepparton, Wyndham, Whittlesea, and Mornington Peninsula.
7. Proliferate myki state-wide. In the event that this cannot be done, V/Line should procure the coach system-wide solution espoused herein.

6. Improve The Customer Experience

Customer's expectations and needs of the public transport network has changed at a rapid pace over the last twenty years. **There are multiple initiatives that could be implemented quickly, easily and affordably that will increase the attractiveness of the public transport network to new customers and help maintain existing ones.**

a) Introduce Free Wi-Fi

Customers want free wi-fi on the public transport network. Free wi-fi enables customers to use data other than their own and enhances the customers experience, enabling many to work and travel at the same time.

BusVic trialled an integrated onboard Wi-Fi and information technology solution on 20 route buses across Melbourne in 2017 and a full scale roll out is now possible – it just needs to be funded. It will cost approximately $15m over four years to have free wi-fi on 1,900 metropolitan route buses, or $20m over four years to have free wi-fi on all 2,500 route buses state wide.

b) Introduce USB Charging Ports on Buses

Customers also want to be able to charge their devices while travelling. Mandating the inclusion of USB charging ports on all new route buses would be a very nominal increase to the purchase price of a bus (which is paid for over 14 years).

c) Install Bike Racks on Buses

Bike racks on route buses have been operating successfully on 4 Victorian routes for 2 years. The program has been particularly successful in regional Victoria by offering customers a new way to connect with the bus network. Customers who previously could not access the local bus service due to distance, can now ride their bike to the local bus stop and catch the bus.

Customers want free wi-fi on trains, trams and buses

BusVic is ready to roll out a staged installation program for route buses across the state, initially targeting regional Victoria and Melbourne's outer suburbs to further enhance community connectivity with the public transport network.

USB Charging Ports

BusVic is working with local bus operators and manufacturers to develop a local bike rack that is manufactured in and creates jobs in Victoria. Doing this will increase intermodality, patronage and the customer experience. Each bike rack costs approximately $3,000, so to install a rack on each contracted route bus over four years would cost $7.5m.

d) Bus Stops & Real Time Data

i. BusVic supports the development and implementation of minimum bus stop standards by PTV. This includes improved customer information and safety at bus stops, DDA compliance to improve accessibility for all customers, enhanced way finding to support intermodal public transport journeys and improved access for buses. This program needs to secure ongoing funding to support the upgrade of existing stops to meet this standard.

ii. Bus interchanges, in particular at rail stations and at shopping centres, need to have improved real time travel data on display to allow for efficient journey choices, in particular to support intermodal journeys. Improved signage and way finding to facilitate movement through the interchange is important in supporting an efficient multi modal customer journey.

iii. We also need to install Passenger Information Display Screens (PIDS) and have automated announcements on all route buses, just like trams, to improve on-board customer information and satisfaction. Buses also need to have people counters to improve reporting accuracy and planning for service investment. This would cost $30m over four years.

iv. Customers need to be able to track buses in real time. At present bus tracking is inconsistent and often shows where the timetable says the bus should be, rather than showing where the bus actually is. So, to improve the customer experience and to maximise one's personal productivity, all customers need to be able to track their bus in real time. This investment must occur.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Allocate $20m over four years to have Wi-Fi rolled out on all metropolitan and regional route buses by 2022.
2. Mandate USB phone charging ports be installed in seats on all new buses delivered as of 2019.
3. Update route bus procurement requirements to standardise on board information technology hardware and software to generate consistent operational data across the fleet to improve customer information, network management, and service planning.
4. Industry, local and state government to work collaboratively to include accessibility to all stops across the state, including the implementation of state-wide consistent guidelines for the construction of bus stops.
5. Install bike racks on route buses in a staged rollout over a four year period to increase public transport connectivity and improve customer inter-modality.

Bike racks on buses increase customer inter-modality and satisfaction

On-board journey information and automated announcements increase customer satisfaction

7. Make the Transport Regulatory Environment More Productive

a) Break Down the Regulatory Silos

In Victoria there are 16 transport regulators and/or agencies, whereas every other State and Territory in Australia has one or two. This should change so our regulatory environment can be more productive.

Firstly, transport needs to be its own department. Having transport bundled up with economic development, jobs, resources is not working.

Secondly, the government should remodel the transport regulatory structure to an integrated Transport Commission model, similar to the Transport for London model.

The Commission will be responsible for the preparation of a clear and endorsed long term planning strategy that is supported by an agreed funding model. The strategy will address key matters including service delivery obligations and the procurement and delivery of transport related infrastructure.

The model will have a single board and Transport Commissioner reporting directly to a single Minister for Transport, coordinating across the entire transport portfolio.

The Minister for Transport will be supported by Parliamentary Secretaries with responsibility for the Public Transport, Roads and Ports and Aviation portfolios within the Transport Commission. A policy secretariat to the Minister will provide departmental support across policy, regulation, legislation and funding.

So rather than having 16 separate entities, this model contemplates 1 entity with numerous divisions. This will facilitate greater integration of transport objectives. This proposed new structure is presented in ***Figure 4***.

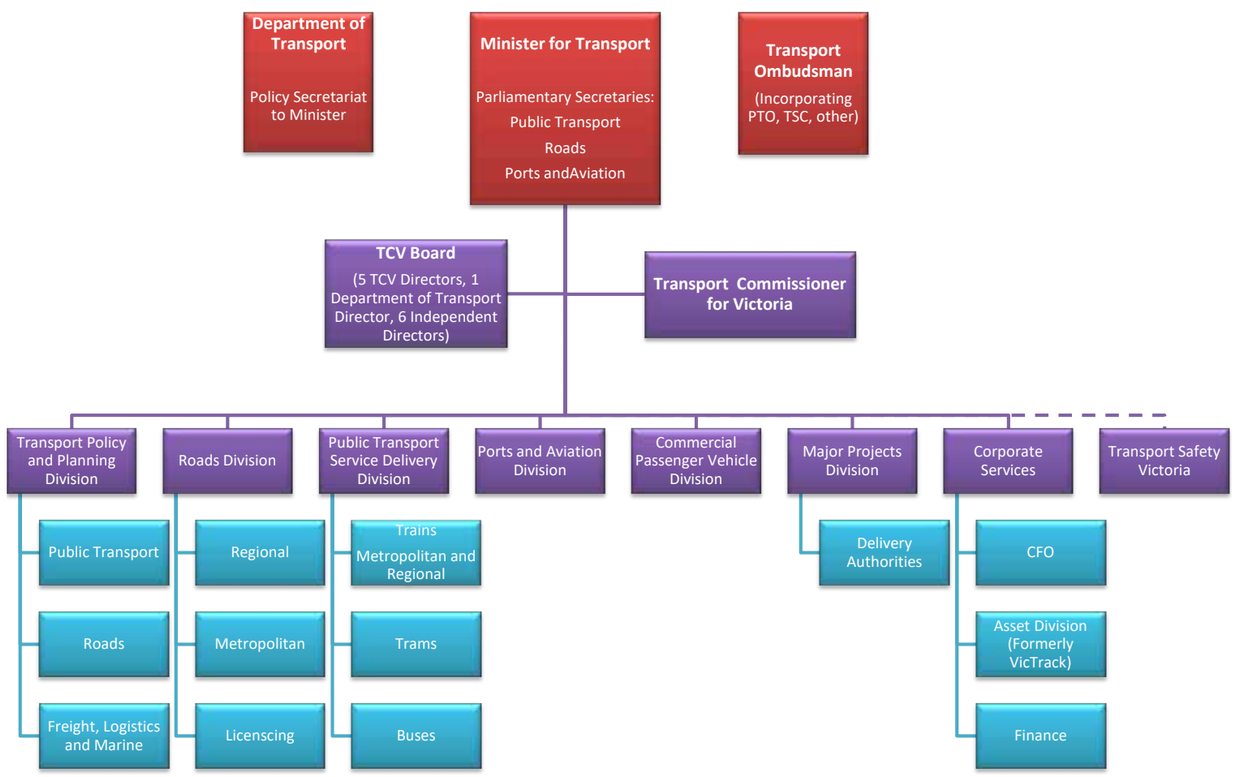


Figure 4: Proposed Transport Comission Victoria Corporate Structure

b) Driver Authority

We need a national licensing approach that mutually recognises heavy vehicle licenses and driver authorities between jurisdictions and allows easy transfer, without having to undertake further driver testing or medicals etc. if a driver moves from one state to another. The license should be accepted on face value for meeting all the requirements to drive in each State.

Currently drivers and operators are affected by the cost and administrative burden in meeting the differing requirements and actually applying for the second/alternative licence and authority. To date, New South Wales and Victorian authorities have introduced a mutual recognition process which recognises a current heavy vehicle licence and drivers' authority from another State. However existing legislative requirements in both States still leads to some other unnecessary/duplicative requirements for example completion of forms, payment of application fees, and driver record checks. Importantly, this existing red tape just delays the newly employed driver commencing work. In some cases, there can be a 12 week lag between being employed by an operator and actually commencing work, which is unacceptable. This needs to be fixed.

c) Increase 3-axle Mass Limits

The bus industry has been advocating at the national level to increase the mass limit of 2 axle and 3 axle buses to reflect the current requirements for manufacturers to present vehicles that are compliant with regulatory obligations (including DDA passenger access devices such as wheel chair lifts and ramps, emissions standards and vehicle safety) which has driven up vehicle tare weights, as well operating at the legal passenger capacity as per the ADRs (Passenger capacity is based on an unrealistic 65kg per passenger calculation). The request for these changes does not result in any additional carrying capacity for the vehicles, but rather rectifies an inconsistency in the ADRs and reflects the current actually operating environment across Australia.

In 2017, the mass of 2 axle buses was increased nationally to reflect these operational requirements, lifting the operating mass of compliant buses from 16 tonnes to 18 tonnes. Nationally, the bus industry is advocating for an increase in mass for 3 axle buses from 20.5 tonnes to 23.0 tonnes to reflect the current operating conditions for buses in the country. The technical and policy review for this change is being manage through the National Transport Commission (NTC) with no set timeframe to deliver an outcome on this issue.

BusVic suggests that, as an interim measure, that the State Government introduce a permit system to increase the operational capacity of all 3 axle buses to 22.0 tonnes to align with the permit system being introduced into NSW. Additionally, at the federal level, BusVic suggests that the State Government, the NTC, the NHVR and other state road authorities pursue a minimum 23.0 tonne operating capacity for all compliant 3 axle buses.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Consolidate the amount of transport agencies/regulators to increase inter-agency communication and effectiveness and deliver a fully integrated transport authority that has responsibility over policy, planning, service delivery and funding of transport across the state.
2. Introduce mutual recognition for driver authority.
3. Introduce standard national vehicle approvals and access protocols for all 3 axle buses.

8. Develop and Implement an Integrated Tourism Strategy

BusVic has identified the following 3 actions to support the continued development and growth of tourism across Victoria:

a) Enhance Accessibility and Amenity in Regional Victoria

The Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy identified the need to better connect Victoria's regional tourism locations with transport options. Tourism strategies such as the Victorian Shipwreck Coast Master Plan is a key document that seeks to redress access shortfalls to a key tourist destination in the state and has been developed working closely with the local communities, tourism businesses, transport providers and government agencies.

BusVic recommends the development of an implementation program that supports improved infrastructure to enhance accessibility and amenity to key tourism regions across the state. The implementation program should be underpinned by an agreed funding program and should be developed in conjunction with the tourism industry, local councils, and government agencies.

b) Securing Bus Access and Parking Facilities in the Melbourne CBD and Airport, as well as Key Tourism Destinations Across the State

Melbourne Airport had approximately 37 million passengers use the terminal during 2017. Of those, approximately 11 million were international tourists.

A significant proportion of tourists that come to Melbourne are part of organised programs, usually meeting a tour bus at the airport. Melbourne Airport has long been seen as the gateway to the city and the rest of Victoria, with visitors travelling via bus directly from the airport to either the Melbourne CBD or a destination in regional Victoria, with these destinations becoming the first experience many of these visitors will have of our State.

To ensure that this transition is efficient and comfortable, it is important that the land-side transport task is managed effectively. Melbourne Airport Corporation is currently upgrading their land-side transport interface which will impact how bus services interact with the airport. It is critical that this activity be completed and access to coaches and tourism operators be maintained and expanded in line with the expected growth of international visitors through the airport.

At the other end, the Melbourne CBD has undergone a major construction boom, with road side parking becoming a critical issue. BusVic has been actively engaging with the City of Melbourne to ensure tourism and charter bus parking bays are retained.

It is recommended that Visit Victoria continue to engage actively with Melbourne Airport and the City of Melbourne to facilitate appropriate access to support the demand of the tourism sector.

c) National Parks Consistency

BusVic supports the development of a single, national permit system for access to all National Parks and calls for the current system to be reviewed under the regulatory reform and harmonisation process.

Currently each State has different requirements to gain access to National Parks. This creates duplication, excessive paperwork and administrative costs for operators, making the left hand side of many a coach windscreen often resemble a patchwork quilt of permit stickers.

This duplication and lack of a national approach is impacting on the viability of some coach operations to enter National Parks. This is compounded by the multitude of park guide training requirements to gain access to National Parks or the other alternative of paying the cost of a local guide to gain access.

If it is possible to make any inroads into any of these initiatives set out above, obviously the return would be extremely significant not just to bus operators in terms of reducing their direct and indirect costs, but it will be particularly beneficial to the tourism industry in the state which would deliver strong economic return, particularly to regional Victoria.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Industry, state government and COAG to collaborate to develop and implement a single national permit system for access to all National Parks.
2. Bolster coach access at Melbourne Airport and Southern Cross station.
3. Develop and implement a tourism infrastructure program to enhance accessibility and amenity to key tourism regions across the state.

9. Local Procurement for Local Jobs

The Australian bus market is a bespoke manufacturing sector and has undergone a major transformation over the past decade due to competition from Europe and China as well as changes in manufacturing processes.

The Victorian commercial bus industry directly employs approximately 8,000 persons across route, school bus and charter services, with 80% (6,400) employed in the operation of bus services and 20% (1,600) in manufacturing and maintenance. When you incorporate community transport and private bus operations, the bus industry, across all operations, manufacture and maintenance, employs over 24,000 Victorians.

Importantly, each bus purchased from Dandenong keeps nearly five Victorians in jobs. [1]

a) Local Procurement Policy

The State Government should mandate local content standards when making procurement decisions for all aspects of public transport, including all bus services, ensuring it is a compulsory requirement for bidders and existing contractors to state how and to what extent their bid contemplates local investment. The retention of funds in the local economy and supporting of local employment is fundamental to the government receiving various taxation revenues, directly and indirectly, so those funds can be reinvested in the infrastructure and services we need. The procurement process should also detail the overall impact of the final procurement decision on the overall economic position of the state.

1 The economic benefits of local bus manufacture. National Institute of Economic and Industry Research. October 2015.

b) Locally Designed and Built

At present, buses operating in Australia are based around European standards and vehicle technologies. These buses need to be modified to ensure they comply with accessibility standards (Federal Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA)) and other local performance obligations often resulting in suboptimal design outcomes for the passenger. The ability to design and manufacture bus configurations that meet Australian requirements will improve the customer service outcomes and support the creation of a competitive bespoke local manufacturing opportunity.

Volgren in Dandenong is a local bus manufacturer that is leading the industry in progressing with locally designed and manufactured buses to suit the changing needs of the Victorian public transport task. As well as working with the local industry to design safer buses, Volgren is also designing low floor DDA compliant buses to suit the demand responsive public transport model

and is currently manufacturing hybrid buses that are in operation in the Latrobe Valley. Volgren is currently working with component manufacturers in Europe to design a fully electric route bus for operation on Victorian roads by 2023.

The opportunity exists for operators and the government to work with local manufacturers to support the development of locally produced electric buses that will transition the industry towards an emission free operating environment across all service needs whilst creating a high-tech hub for manufacturing, training and learning in Victoria.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. State Government should set a minimum procurement local content level for all Victorian contracted route bus operators.
2. State Government should invest in battery electric bus design and manufacture in Victoria and support the development of a pilot network to trial operational and infrastructure requirements.
3. State Government should implement a staged BRT network in Melbourne.
4. Establish an industry working group to re-set vehicle performance and design requirements to support the manufacture of bespoke buses to meet Victoria's public transport needs.
5. Manufacture small to medium size low floor buses to comply with DDA requirements as well as respond to the need to introduce more demand responsive public transport services aligned to population and geographic changes.
6. State Government and industry establish a knowledge and learning centre for electric vehicle design and manufacture to encompass not only bus but other forms of electric vehicles.

10. Improve Driver, Passenger and Public Safety

a) Driver Safety

Driving a bus is one of the most hazardous occupations in terms of health. Verbal and physical assaults by passengers on bus drivers seem to be increasing. Investigations by BusVic estimate that there are around 200 reported and non reported instances of physical abuse of bus drivers by passengers per year. This needs to change.

The cost implications of this reality cannot be underestimated. The financial costs to the State of dealing with mental health issues is increasing significantly. There is a material financial impost to employers of dealing with workers compensation claims in both dollars and general resource time, as well as significant social and future economic costs for the person involved and their families. Claims made by passengers also require significant time and resources to understand, respond to and settle.

BusVic and its safety taskforce has developed and began implementing a strategy to address this. The first action has been to reach agreement with PTV to retrofit driver safety/security screens throughout the metropolitan and regional route bus fleets within an agreed time period.

BusVic advocates for two key legislative changes that would help the industry's endeavours markedly and give bus drivers some more peace of mind with regard to their safety and security:

- Amend the Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Workers) Act 2014 to be broadened to include essential service workers, then include bus drivers as essential service workers so tougher penalties apply for assaults on bus drivers.
- Deploy PSO's and dedicated Authorised Officers (AO) to bus services, particularly night bus services.

b) Volgren Safe Bus Design

Operators and Volgren have been working together for over 3 years to develop a new bus design that physically segregates the driver from passengers, adopting a tram style compartment arrangement, whilst still maintaining seating capacity and utilising systems to monitor customers from a safety perspective. The bus design gives the driver a greater degree of safety. As this design precludes the driver from asking passengers to pay, myki technology that enables people to touch on/off, buy a myki and top up would need to be installed on the bus.

It is proposed that the Next Gen buses be trialled with the necessary ticketing equipment on high patronage routes that link activity centres (i.e. universities, shopping centres).

c) Heavy Vehicle and Commercial Passenger Vehicle Roadworthiness

All owners of heavy vehicles are obliged to have their vehicle undergo an annual independent, mandatory roadworthy certification/inspection process.

Commercial Passenger Vehicles (CPV), however, are a different story. The current Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act and Regulations do not specifically address this issue for vehicles covered by the Act, although we note it is a condition of registration of a vehicle. The data currently available suggests that obtaining independent, mandatory roadworthy certificates/inspections, including roller-brake testing, is an effective method for reducing the road toll and improving public safety.

With more diverse vehicle types being used for public transport, such as demand responsive buses, taxis and last mile/first mile ride sharing vehicles, there will need to be a greater focus on legislating independent vehicle safety assessments to provide the confidence to the travelling public that their every day journey will be a safer one.

Heavy vehicles also play a vital role in our economy but because of their mass, they are potentially extremely dangerous. The Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics' (BITRE's) Road Trauma Involving Heavy Vehicles Crash Statistics (2017) compares articulated trucks, heavy rigid trucks and buses and the amount of deaths from crashes involving heavy vehicles. This data confirms that the fatal-crash rates of buses are only on average 20% of fatal-crash rates of articulated trucks. Why is this so?

Bus operators in most states of Australia must comply with rigorous accreditation regimes that place maintenance and information-management obligations on the operator, the bus and the driver. Included in these requirements is the mandatory obligation for operators to ensure their buses or coaches have an independent, annual roadworthy certificate/inspection undertaken, which includes a roller-brake test. In some states, the frequency of such checks is bi-annual. Other heavy vehicles such as articulated trucks and heavy rigid trucks do not have such requirements. This should be addressed.

d) Passenger Safety

BusVic has worked with Transport Safety Victoria (TSV), the Victorian Police, Metro Rail, Yarra Trams, TfV and PTV to identify safety measures to improve passenger and driver safety on the bus network as part of an overall safety improvement across the entire Victorian Public Transport network. Advancements in technology allow operators to now live stream CCTV footage directly to base to monitor any incidents live to enable a prompt response from police, PSOs or Multi Modal Authorised Officers (MMAO).

The implementation of this capability is part of the broader push by BusVic and operators to have a single integrated information technology system that not only improves customer information and accessibility, but provides enhanced safety outcomes.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Legislate the requirement for <u>all</u> heavy and commercial passenger vehicles to have a mandatory and independent annual roadworthy inspection.
2. Increase the number of Multi Modal Authorised Officers deployed on bus services.
3. Mandate the installation of real time back to base on board CCTV cameras on all contracted route and school buses for improved passenger safety.
4. Improve lighting, CCTV and way finding at major transport interchanges and at the end of line.
5. Amend legislation to include bus drivers as essential service workers.

2015 BusVic Maintenance Conference and BusExpo, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, July 2015

Bus Association Victoria Inc is the voluntary professional association for Victoria's accredited route, school, tour and charter bus and coach operators. We represent the best interests of members in a variety of ways, most importantly in respect of their relationship with Government and its Agencies, including contract negotiation and legislative and regulatory compliance.

We also deliver a suite of products and services to the industry that add value to member operators' businesses.

BusVic extensively and strategically invests in research and development on procurement, social, economic, environmental, governance and safety factors on behalf of a 'community of interest', a collective of like-minded family businesses that form the Victorian bus and coach industry. BusVic is owned and controlled by its members and it applies 'co-op' principles and values in its day-to-day operation.

BusVic's members' have a trans-generational commitment to getting their customers home safely. This is the ultimate promise member operators make to each other, to their customers, to their staff, and to the various stakeholders in the communities in which they operate. Safety is at the heart of everything that BusVic member operators do.

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30 August 2018