



## VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNANCE ASSOCIATION

SUITE GO6, 60 LEICESTER ST CARLTON 3053

TELEPHONE: 9349-7999 FAX: 9347-9933

EMAIL: vlga@vlga.org.au WEB: www.vlga.org.au

**SUBMISSION TO THE VICTORIAN STATE GOVERNMENT'S  
TRANSPORT LEGISLATION REVIEW  
- December 2007 -**

**Q1: Please provide a summary of the key issues and themes raised in your submission:**

- The VLGA is very supportive of an improved Transport Act
- We would support a Climate Change Act as the overarching legislation, under which a new Transport Act might sit with other relevant Acts
- A benchmark of International Transport Acts is required (including the Best practice examples for Transport legislation in Wales, Canada, and Portland, Oregon)
- Overarching Objective must prioritise Climate Change and Environmental impacts of travel choices

**Q2: What do you consider to be the key *current* issues for transport in Victoria?**

- Current legislation does not:
  - reflect contemporary circumstances
  - Link or reference key legislation and policies (eg Planning and Environment Act, Melbourne 2030)
- The economic and social costs of congestion
- Under-investment in sustainable transport to encourage mode shift
- Lack of common ownership of challenges and solutions

**Q3: What do you consider to be the *future* issues for transport in Victoria?**

- Land-use planning and resource allocation decisions must prioritise sustainable transport options
- Targeted road improvements should continue, but only where it is demonstrated that expanding capacity will relieve congestion

**Q4: What are your comments on the draft objectives included in the discussion paper?**

**Q5: What are your suggestions for transport objectives to include in the legislation?**

#### **An environmentally sensitive system**

- The wording of this objective is weak and:
  - should be changed to ‘an environmentally responsible and sustainable system’
  - should aim to minimise, not merely ‘recognise’ the impact of the transport system on the environment
  - should aim to minimise (rather than ‘unnecessarily contribute’) to reductions in pollutants and wastes, including greenhouse gas and particulate air pollution

#### **An integrated and coordinated system**

- An efficient, integrated and safe transport system which meets the needs of all – individuals and businesses, car and public transport users, cyclists and pedestrians – without threatening our environment
- Integration within and between different modes of transport – so that each contributes its full potential and people and goods can move easily between them
- Integration between transport and land-use planning – with the two working together to support more sustainable travel choices
- Better service integration between different operators and different modes, including taxis, trains, trams, cars, buses and ferries, through:
  - generational investment in better transport interchanges, better timetabling and new demand-responsive transport schemes
  - stronger State Government policy control for collaboration rather than competition
- Definition of integrated needs to be agreed, and could require:
  - selecting the right package of complementary measures (*Integrated Transport Planning Framework, Queensland Transport*)
  - ‘horizontal integration’ which integrates transport, land-use, economic development, education and health
  - decisions made in one sector complement, and do not compromise, decisions or interests in another
  - ‘vertical integration’ which is about taking direction, knowledge and priorities from other levels of planning into account, both top down and bottom up
  - specific localised planning that recognises local needs, knowledge, solutions and priorities needed to achieve higher-order planning and priorities
- There are many helpful statements that could more effectively define ‘integrated transport’ such as:

- when all forms of transport work together in a coordinated system with the aim of providing comprehensive land use accessibility
- a transport system that seeks to minimise use of scarce resources and maximise use of more sustainable, low impact forms of travel
- where the component modes / activities are developed and managed to achieve the overall goal rather than the success of a single element
- recognising that many community benefits can be achieved by a complete transport system such as health, environmental protection, and social connections. Funding integrated transport can benefit other local government goals
- understanding transport as a social determinant and a tool to achieve other seemingly unrelated local government goals such as affordable housing
- funding to ensure that levels of service of one particular mode are not improved relative to that of others, unless intentionally to correct imbalance or refocus on broader community goals

#### **A safe and secure system**

- Could be expressed as ‘reducing accidents and enhancing the personal safety of pedestrians, drivers, and passengers in private and public transport’
- Encouraging more people to walk and cycle every day reliant on improvements to cyclist and pedestrian safety

#### **An efficient and reliable system**

- Given the shift towards ‘triple bottom line policy frameworks’, the term ‘effective’ is more appropriate than efficient
- Connectivity of public transport services is critical to an efficient and reliable system
- Great emphasis on peak time needs
- Shifts in policy and resources to prioritise public transport
- Shift away from road freight to rail freight

#### **A system that provides value-for-money**

- ‘Triple bottom line value’ (i.e. environmental, social and economic)
- Role for education as value-for-money is best understood when a critical mass of information on real benefits and costs of travel all modes is transparent
- Include ‘affordability’ and low-income subsidies in this objective

#### **A system that supports economic growth**

- Longer operating hours to recognise workplace and family changes
- The new Act must include provisions for road pricing decisions to be

- taken without requiring further drawn-out legislative reforms to urgently relieve the economic and social burden of congestion
- Road Pricing principles and practicalities needed, as justification and community support relies on transparent policies indicating:
    - how money will be spent
    - that this will be new and quarantined money, not be a substitute for existing public expenditure
    - real public transport alternatives that match the convenience of the car
  - In Scotland, the Executive acknowledged this and introduced a set of guiding principles, namely:
    - **Additionality:** charging revenue will be genuinely additional expenditure on transport
    - **Full transparency:** motorists and businesses will be able to see where their money is going through transparent annual reporting and accounting arrangements
    - **Fair treatment:** both in terms of those paying, and those benefiting, and
    - **Public transport improvements:** before charging with further improvements to follow
  - Public transport priorities are primary, but targeted road improvements should continue, only where it is demonstrated that expanding capacity will relieve congestion
  - Transport Act needs to include references to processes, principles and ways to hold decision-makers accountable for public transport and road-based improvements that are also publicly transparent

### **An equitable, accessible and socially inclusive system**

- The VLGA supports the Victorian Council of Social Service comments, including:
  - Transport equity should be measured in terms of access to services, employment and the ability to participate in public and community life
  - This objective needs to include specific reference to physical accessibility and useability for people with different levels of mobility. The concept of 'universal design' should apply to transport
  - A 'socially inclusive transport system' to include affordability and recognition that public transport is an essential service for many in the community.
  - Revenue generation should be a secondary goal to meeting the transport needs of all, including the most disadvantaged
  - A 'socially inclusive transport system' should also include the concept of meeting mobility needs across the lifespan
  - We strongly disagree with the final paragraph under this

objective which states that ‘the unmet mobility needs of transport disadvantaged individuals are typically local and specific in nature’. The mobility needs of those who are transport disadvantaged includes young people, people with disabilities, older people and people who can’t drive. There transport needs are largely similar to the rest of the population’s. It is true across the population that most of our travel is within our local area. However, this does not take into account people travelling long distances to access education and training, medical and health services etc – especially people living in rural and regional areas

- Community transport, as well as other flexible transport delivery systems, should be explicitly acknowledged as part of an accessible and socially inclusive transport system

- The VLGA would also encourage a legislated and specified minimum level of travel concessions
- Considerations of equity must ensure that there is a focus on areas where low public transport infrastructure has the most profound social, economic and environmental impacts on local communities

#### **A healthy system**

- A broader definition of health should be incorporated into this objective including social determinants of health and mental health.
- A healthy system would also reduce community exposure to airborne pollutants.

#### **Other Comments**

##### **Enshrining the Roles Of and Opportunities For Local Governments**

The VLGA believes that the process to fundamentally alter the Transport Act also provides an opportunity to enshrine the roles and contributions that Local Governments can make.

Local governments are well-positioned with particular functions and attributes that enable us to carry out many of the actions necessary to support integrated transport planning. We have a unique set of skills that are not available to other levels of government.

*Councils frequently represent the only critical mass of resources and knowledge to identify community needs and how to best meet them (Infrastructure Planning Council, 2002).*

##### **Function**

Local governments also have control, to a large degree, of two of the most important factors that influence travel demand:

- **Land use** - the distribution and density of the variety of land uses impacts the distances people travel from home to essential facilities and is a major determinant of travel demand, and  
**Parking** - a major determinant in mode choice and destination selection and currently strongly influenced through the planning scheme and development permits.

*"There are many opportunities for local councils to use the planning process to reduce greenhouse gas emissions....A major reason has been that approvals authorities for land development - including local councils - have been reactive: designs are routinely drawn up by the development company, then councils or governments formally ratify these, having exerted little influence on their form.*

*But although councils cannot unilaterally amend planning schemes, since the planning process always requires either the eventual approval of the Planning Minister or that of a body established by the relevant government, they can use opportunities to work within existing frameworks.*

*In order to do so, local councils will need to be much more proactive and seek to set agendas rather than just provide an approvals mechanism for decisions essentially made before the process begins" (ICLEI).*

### **What Local Governments Bring To The Table**

- Intimate relationships with local communities, with communication links second-to-none
- Focus on community wellbeing and a legislative mandate to act
- Clear role of community leadership
- Capacity to meet challenges while providing leadership and setting an example
- Culture of inter-disciplinary working relationships
- Integration of complex functions and stakeholder involvement
- Capacity to promote community acceptance and behaviour change while delivering sustainable growth
- Knowledge sharing
- Community-owned visions, resource allocation to achieve these visions

To date, there has been inadequate investment in building the community's capacity to take advantage of the above unique attributes. Yet integrated and sustainable transport planning and policy depends on strengthening this capacity. It is time to build on collective strengths and opportunities to truly harness the benefits of local government's unique community engagement and planning roles.

**Authorised by  
 Ms Rae Perry, Chief Executive Officer**