



**Response to The
East-West Link Needs Assessment
Transport Options Review**

**Looking through the ‘liveable cities lens’
to address climate change and
sustainable transport**

July 2008

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Executive Summary

The VLGA is a unique peak body for councillors, community leaders and Local Governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change.

Our Vision, Mission and Values seek to ensure local communities are inclusive, sustainable and dynamic, and characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

We believe that transparent, accountable and democratic governance policies and practices in all settings enable citizens to create their own sustainable futures.

Our Strategic Plan contains a number of Priorities relevant to transport issues, and which guide our approaches to:

- Increase the understanding of how transport and mobility plays a key role in the development of strong, sustainable communities by ensuring that Local Governments and communities are at the forefront of transport debates
- Provide leadership and advocacy on leading edge and critical land use planning, and
- Promote and support sustainable solutions to the issues of settlement and design.

The twenty recommendations contained in the EWLNA Report cover a variety of transport related issues. The VLGA does not intend to address all of the issues raised by the study team or all EWLNA Recommendations.

Rather, the VLGA has applied a “Liveable Cities” lens which acknowledges the critical inter-relationship of Climate Change and transport.

Our Response is prefaced with the view on climate change and the need to reduce green house gas emissions (GHGs). We believe that two critical and outstanding questions need further consideration prior to a final response from the State Government, namely:

- How will key recommendations especially those regarding road and rail, impact the lives of Melbourne residents and visitors?
- What potential governance/implementation costs will fall to Local Governments as a result?

Looking through the Liveable Cities lens, our Response will therefore focus on 10 Recommendations in the EWLNA Report (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 15, 16, and 18) with limited comment on a further 4 Recommendations (10, 11, 12 and 13), covering the following issues:

- Proposed Rail and Road Tunnels
- Doncaster Buses (DART)
- Cycling Infrastructure
- Priority Measures for Trams and Buses
- Freight
- CO2 Emission Reduction, and
- Funding and Governance Implications for Local Government.

The VLGA believes that Climate Change considerations should underpin all transport policy – prioritising the reduction of GHGs – with a key role for Local Government regulation if our cities are to continue to be “liveable”.

The VLGA also believes it is time to centralise emission management and provide a framework and targets to direct transport investment and management as well as a massive increase in resourcing of behaviour change programs.

In relation to the EWLNA Recommendations, the VLGA makes the following responses.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 1:** Planning work should commence for the staged construction of a new 17 kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel linking Melbourne’s booming western and south-eastern suburbs and providing a major increase in the capacity of the rail network.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 2:** The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to significantly improve the frequency and reliability of services from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. The Government should commit to using the new rail tunnel and Tarneit link as the foundation for extending the metropolitan rail network further to the west within the next 15 years.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 3:** During the planning and construction of the rail tunnel, the Victorian Government should continue to make better use of the existing network to increase capacity, including commencing work on the electrification of the network to Sunbury to boost services on the Sydenham line.

VLGA Response

The VLGA strongly supports Recommendations 1-3 of the EWLNA study – that is, an investment in rail as proposed will be a long-term investment for a more liveable Greater Melbourne.

At the same time the VLGA supports on-going improvements and extensions to the existing rail network. These projects will create additional capacity in the rail network and as such lead to positive outcomes. We believe that processes to plan for the tunnel and to improve the capacity of the existing rail infrastructure should be transparent and accountable and involve external expertise as required.

We believe that allocation of resources for rail infrastructure should have priority for implementation over EWLNA recommendations that provide for the private motor vehicle.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 4:** Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.

VLGA Response

The VLGA acknowledges that there are differing views among Local Governments about the proposed cross city road connection, and also that there are concerns about whether it will deliver the benefits canvassed in the EWLNA Report.

Therefore, we believe the road tunnel option needs to be further assessed, firstly in the context of climate change and peak oil, and secondly against other possible metropolitan transport infrastructure projects, particularly those which would result in green house gas reductions. We believe that funds should be committed in ways that achieve the greatest overall benefits for metropolitan Melbourne.

We note that people traversing Melbourne in cars from the rural and regional areas, believe that they would benefit from the road tunnel. The converse view is that if we can transport more metropolitan Melbourne people by public transport, and shift a greater proportion of freight onto rail and more efficient freight transport, then existing roads will be less congested, despite population growth.

Furthermore, the VLGA supports increased State and Federal Government investment and active Local Government participation towards achieving these goals. Greater levels of employment in Transit Cities and Activity Centres in the West, together with more sustainable modes of transport, will reduce the need for much West-East and/or West-CBD travel. Priority funding for public transport, walking and cycling initiatives would reinforce these goals.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 6:** Public transport to the Doncaster region is best provided by rapid, high quality bus services, additional bus priority measures and a major new bus-rail interchange at Victoria Park. To deliver this standard of services, the DART upgrade announced in the 2006 *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* plan should be introduced as soon as possible, along with additional service enhancements and bus priority measures undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 4.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 6 to improve DART via buses as an interim measure, provided that further long term planning and benefit-cost analysis is done to look at the efficacy of light or heavy rail DART.

In the medium term we support a Budget allocation to more detailed technical feasibility studies for rail options.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 7:** A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melburnians cycling to work.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 7 and believe that further steps are required to extend bicycle networks to cover the whole of Great Melbourne. These should cover north-south access routes as well as the east-west bike trails, and extensions to regional Victoria.

The VLGA also supports a greater portion of the CBD Congestion Levy being made available to other Local Governments – currently the Congestion Levy is available to the City of Melbourne - to improve sustainable transport.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 8:** The Victorian Government should work with Local Governments and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 8, on condition that:

- Local Government transport planning is given due respect and consideration
- Activity Centres for employment, services, social activity and tourism are not adversely affected, and
- Victorian Government policies such as Melbourne 2030 are taken into account.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 10:** The Victorian Government should re-evaluate its 30/2010 rail target (which aims to move 30 per cent of freight from and to all Victorian ports by rail by 2010), given the clear finding by the EWLNA that it cannot be met. The Government should create a new strategy and work with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan for moving more freight by rail.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 11:** The Government should take action to increase rail's share of freight by:
 - Ensuring the development of a single, common user, interstate, intermodal freight terminal north of the city on the Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor
 - Developing the standard gauge rail freight network to connect the interstate intermodal terminal with the key metropolitan freight hubs
 - Making and announcing concrete planning decisions about the future sites for metropolitan freight hubs, and
 - Ensuring that all future transport plans build in the connection of the Port of Hastings to the interstate standard gauge rail network.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 12:** The Port of Melbourne Corporation should be given overall responsibility for implementing an intermodal hub network in Melbourne, including responsibility for achieving the Government's revised rail freight target.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 13:** Given the projected increase in the metropolitan freight task, the Government should take further action to improve the efficient movement of road freight by permitting the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes.

VLGA Response

This VLGA Response is limited in that we have not been able to consider the EWLNA Recommendations relating to freight in detail. We note that a number of other groups will be considering these issues in their responses.

Nevertheless, looking through a liveable cities lens, the VLGA sees that there are significant climate change, green house gas and liveability advantages of improving the operation of, and shift of road-based freight to rail. Therefore, we would generally be very supportive of EWLNA Recommendations 10 and 11.

Recommendations 12 and 13 are less straight-forward and we note that some VLGA members have expressed their opposition to these.

Although we have not been able to consider these two Recommendations in our Response, we would recommend that the State Government consult closely with Local Governments in implementing a new Freight Strategy prior to adopting any of these four Recommendations.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 15:** Through the Council of Australian Governments – and working with the Australian automotive industry – the Victorian Government should pursue measures to bring Australia into line with European CO2 emissions standards for motor vehicles.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 16:** The Government should develop a clear strategy for increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendations 15 and 16 as well as mandatory emission standards for motor vehicles. The VLGA also supports a significant increase in the magnitude of change required.

- **EWLNA Recommendation 18:** The Victorian Government should consider a funding structure for the proposed new Metro rail tunnel that includes contributions by beneficiaries (including public transport users and property owners across Melbourne).

VLGA Response

The VLGA opposes Recommendation 18 – and a funding structure that proposes increasing Local Government rates from property owners, or application of levies on specific Local Governments. The financial and governance implications of this cost and responsibility shift to Local Governments are serious and unsupportable.

1 Introduction

Victorian Local Governance Association

The VLGA is a unique peak body for councillors, community leaders and Local Governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change.

Our Vision, Mission and Values seek to ensure local communities are inclusive, sustainable and dynamic; characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

We believe that transparent, accountable and democratic governance policies and practices in all settings enable citizens to create their own sustainable futures.

Our Strategic Plan contains a number of Priorities relevant to transport issues, and which guide our approaches to:

- Increase the understanding of how transport and mobility plays a key role in the development of strong, sustainable communities by ensuring that Local Governments and communities are at the forefront of transport debates
- Provide leadership and advocacy on leading edge and critical land use planning, and
- Promote and support sustainable solutions to the issues of settlement and design.

The East West Links Needs Assessment (EWLNA)

The final EWLNA report was handed to the State Government in April 2008. It is the culmination of 12 months of research, with more than 130 public submissions, site visits, and consultation with Local Governments, business, industry and the community.

The two main recommendations in the report – Investing in Transport – are: building a 17 kilometre rail tunnel linking Melbourne’s western and south eastern suburbs; and an 18 kilometre road corridor that provides an alternative to the West Gate Bridge, as well as a number of other significant initiatives to address transport issues in the east-west corridor:

While the report itself makes 20 recommendations in all (See Appendix 1); the key recommendations we wish to focus on in the report include:

- A 17 km rail tunnel linking Melbourne’s western and south eastern suburbs
- An 18 km road corridor that provides an alternative to the West Gate Bridge
- Targeted road improvements to remove truck traffic from local roads in the inner west
- A major boost to bus services for Doncaster, and
- Improved cycling connections.

The VLGA acknowledges the important role played by Local Governments in this process, noting that of the original submissions to the EWLNA called for in March 2007, twelve came from Local Governments in areas in or adjacent to the EWLNA study area.

Others were submitted by coalitions of Local Governments, community-based advocacy groups such as the Metropolitan Transport Forum which represents nineteen Local Governments across Melbourne, the Eastern Transport Coalition of Local Governments in Melbourne’s South-east, and the Municipal Association of Victoria.

VLGA Approach to the EWLNA Report

The VLGA welcomes the fact that public submissions and comments such as ours are to be considered as part of a formal Government response later in 2008.

The Government has asked the wider community to consider some critical questions in evaluating proposals in the report, including:

- Whether a project would make Victoria's economy more productive
- Whether it would make communities more liveable
- Whether it would make Victoria more sustainable, and
- How it ranks alongside other Victorian priorities – both in transport and other priority areas.

The twenty recommendations contained in the EWLNA Report cover a variety of transport related issues. The VLGA does not intend to address all of the issues raised by the study team or all of the recommendations.

Rather, and consistent with the aforementioned Priorities in our Strategic Plan, the VLGA has applied a "Liveable Cities" lens which acknowledges the critical inter-relationship of Climate Change and transport.

Our Response is prefaced with the view on Climate Change and the need to reduce green house gas emissions (GHGs). We believe that two critical and outstanding questions need further consideration prior to a final response from the State Government, namely:

- How will key recommendations especially those regarding road and rail, impact the lives of Melbourne residents and visitors?
- What potential governance/implementation costs will fall to Local Governments as a result?

Looking through the Liveable Cities lens, our Response will also comment on selected EWLNA recommendations, in particular:

- Proposed Rail and Road Tunnels
- Doncaster Buses (DART)
- Cycling Infrastructure
- Priority Measures for Trams and Buses
- Freight
- CO2 Emission Reduction, and
- Funding and Governance Implications for Local Government.

2 Climate Change – Underpinning Transport Policy

The VLGA agrees that without significant intervention there will be crippling congestion in the inner region by 2031 affecting liveability, the economy and the environment (as detailed in EWLNA). It is in the importance of the over-arching climate change policy and the areas for intervention and priority spending that the VLGA differs with some EWLNA findings.

The EWLNA Report is unequivocal in its recognition of the impact of the production of GHG on Climate Change, quoting the Stern (U.K.) and Garnaut Reports:

“The scientific evidence is now overwhelming: climate change is a serious global threat and it demands an urgent global response.”¹

This view has been endorsed by the interim report of the Garnaut Climate Change Review, which states that:

“The large majority of the relevant scientific opinion and of the leadership of the learned academies of science in the countries of great scientific accomplishment hold the view that human-induced climate change is with us, and that it is already affecting natural and human systems and will increasingly create risks to current patterns of human settlement and activity.”²

This view, the EWLNA Study concludes, “is accepted by the Victorian Government.”

It may be that the broad brush required to deal with the policy implications of the Transport sector’s production of GHGs is beyond EWLNA’s Terms of Reference but to its great credit, it certainly does not ignore the impacts:

“In 2005, 14 per cent of all GHG emissions in Australia were generated by the transport sector, with 87.9 per cent of these emissions coming from road transport. Between 1990 and 2005, these emissions grew by 29.9 per cent, increasing by around 1.8 per cent each year.”³

However, the VLGA supports the view of the Bus Association of Victoria that the modelling assumptions, the travel forecasts, options assessment and economic evaluation EWLNA assumes are best characterized as a “business as usual” approach.

They assume no carbon constraints; no real increase in fuel prices beyond 2006, no carbon price on transport emissions, and no road pricing before 2031 (although it is “inevitable”). Disappointingly, but consistent with these assumptions, the result according to the EWLNA Report is that:

“the infrastructure recommendations will make no dent on transport emissions.”⁴

¹ Stern, Nicholas (2006) *The Economics Of Climate Change*, p.vi Cited in Eddington, Rod (2008) East West Links Needs Assessment (EWLNA), Department of Infrastructure, Chapter 8 p. 182

² Garnaut, Ross (2008) *Climate Change Review: Interim Report to the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments of Australia*, Cited in Ibid Chapter 8 p.182

³ Ibid EWLNA Section 8.1.1 Chapter 8 p. 182

⁴ Loader, Chris (2008) *East West Link: Needs Assessment!* -Bus Association Victoria page 6 <http://www.busvic.asn.au/database/files/East%20West%20Link%20-%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf> (Accessed 13/06/08)

The VLGA believes that the EWLNA Study Team, having recognised the extent and cause of the problem have erred in concluding:

“... that it may be in Victoria’s long term interests to seek more immediate reductions from sectors where restrictions come at less economic and social cost (such as building efficiencies and stationary energy demand), while pursuing more aggressive measures to boost the numbers of efficient, ‘clean’ vehicles on the state’s roads and increase public transport patronage.”⁵

The VLGA notes that little progress has been made to reduce GHGs from cars over the past 20 years as exemplified by the EWLNA’s own study figures. We subscribe to the view that no one sector producing GHGs can be put on hold or regarded as “too hard”. In our view efforts must be made on all fronts to combat GHG transmission and mitigate climate change.

We note the findings of the just released Fuel for Thought report⁶ that states:

“In the event of a decline in international oil supplies technology alone will not be sufficient to meet the fuel supply gap. Reduced travel across freight and passenger transport will be necessary. If international oil supply declines slowly then modest reduction in travel of less than five per cent is sufficient. However, if reduction in oil supply is rapid and alternative fuel vehicles are slow to become available then passenger and freight travel may be reduced by up to 40 per cent.

Early action to accelerate the availability of non-oil based alternative fuels and less fuel intensive modes of travel is key in avoiding impacts in the high end of this range.

The choices Australians make about the size of their vehicle, how much they need to travel and in what mode (e.g. public versus private passenger transport) are likely to be equally as important as the fuel and technology choices that they make in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and their vulnerability to the impacts of higher prices for oil products.

This is important because of the uncertainty that still remains over which future technologies and fuels will proceed to be commercially available at reasonable cost.

The modelling projected that a greater shift toward public transport and lighter vehicles, and increased use of rail and sea freight could reduce kilometres travelled by 30 per cent and greenhouse gas emissions by 17 per cent.”

The VLGA agrees with the EWLNA Study, that a sophisticated policy will seek to reduce travel demand, boost public transport share and improve vehicle technologies.

In so doing, the VLGA foresees a critical role for State and Local Governments working together - using Land Use Planning powers to provide for higher density housing which necessitates less travel and shorter journeys.

⁵ Op Cit EWLNA Chapter 8, Section 8.1.3 p. 185 Future Trends

⁶ Future Fuels Forum (2008) Fuel for thought. The future of transport fuels: challenges and opportunities. Executive summary

It is also disappointing that the EWLNA Report gives little emphasis to behavioural change or the impact of pricing and other means of demand management, as evidenced by:

“As noted earlier in this Chapter, GHG emissions from transport in Victoria are set to grow by 16.4 per cent by 2020. Looking longer term – and keeping in mind the Victorian Government’s target to reduce overall GHG emissions by 60 per cent in 2050 – emissions from transport are likely to rise by between 60 to 80 per cent over the next 40 years. Clearly, action needs to be taken to reduce these emissions; however, the scale and range of measures that can be taken to achieve this outcome are beyond the scope of the EWLNA.”⁷

The VLGA believes that to adopt what could be called a “pragmatic” position as the EWLNA appears to do, will damage Victoria’s social, economic and environmental sustainability by continuing a dependence on high emission transport.

Oil-dependent lifestyles are fast becoming costly and most accept they will ultimately become redundant. This fact is reflected in the views of the submissions by many member Local Governments and community groups to the Eddington Review.

VLGA Response

The VLGA believes that climate change considerations and acknowledgement of the reduced availability and increased cost of oil should underpin all transport policy – prioritizing the reduction of GHGs – with a key role for Local Government regulation if our cities are to continue to be “liveable”.

The VLGA also believes it is time to centralise emission management and provide a framework and targets to direct transport investment and management as well as a massive increase in resourcing of behaviour change programs.

⁷ Ibid EWLNA 8.3.1 p. 205

3 VLGA Response to Selected Recommendations

3.1 The Proposed Rail Infrastructure

The EWLNA Report makes three recommendations regarding improvements to Melbourne's rail network:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 1:** Planning work should commence for the staged construction of a new 17 kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel linking Melbourne's booming western and south-eastern suburbs and providing a major increase in the capacity of the rail network.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 2:** The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to significantly improve the frequency and reliability of services from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. The Government should commit to using the new rail tunnel and Tarneit link as the foundation for extending the metropolitan rail network further to the west within the next 15 years.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 3:** During the planning and construction of the rail tunnel, the Victorian Government should continue to make better use of the existing network to increase capacity, including commencing work on the electrification of the network to Sunbury to boost services on the Sydenham line.

The VLGA has attended briefings by senior rail engineers with strategic responsibility for overseeing the rail network and studied these recommendations carefully, particularly in light of a Liveable Cities lens so important to local communities and Local Governments.

The EWLNA paints a picture that from the 1960s through 1990s patronage of the urban rail network and Vic Rail trains from regional locations declined as people moved to mass produced, affordable, more convenient and flexible car travel. More freeways were also built. The last major boost to rail infrastructure - the construction of The Loop in the 1980s - appeared almost to be an aberration although a welcome one.

However the situation is changing. It is evident both from the EWLNA's own figures, crowded trains in morning peak hours and letters to the editor from unhappy travellers, that our rail network is now experiencing an unprecedented boom in patronage - with an imbalance towards peak hour services.

It is expected by the Department of Transport (DOT) that this increase in demand – motivated by peak oil prices, parking costs, environmental concerns, population increases, congestion, and other factors will continue.

Having said this, the EWLNA study cautions that Victorians have a love affair with cars and daily trips taken by car will still outnumber those by train by a ratio of 5 to 1:

“Patronage growth on Melbourne's rail network has been more than 30 per cent over the past three years – an annual average growth rate of 10.2 per cent, a sharp contrast to the 1 or 2 per cent growth rates over the previous two decades. There are no signs of this growth slowing. This strong growth means that in 2007, an

*additional 160,000 people were travelling each day on Melbourne's trains compared to 2002.*⁸

The VLGA believes that in light of the climate change factors cited in this Response (Section 3), State and Local Government leadership must focus on managing a paradigm shift in our transport choices. Recent data from VicRoads indicates a decline in private car use, especially in the morning peak traffic volumes (Age 7 June 2008, Petrol rise blames as peak traffic declines). Government policies are instrumental in supporting this decline in vehicle congestion by major expansion in public transport infrastructure to meet the increasing demand for public transport services.

The VLGA supports major investment in rail infrastructure. Melbourne is at a stage of development when planning for an underground metro rail system is essential to the City's future. However, this should not be at the expense of meeting longstanding priorities of expanding rail services to growth areas in other parts of Melbourne, not covered by the EWLNA. In particular, returning rail to existing tracks from Epping to South Morang and Whittlesea, from Cranbourne to Cranbourne East, is imperative. Extensions of suburban rail services to Rowville, Aurora, Caroline Springs, Melton and other growth areas is also required to remedy transport disadvantages faced by these outer suburbs. Further, better exploitation of existing above ground infrastructure is needed, including the standard gauge line from Footscray to Southern Cross Stations.

The VLGA believes that the new Tarneit line should be an electrified suburban service from inception, and be accompanied by well planned Transit Oriented Development at stations along its length. It should connect Werribee with an appropriate activity centre on the Melton corridor.

A major critical first step would be to authorise significant new spending on rail infrastructure to not only encourage the trend to public transport usage on a mass scale to facilitate the movement of East –West traffic (and traffic into the booming Central Activities District). More importantly this will reduce the production of GHGs and ease the worsening congestion that currently present clear social, environmental and economic barriers to Victoria's liveability.

We note the different opinions that have been expressed about the proposed rail tunnel, regarding when and if the extra capacity will be required (i.e. how much extra capacity there is in the existing system), and whether the proposed tunnel is the most effective way to providing extra rail capacity.

We believe that the best way to resolve these concerns is to undertake transparent and accountable processes for both the planning for the tunnel and to improve the capacity of the existing system, and to consider engaging external expertise to assist in these processes.

VLGA Response

The VLGA strongly supports Recommendations 1-3 of the EWLNA study – that is, an investment in rail as proposed will be a long-term investment for a more liveable Greater Melbourne.

⁸ Ibid EWLNA, Section 3.2 p.72

At the same time the VLGA supports on-going improvements and extensions to the existing rail network. These projects will create additional capacity in the rail network and as such lead to positive outcomes. We believe that processes to plan for the tunnel and to improve the capacity of the existing rail infrastructure should be transparent and accountable and involve external expertise as required.

We believe that allocation of resources for rail infrastructure should have priority for implementation over EWLNA recommendations that provide for the private motor vehicle.

3.2 The Proposed Road Tunnel Infrastructure

The EWLNA Report makes a key recommendation regarding the construction of a road tunnel:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 4:** Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.

Some Local Governments agree with the EWLNA Report that the growing western suburbs will need an alternative to the West Gate Bridge. Other Local Governments say that the nominal advantages arising from a new cross city road connection, such as reducing time-travel volatility may not be realised. Many are concerned about the very low Benefit-Cost Ratio of 0.7 - reflecting a negative return on investment.

While there is disagreement about the merits of the road tunnel, there is growing agreement that a paradigm shift in both community attitudes and practice, in the light of climate change and peak oil and their associated social and environmental and economic consequences, and the creation of employment in well funded Transit Cities and Activity Centres in the West are all required.

The VLGA supports increased State and Federal Government investment and active Local Government participation towards achieving these goals. Greater employment in Transit Cities and Activity Centres in the West, together with more sustainable modes of transport, will considerably reduce the need for much West-East and/or West-CBD private vehicle travel. Priority funding for public transport, walking and cycling initiatives would reinforce these goals.

The modelling in EWLNA assumes on-going car dependence for commuters – which premises the “need” for a road tunnel.

EWLNA assumes that our “love of the car” will continue more or less as it has done for the past few decades. However, our “infatuation” has largely been due to the perceived flexibility, convenience, status, safety and security of the car and a lack of choice of high quality public transport alternatives for large numbers of Melbournians.

The construction of a road tunnel will intervene at a point in the Cycle of Automotive Dependency (see Figure below) that continues to skew transport planning in the direction of the automobile, reduces travel options, stigmatizes alternative modes (despite increases in funding for them) and leads to less-liveable cities.

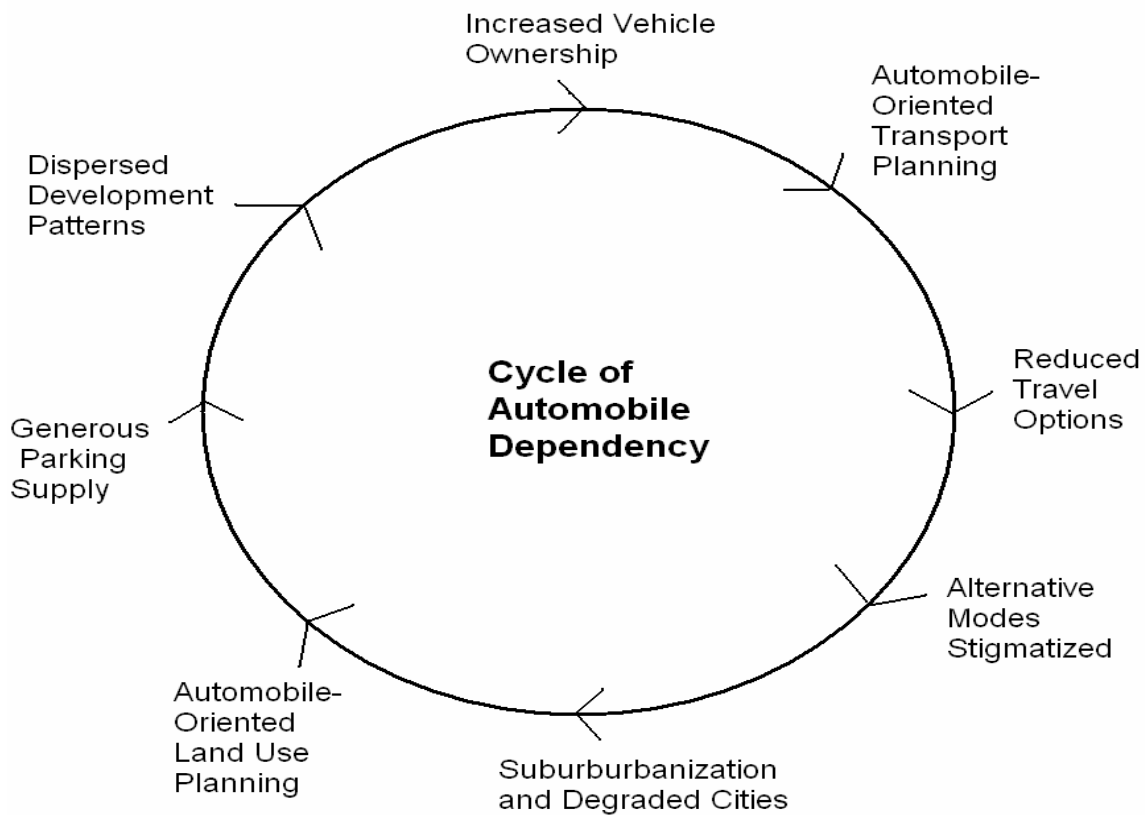


Figure 1: Cycle of Automotive Dependency⁹

When releasing his EWLNA Report, Sir Rod Eddington explained that the production of GHGs would essentially be neutral (i.e. no greater increase than would have otherwise occurred if the tunnel had not been built).

The VLGA believes that the EWLNA's premise of "more of the same" runs counter to their acknowledgment that Public Transport usage will increase at a faster rate than car usage and recommendations for improved spending on public transport and cycling

EWLNA modeling of the impacts of the road tunnel on the production of GHGs:

*"indicate that the inclusion of additional road infrastructure results in decreases in GHG emissions as trips that would otherwise be made on congested local and arterial roads are reallocated to a new free-flowing road. However, these decreases are so small as to be statistically insignificant in the wider Melbourne area"*¹⁰

This explanation comes at a time when Victoria is targeting 60% reductions in GHG emissions by 2050, yet it is acknowledged in the EWLNA Report that significant emissions are produced by the transport sector - and road based transport in particular.

While private vehicle travel has clear benefits for users (especially those who have no other choices), in the current context a more rational market would see transport users

⁹ Litman, Todd (2007) Win-Win Emission Reduction Strategies: Victoria Transport Policy Institute p. 2

¹⁰ Op Cit EWLNA p. 185

choose to drive less and use available alternatives more than they do now, encouraged by Government Policy in which prices for each transport option reflect its production costs.

Motor vehicle travel is significantly under-priced: many costs that are now either fixed or external would change thus assisting the mode switch in favour a new transport paradigm and more Liveable Cities. As eminent academic Professor Peter Newman observes:

“The main planning agenda for our cities in the 21st century is to build reduced car dependence through better infrastructure and planning. The car dependence trend cannot continue due to its sheer spatial problems as well as looming oil shortages. Sustainable transport will require ways of accommodating car ownership but not car dependence.”¹¹

Annex 1 in this submission outlines some of the strategies that could be adopted

“strategies implemented to the maximum degree economically justified, would probably reduce total vehicle travel 30-50% compared with current practices. This is the magnitude of reductions required to achieve the Kyoto targets, and would provide other economic, social and environmental benefits”¹²

The VLGA considers that the EWLNA study is seriously flawed in that it didn't model transport scenarios for Melbourne that are consistent with addressing climate change and reduced oil availability. By presuming 'more of the same' with regard to mode share of private car use compared with public transport, walking and cycling, the study fails to provide information for the community on how climate change and peak oil are likely to impact on kilometres travelled, trip modes and hence road capacity required.

Some Local Governments in the West support this recommendation (in part) on the grounds that it offers an alternative to a stretched West Gate Bridge, in the context of significant population growth, but they also ask for more consultation on the grounds that it is difficult to make an informed decision on the best choice of option citing the lack of design, route alignment, property acquisition and traffic impact detail and the potential advantages and disadvantages.

VLGA Response

The VLGA acknowledges that there are differing views among Local Governments about the proposed cross city road connection, and also that there are concerns about whether it will deliver the benefits canvassed in the EWLNA Report.

Therefore, we believe the road tunnel option needs to be further assessed, firstly in the context of climate change and peak oil, and secondly against other possible metropolitan transport infrastructure projects, particularly those which would result in greenhouse gas reductions. We believe that funds should be committed in ways that achieve the greatest overall benefits for metropolitan Melbourne.

We note that people traversing Melbourne in cars from the rural and regional areas, believe that they would benefit from the road tunnel. The converse view is that if we

¹¹ Newman, Peter (2006) *Sustainable Transport For Sustainable Cities*. Director, Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University pp 1
http://www.susdev.gov.hk/html/en/leadership_forum/peter_newman_paper.pdf (Accessed 13/06/08)

¹² Op Cit Litman p. 7

can transport more metropolitan Melbourne people by public transport, and shift a greater proportion of freight onto rail and more efficient freight transport, then existing roads will be less congested, despite population growth.

Furthermore, the VLGA supports increased State and Federal Government investment and active Local Government participation towards achieving these goals. Greater levels of employment in Transit Cities and Activity Centres in the West, together with more sustainable modes of transport, will reduce the need for much West-East and/or West-CBD travel. Priority funding for public transport, walking and cycling initiatives would reinforce these goals.

3.3 Doncaster Buses

The EWLNA Report makes a key recommendation regarding bus services to Doncaster:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 6:** Public transport to the Doncaster region is best provided by rapid, high quality bus services, additional bus priority measures and a major new bus-rail interchange at Victoria Park. To deliver this standard of services, the DART upgrade announced in the 2006 *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* plan should be introduced as soon as possible, along with additional service enhancements and bus priority measures undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 4.

The VLGA has been a consistent supporter of mass transit options for Doncaster (i.e. either light or heavy rail) and believes the improved bus option should only be considered as an interim measure to cope with demand. It should be noted that in assessing the rail option for the Doncaster corridor, the EWLNA examined only the population of one municipality, namely the 116,000 residents of the City of Manningham. Considered against the broad population base of the Eastern Region, near one million, and 25% of Melbourne's population, a DART via rail is feasible on economic grounds. It is also likely that the rail extension is feasible on technical grounds.

Clearly buses are a less expensive option that can be implemented relatively quickly they will carry far fewer passengers and will not offer the speed of transit that can be achieved by a modern rail system. A far higher mode shift to public transport can be achieved by rail than by bus, notwithstanding the EWLNA arguments to the contrary.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 6 to improve DART via buses as an interim measure, provided that further long term planning and benefit-cost analysis is done to look at the efficacy of light or heavy rail DART.

In the medium term we support a Budget allocation to more detailed technical feasibility studies for rail options.

3.4 Cycling Infrastructure

The EWLNA Report makes a key recommendation regarding ways to improve cycling infrastructure:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 7:** A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melburnians cycling to work.

The EWLNA nominates 8 specific projects within the Study Area totaling approximately 26 kilometres for a cost of \$60 million.

As cycling continues to grow in popularity across Melbourne, the projects recommended by the EWLNA will deliver substantial benefits:

- Significantly enhances cycling connections for people making journeys to and from the central city and across the city
- Supports the strong growth in commuter cycling (especially from the west) and encourages greater take up of cycling for travelling to work
- Provides much improved cycling connectivity around the central city by addressing specific and longstanding gaps in the bicycle network, and
- Creates a new, whole of government approach to cycling policy and infrastructure that treats cycling as a separate, distinct traffic category, with the aim of making cycling competitive with cars and buses for commuting and shorter trips.¹³

The VLGA supports the rationale underlying this recommendation i.e. bikes free up road space, are carbon free, better for people's health, would help meet the 60% greenhouse gas reduction target by 2050 and are cheap compared to other transport solutions.

While the VLGA supports the improvements to the cycling network recommended in the EWLNA study we believe the EWLNA team has, perhaps of necessity, limited its comments to the general study area.

The VLGA supports a more comprehensive bike network as a priority covering the whole of Greater Melbourne – for example some cyclists begin their city-bound journeys from the outer metropolitan suburbs and regional and rural areas.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 7 and believe that further steps are required to extend bicycle networks to cover the whole of Great Melbourne. These should cover north-south access routes as well as the east-west bike trails, and extensions to regional Victoria.

The VLGA also supports a greater portion of the CBD Congestion Levy being made available to other Local Governments – currently the Congestion Levy is available to the City of Melbourne - to improve sustainable transport.

¹³ Bicycle Victoria website <http://www.bv.com.au/change-the-world/41262/> (accessed 13/06/08)

3.5 Priority Measures for Trams and Buses

The EWLNA Report makes a key recommendation regarding priority measures for Trams and Buses:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 8:** The Victorian Government should work with Local Governments and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.

The VLGA believes city-wide measures to unblock congestion for Melbourne and to smooth the flow of trams and buses, ensuring a mode-shift from private vehicles to public transport should be encouraged. Public transport trips on buses and trams are still frustratingly slow especially during peak hours. The VLGA welcomes the announcement of the State Government to set up an Implementation Reference Group involving Local Governments for the purpose of implementing this recommendation.

Such a group could ensure the non-negotiable commitment to significantly speed up travel times is being met. It could also monitor whether other measures are more appropriate for particular local circumstances. We are concerned that any one-size-fits-all approach of expanding clearways, which support and encourage commuting by car, will only add to congestion and may serve to undermine tram and bus speeds.

At the same time they are inconsistent with the goals of Melbourne 2030 in supporting access to and the viability of Activity Centres as centers of employment, services and tourism. Our concern about a one-size-fits-all approach has also been echoed by the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission, Inquiry into Congestion:

“The congestion-reduction benefits of clearways may diminish over time as traffic increases, whereas any residual effects on local traders are likely to be ongoing.”¹⁴

Improved public transport services, tram fairways and accessible stops might be far more effective in tackling congestion and trams speeds than encouraging driving to the Central Activities District.

The VLGA accepts that the priority measures are needed to achieve system-wide improvements; we believe that the good work done by Local and State Government Departments on Local Transport Strategies should also be taken into account in further discussions. The demands to provide priority for road based public transport on the one hand and the need on the other hand for Activity Centres which provide pedestrians and shoppers with important amenities and economic vitality, are often in conflict.

System improvements will not be achieved by State and Local Governments working in isolation, and so the VLGA looks forward to close collaboration between us.

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendation 8, on condition that: Local Government transport planning is given due respect and consideration Activity Centres for employment, services, social activity and tourism are not adversely affected, and Victorian Government policies such as Melbourne 2030 are taken into account.

¹⁴ Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (2006) *Making the Right choices: Options for managing transport congestion* Final Report p. 296

3.6 Freight

The EWLNA report makes 4 recommendations regarding freight

- **EWLNA Recommendation 10:** The Victorian Government should re-evaluate its 30/2010 rail target (which aims to move 30 per cent of freight from and to all Victorian ports by rail by 2010), given the clear finding by the EWLNA that it cannot be met. The Government should create a new strategy and work with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan for moving more freight by rail.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 11:** The Government should take action to increase rail's share of freight by:
 - Ensuring the development of a single, common user, interstate, intermodal freight terminal north of the city on the Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor
 - Developing the standard gauge rail freight network to connect the interstate intermodal terminal with the key metropolitan freight hubs
 - Making and announcing concrete planning decisions about the future sites for metropolitan freight hubs
 - Ensuring that all future transport plans build in the connection of the Port of Hastings to the interstate standard gauge rail network.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 12:** The Port of Melbourne Corporation should be given overall responsibility for implementing an intermodal hub network in Melbourne, including responsibility for achieving the Government's revised rail freight target.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 13:** Given the projected increase in the metropolitan freight task, the Government should take further action to improve the efficient movement of road freight by permitting the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes.

VLGA Response

This VLGA Response is limited in that we have not been able to consider the EWLNA Recommendations relating to freight in detail. We note that a number of other groups will be considering these issues in their responses.

Nevertheless, looking through a liveable cities lens, the VLGA sees that there are significant climate change, green house gas and liveability advantages of improving the operation of, and shift of road-based freight to rail. Therefore, we would generally be very supportive of EWLNA Recommendations 10 and 11.

Recommendations 12 and 13 are less straight-forward and we note that some VLGA members have expressed their opposition to these.

Although we have not been able to consider these two Recommendations in our Response, we would recommend that the State Government consult closely with Local Governments in implementing a new Freight Strategy prior to adopting any of these four Recommendations.

A new Freight Strategy should also accommodate assumptions that recognise the complementary challenges of climate change and peak oil.

3.7 Reducing Emissions

The EWLNA Report makes two key recommendation regarding ways to reduce emissions:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 15:** Through the Council of Australian Governments – and working with the Australian automotive industry – the Victorian Government should pursue measures to bring Australia into line with European CO2 emissions standards for motor vehicles.
- **EWLNA Recommendation 16:** The Government should develop a clear strategy for increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne.

Little progress has been made over the past decades in reducing emissions from motor vehicles and international comparisons make depressing reading:

“the level of emissions from land transport per head of population in Melbourne are 3.1 tonnes compared to 1.2 tonnes per head in London.”¹⁵

There is a critical need for government regulation on emission standards in order to ensure that manufacturers produce more efficient engines and reduce vehicle emissions quickly. Strong State and Federal Government leadership is required in terms of legislating and leading by example e.g. the type, engine size and level of emissions of vehicle use in their own fleets should meet world standards. However, the VLGA believes that while improved engine efficiency is needed it is but one part of the transport management package needed to ameliorate the impacts of climate change:

“Improvements to vehicle efficiency are clearly an important part of reducing GHG emissions, however they will take too long to come on board and are far from sufficient and do not offer a wider range of co-benefits such as congestion reduction and healthier communities.”¹⁶

The Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) Fuel for Thought report¹⁷ notes:

“The choices Australians make about the size of their vehicle, how much they need to travel and in what mode (e.g. public versus private passenger transport) are likely to be equally as important as the fuel and technology choices that they make in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and their vulnerability to the impacts of higher prices for oil products.”

VLGA Response

The VLGA supports EWLNA Report Recommendations 15 and 16 as well as mandatory emission standards for motor vehicles. The VLGA also supports a significant increase in the magnitude of change required.

¹⁵ BusVic *Estimates of Melbourne’s 2006 Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Land Transport* (2007) http://www.busvic.asn.au/database/files/Transport_emissions_2006_-_Melbourne_v_London.pdf (accessed 13/06/08)

¹⁶ Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) (2008) submission to Garnaut Climate Change Enquiry *Climate Policy at the Junction: The role of transport in preventing dangerous climate change*. p. 17

¹⁷ Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) (June 2008), *Fuel for thought. The future of transport fuels: challenges and opportunities*. Future Fuels Forum, Executive summary

3.8 Funding Structures for the Rail Tunnel

The EWLNA Report makes one recommendation regarding funding of the recommended rail tunnel proposal:

- **EWLNA Recommendation 18:** The Victorian Government should consider a funding structure for the proposed new Metro rail tunnel that includes contributions by beneficiaries (including public transport users and property owners across Melbourne).

Local Governments plan, develop and maintain key infrastructure for our local communities. We provide and maintain vital infrastructure such as local roads, bridges, footpaths, water, drainage, waste disposal and public buildings.

It is well known that Local Government's capacity to fund infrastructure is constrained by our general revenue raising capacity. A number of factors have contributed to downgrading the maintenance of local infrastructure, including:

- pressure to broaden the range of Local Government services;
- unfunded mandates from State and Federal governments; and
- revenue-raising restrictions imposed by State governments.

The 2003 Hawker Report identified the current roles and responsibilities of Local Government and the growth of its functions. The extent and effects of cost shifting are detailed as are the major problems facing Local Government's deteriorating infrastructure.^[1]

A specific reference in the Hawker Report is instructive:

"There has also been some evidence received pointing to State governments reclassifying roads from their status as State controlled roads to a lesser status, resulting in a lessening of the State government's burden towards the upkeep, maintenance and care of the roads. In other words, costs have been directly transferred to local government."^[2]

The VLGA believes that for as long as Local Governments continue to attract only three cents out every taxation dollar yet are expected to deliver between what some estimate to be twelve to twenty per cent of services, the opportunities to improve both local infrastructure and services are fundamentally constrained.

Moreover, experience in Victoria has meant that Local Governments have been very conservative in applying value-capture principles to raising revenue. Indeed, other than Open Space Developer Contributions, Local Governments rarely levy new contributions that remain unchallenged by either State Governments or developers.

Given the above funding and infrastructure challenges, and the relative absence of advanced policy responses and agreements between all levels of Government, the VLGA believes that this EWLNA Recommendation is premature, at best, and reckless at worst.

The VLGA believes that levying a contribution from property owners through Local Government rates, or applying a levy to specific Local Governments have both financial and governance implications.

These implications need to be understood and agreed across all three levels of Government before proceeding with such a recommendation as this goes to the heart of our collective and individual financial and governance roles and responsibilities, adding further to the fiscal imbalances which undermine the Australian Federation.

As an illustration of this, if the primary decision-making and delivery roles rest with The State Government, perhaps the State Government is best placed to levy contributions through land tax regimes.

VLGA Response

The VLGA opposes Recommendation 18 – and a funding structure that proposes increasing Local Government rates from property owners, or application of levies on specific Local Governments. The financial and governance implications of this cost and responsibility shift to Local Governments are serious and unsupportable.

4 Appendix 1: EWLNA's Recommendations

<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Planning work should commence for the staged construction of a new 17 kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel linking Melbourne's booming western and south-eastern suburbs and providing a major increase in the capacity of the rail network.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to significantly improve the frequency and reliability of services from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo.</p> <p>The Government should commit to using the new rail tunnel and Tarneit link as the foundation for extending the metropolitan rail network further to the west within the next 15 years.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>During the planning and construction of the rail tunnel, the Victorian Government should continue to make better use of the existing network to increase capacity, including commencing work on the electrification of the network to Sunbury to boost services on the Sydenham line.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>Community amenity in the inner west should be restored by implementing a Truck Action Plan to remove truck traffic from local streets in the inner west. The plan should include a series of targeted road improvements that form an effective bypass around residential areas, reinforced by local truck bans.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>Public transport to the Doncaster region is best provided by rapid, high quality bus services, additional bus priority measures and a major new bus-rail interchange at Victoria Park. To deliver this standard of services, the DART upgrade announced in the 2006 <i>Meeting Our Transport Challenges</i> plan should be introduced as soon as possible, along with additional service enhancements and bus priority measures undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 4.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melburnians cycling to work.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>The Victorian Government should work with local councils and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>A dedicated fund should be established to facilitate the development of Park & Ride facilities, with priority given to improving access to rail services in Melbourne's west and facilitating public transport patronage in the Doncaster corridor.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>The Victorian Government should re-evaluate its 30/2010 rail target (which aims to move 30 per cent of freight from and to all Victorian ports by rail by 2010), given the clear finding by the EWLNA that it cannot be met. The Government should create a new strategy and work with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan for moving more freight by rail.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>The Government should take action to increase rail's share of freight by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the development of a single, common user, interstate, intermodal freight terminal north of the city on the Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor • Developing the standard gauge rail freight network to connect the interstate intermodal terminal with the key metropolitan freight hubs • Making and announcing concrete planning decisions about the future sites for metropolitan freight hubs • Ensuring that all future transport plans build in the connection of the Port of Hastings to the interstate standard gauge rail network.

Recommendation 12
The Port of Melbourne Corporation should be given overall responsibility for implementing an intermodal hub network in Melbourne, including responsibility for achieving the Government's revised rail freight target.
Recommendation 13
Given the projected increase in the metropolitan freight task, the Government should take further action to improve the efficient movement of road freight by permitting the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes.
Recommendation 14
The Government should continue to implement <i>Melbourne 2030</i> and take stronger action to accelerate the development of vibrant suburban hubs in Melbourne's west, particularly Footscray, Sydenham, Sunshine and Werribee.
Recommendation 15
Through the Council of Australian Governments – and working with the Australian automotive industry – the Victorian Government should pursue measures to bring Australia into line with European CO2 emissions standards for motor vehicles.
Recommendation 16
The Government should develop a clear strategy for increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne.
Recommendation 17
The Victorian Government should seek early discussions with the Commonwealth Government regarding a funding contribution from AusLink towards some or all of the EWLNA recommended projects. The Government should also work with the Commonwealth to extend AusLink to transport projects designed to relieve urban congestion.
Recommendation 18
The Victorian Government should consider a funding structure for the proposed new Metro rail tunnel that includes contributions by beneficiaries (including public transport users and property owners across Melbourne).
Recommendation 19
The Government should re-evaluate its current road tolling policy to ensure that the long term benefits of new road investments can be fully realized (including public transport priority, improved cycling opportunities, road network balance and improved local amenity).
Recommendation 20
A single statutory authority should be created to deliver the EWLNA recommended projects, using a 'corridor approach' to planning, managing and delivering the full suite of projects

5 Appendix 2: Win-Win Transportation Solutions

Name	Description	Transport Impacts
Planning Reforms	More comprehensive and neutral planning and investment practices.	Increases support for alternative modes and mobility management, improving options.
Pay-As-You-Drive Pricing	Converts fixed vehicle charges into mileage-based fees.	Reduces vehicle mileage.
Parking Cash-Out	Offers commuters financial incentives for using alternative modes.	Encourages use of alternative commute modes.
Parking Pricing	Charges users directly for parking facility use, often with variable rates.	Reduces parking demand and facility costs, and encourages use of alternative modes.
Road Pricing	Charges users directly for road use, with rates that reflect costs imposed.	Reduces vehicle mileage, particularly under congested conditions.
Transportation Demand Management Programs	Local and regional programs that support and encourage use of alternative modes.	Increased use of alternative modes.
Transit and Rideshare Improvements	Improves transit and rideshare services.	Increases transit use, vanpooling and carpooling.
Walking and Cycling Improvements	Improves walking and cycling conditions.	Encourages use of non-motorized modes, and supports transit and smart growth.
Smart Growth Policies	More accessible, multi-modal land use development patterns.	Reduces automobile use and trip distances, and increases use of alternative modes.
Freight Transport Management	Encourage businesses to use more efficient transportation options.	Reduced truck transport.
Carsharing	Vehicle rental services that substitute for private automobile ownership.	Reduced automobile ownership and use.
Revenue-Neutral Tax Shifting	Increases fuel taxes and other vehicle taxes.	Reduces vehicle fuel consumption and mileage.