

Advocating for Better Transport Solutions

Responding to the Eddington Report and proposed clearway extensions



Due to its location, the City of Yarra is greatly impacted by the flow of traffic in and out of the CBD and from the eastern suburbs. This will increase as a result of the opening of East Link.

Yarra City Council is committed to prioritising sustainable modes of transport over cars. Council believes that easing Melbourne's congestion problem requires offering effective public transport choices.

To achieve this there must be significant State and Federal investment in public transport, so that it is frequent, efficient, and has capacity to become a reliable transport option for the community. Melbourne clearly requires an integrated approach to transport, that does not rely on building more roads, road tunnels and freeways.

As part of our continued transport advocacy, in July 2008 Council made submissions to two controversial transport announcements: the release of Sir Rod Eddington's *Investing in Transport* Report, and the blanket extension of clearway times within 10km of the CBD. These submissions are summarised here.

Investing in Transport Report

In 2006, the Premier of Victoria appointed Sir Rod Eddington to undertake a needs assessment of transport options in the east-west corridor of metropolitan Melbourne.

Sir Rod Eddington's report, *Investing in Transport*, was released in April 2008 for public comment. The report sets out 20 recommendations that outline a multi-modal approach to improving transport links in the east-west corridor of metropolitan Melbourne.

The report also says that for Melbourne to remain a dynamic and liveable international City, the Government must undertake effective long-term and integrated transport planning, backed by serious investment – the report calls for immediate action.

A summary of the 20 recommendations in the report can be accessed through the Department of Transport via www.doi.vic.gov.au, www.transport.vic.gov.au or by calling 9655 6666.

Council's response to these recommendations is available on Council's website at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au, and is summarised as follows:

Council's Position

Council does not support a road tunnel.

- Council supports improvement to Melbourne's public transport system, but not a road tunnel or more freeways. Road building will not solve congestion, and will encourage more people to drive.
- Council is extremely concerned about the impact the construction of the road tunnel will have on Yarra roads. The tunnel's development will bear significant costs on the Yarra community in terms of increased congestion, urban design impacts, and traffic disruption.
- The road tunnel will not provide a solution for the congested intersection at Hoddle Street and the Eastern Freeway – people who drive to the CBD will still need to exit at Hoddle Street.
- It will lead to more traffic using Queens Parade and Alexandra Parade, roads not designed to carry heavy freeway traffic.
- Rather than investing in more roads, the focus needs to be on increasing the frequency and capacity of public transport in the Doncaster corridor, such as the development of a rail line, so people have a realistic option not to drive.

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Council supports the proposed improvements to the rail network.

- Investment in extending and improving the rail network is long overdue; it is acknowledged that the Northern rail lines and the Caulfield group are close to capacity and require significant investment.
- The development of a new rail tunnel is proposed in order to free up the City Loop, allow additional capacity on the other rail lines, bring a vital rail connection to the university/hospital precinct in Parkville, and facilitate V/Line rail improvements.
- Any effective plan to improve transport in this area must include a rail line to Doncaster, as identified and promised over 30 years ago.

Council supports a Rapid Transit Bus System to the Doncaster corridor, but not as a substitute for a rail line to Doncaster.

- Council is disappointed that the report does not see a need for a rail line to Doncaster which has been a significant growth corridor over the past 30 years, and is still growing.
- An effective rapid bus system for the Doncaster corridor is essential to address immediate demands, but will not suffice in the medium to long-term.
- Council supports the rapid transit bus system as a short-term solution only.
- A rail line is the most effective mode of mass transport in the medium to long-term and Council will continue to vigorously pursue this outcome.

Council fully supports the development of improved bicycle links around the City and prioritisation of public transport, such as trams and buses, over cars.

- The first step to improving the efficiency of public transport is the effective enforcement of priority vehicle lanes, bus lanes and tram fairways.

- Prioritising sustainable modes of transport is essential for the future sustainability and liveability of Melbourne.
- Council does not support the blanket extension of clearway times or removal of parking as this will have a devastating effect on our local Activity Centres.
- Council recognises that where public transport efficiency would be improved, some limited site specific modification to parking and clearways may be necessary.
- Council is committed to prioritising sustainable modes of transport and is keen to work with the State Government to realise these outcomes as a matter of urgency.

Clearway extensions

To coincide with the release of the *Investing in Transport* Report, the State Government has announced a \$112 million package of "short-term initiatives to address congestion within a 10km radius of the CBD" which includes the introduction of standardised, increased clearway times.

The new regulations extend the clearway times to 6.30am–10.00am and 3.00pm–7.00pm. The proposed timelines for the introduction of extended clearways is a staged roll out of the AM clearway times by the end of 2008, followed by the PM times in 2009.

In Yarra, this will affect Bridge Road, Hoddle Street, Victoria Street, Swan Street, Brunswick Street, Johnston Street, St Georges Road, and Heidelberg Road.

Council and traders are extremely concerned about the effect of these extensions on the local economy, particularly retail shopping strips, and are disappointed with the lack of consultation about the plan.

Council is lobbying for the State Government to review its clearway extension policy to ensure that Yarra's

traders and the local economy are not adversely impacted.

A Clearways Implementation Reference Group was set up by the State Government to hear submissions lodged until mid-July 2008.

Council's full submission is available at www.yarracity.vic.gov.au (follow the links to Planning & Building and then Strategic Transport), and is summarised below:

Council's Position

- Blanket extension of clearways is unacceptable and fails to consider the economic impact this will have on some of Melbourne's premier retail shopping strips.
- The cost to the economy of undermining Activity Centres is significantly higher than the quoted \$2.6 million cost to Victoria of congestion. Our premier retail strips contribute to Yarra's \$15 billion annual economic output and 57,000 jobs.
- Facilitating single occupant vehicle access to the CBD is poor policy. Rather than tweaking roads to accommodate the multitude of single occupancy vehicles making their way to the CBD, the State Government should focus on strategies that get people into car pools, onto bikes and using public transport.
- More efficient use of roads, via people moving vehicles such as buses and trams and installing more bike lanes are better ways to tackle congestion and would leave the vibrancy of shopping strips intact.
- Any proposed clearway or parking changes should be negotiated at a local level on a site by site basis with Council and traders.
- Council's priority is to support and encourage people to use sustainable modes of transport. We do not need more people driving on our roads.