



**Response to**

**Investing in transport  
East West Link Needs Assessment - March 2008**

**August 2008**

## RESPONSE TO EDDINGTON REPORT (SUMMARY)

RACV welcomes the Eddington report. We believe that the State Government's decision to provide a high level oversight of the East-West corridor was a constructive start, but it now needs to be considered in the wider Melbourne context.

RACV supports all twenty of the Eddington recommendations, but we have comments on a number of aspects as outlined in Section 5. We note that while these recommendations are all critical, they form only part of the work required to develop Melbourne's transport network into the future. Further, we note that Melbourne's transport network remains incomplete and there is no comprehensive transport plan for the next 30 to 40 years to provide a context and direction for ongoing development. RACV recognises that the production of such a plan is not a quick or simple exercise and that it is likely to require a development timeframe of up to three years.

RACV proposes development of a Longer Term Transport Plan for Melbourne and commitment to a priority list of Critical Projects for implementation over the next decade. However there are many major initiatives and infrastructure projects that are well known, well analysed and well understood and should proceed immediately. It is imperative that the Government takes decisive action on these matters otherwise Melbourne will continue to suffer needless congestion and economic and social disadvantage.

This comprehensive transport plan for Melbourne should establish the existing transport network's capabilities, determine the road and public transport projects and initiatives required over the 30-40 year period and ensure land is designated and reserved for the transport projects required to meet Melbourne's long term urban development. Components of this plan include:

- Cross-town, heavy / light rail should be considered for the longer term to supplement the current radial only focus. The planning of major rail and road projects for Melbourne needs to move away from the outdated hub and spoke (or radial approach) prevalent in our existing rail and tram networks. The first part of such an expanded rail system will be the Eddington project for the rail tunnel from Footscray to Caulfield via Melbourne University, the central area of Melbourne, the St Kilda junction area and South Yarra. The aim of creating an expanded cross-town rail system is to realign the radially focused public transport system in Melbourne to create a larger central area with a high level of public transport access and services
- Land Use Plans for future Melbourne must be defined, including for example, higher density in selected activity centres and along tram routes with designated growth corridor strategies including public transport services (eg rail to Mernda/Epping North, buses in some)
- Road and public transport strategies and demands must be defined and projects identified
- Outer Western and possibly Northern transport corridors should be defined
- Planning for any rail and road projects identified should commence to specify requirements and secure land reservations for the future.

### Transport Projects for the next Decade

- RACV supports all 20 recommendations in the Eddington Report for improvements to public transport and roads with particular emphasis on the Rail Tunnel/Road Tunnel extended to Western Ring Road/Tarneit Rail/Doncaster SmartBuses. There are a number of detailed issues which RACV believes need to be taken into account in implementing the recommendations. These are provided in Section 5
- Some 80 per cent of public transport services are on roads, therefore the need for integrated road and public transport improvements is critical
- Improved operation of Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade with grade separations (eg Hoddle Street at Johnson Street and Victoria Street) should be included as part of the Government's response to Eddington, especially to improve the operation of cross tram and bus routes and reduce congestion

- A dedicated airport rail link should be developed now
- The following major road projects across Melbourne are well known and there is an urgent need to get on with implementation, now:
  - Complete Melbourne's Freeway Network by closing the 3 critical gaps – Metropolitan Ring Road - Greensborough to EastLink, EW Road Tunnel extended to the Metropolitan Ring Road and the Frankston ByPass to the Mornington Peninsula
  - The backlog of outer metropolitan projects should be addressed with an ongoing program delivered now in packages as a big boost to outer metropolitan suburbs and then paid for by a "shadow toll" system
  - A ten year program to eliminate level crossings on busy arterial roads at a minimum of five per year should be committed.
- Many significant improvements to public transport across Melbourne have been identified including increased train and tram services and cross-town and Doncaster corridor smart buses. Implementation of these improvements needs to be speeded up
- The congestion package announced by the Government to extend clear ways to free up tram operations and reduce traffic congestion, improve public transport clearways and expand Melbourne's bicycle network must proceed now

The major projects in this package should be implemented as a matter of priority, with the Federal Government being asked to contribute to the funding. If the Government does not have the budget capacity to deliver all projects then the private sector should be engaged for selected projects, on a Public, Private Partnership basis.

## 1. Introduction

RACV represents over 1.9 million members across Victoria. Our members rely on safe and efficient private and public transport on a daily basis in order to contribute to a functioning society. As such, we have a keen interest in the management of Victoria's transport system and welcome the opportunity to comment on the East-West Link Needs Assessment by Sir Rod Eddington.

The area of Melbourne encompassed by the Study contains a number of transport challenges, and their resolution is therefore important not only in the context of the Study area, but more broadly for the Melbourne metropolitan area.

RACV in its June 2007 submission (attached) to the study team set out a comprehensive transport network approach covering the issues of:

- mobility needs of the community
- motorist's perceptions about the road network
- Melbourne's transport needs at the strategic, tactical and operational levels
- population growth in the corridor
- public transport opportunities
- the efficient and sustainable movement of freight
- improving urban amenity
- providing a connected road network
- lack of capacity and vulnerability of Monash/CityLink-Westgate corridor
- technology
- paying for future options.

The proposals in this submission remain valid as comment on the recommendations in the Eddington report and provide background to the rationale for the proposals.

## 2. The Study

The State Government's 2006 report 'Meeting our Transport Challenges' foreshadowed the appointment of Sir Rod Eddington to undertake an East-West Link Needs Assessment.

On March 1<sup>st</sup> 2008, the State Government and Sir Rod Eddington released the East-West Link Needs Assessment Study Overview outlining the areas the Study will consider in determining the solutions for East-West travel in Melbourne. RACV made a comprehensive submission to this Study Overview as referred to above.

Subsequently, the EWLNA team, headed by Sir Rod Eddington, produced a report to the State Government containing 20 recommendations and calling for substantial new investment for their implementation. RACV's response supports these 20 recommendations, but we have comments on a number of the aspects covered and on priorities for implementation. Section 5 provides details of these matters. This response also presents our perspective on transport planning for greater Melbourne and its implications for policy making. RACV believes that analysis of the issues affecting the East-West corridor should be considered in the context of the role of the broader transport system.

### **3. Melbourne's transport needs**

RACV welcomes the Eddington report. We believe that the State Government's decision to provide a high level oversight of the East-West corridor was a constructive start, but it now needs to be considered in the wider Melbourne context.

The Melbourne 2030 strategy set out a vision for the future of land use patterns in Melbourne. Major components of this plan included a focus on activity centres, an urban growth boundary, and an increased role for public transport in meeting urban transport needs. This strategy needs to be reviewed to ensure that Melbourne's future population can be accommodated. In addition, opportunities for further increases in population density (for example), along tram routes should be explored.

This strategy was to be underpinned by significant investments in the transport system, specifically through the Tram Plan, Bus Plan, Train Plan and road planning documents (which we understand were completed but never released). The links between Melbourne 2030 and transport planning have not eventuated as originally envisaged. There is ample evidence to suggest that execution of the Melbourne 2030 strategy has not met the original expectations. Critically, a long term transport plan to match the 2030 land use plan has not been produced.

The 2004 Metropolitan Transport Plan was a high level strategy setting forth mostly priority actions for the subsequent four to five years. The timeframe of this document will soon be exhausted.

In 2006 the State Government released 'Meeting Our Transport Challenges', which outlined a 10 to 15 year investment program for transport in Melbourne and Victoria. This package followed actions identified in the Metropolitan Transport Plan, although it was essentially a package of investment works. It provided a good start on redressing previous underinvestment in transport, but more is now needed.

While these three major documents have provided useful contributions, they do not together constitute a current and comprehensive transport plan for Melbourne that is tightly integrated with its land use plan.

### **4. Melbourne's Longer Term Transport Plan**

Melbourne requires a comprehensive long term transport plan which compliments the adopted land use plan. This plan needs to review the existing transport network capabilities in Melbourne and determine the transport projects required for the next 30 to 40 years based on the land use plan. Detailed investigations will be required to determine the land required for future transport projects and actions taken to reserve this land to ensure Melbourne's future long term development requirements can be met.

Melbourne requires a comprehensive long term transport plan for the next 30 to 40 years for a number of reasons, including:

- The last metropolitan transport strategy (2004) is approaching life expiry
- The Melbourne 2030 land use strategy has not met implementation expectations and itself is under review
- The combination of carbon emissions trading and rising oil prices will exacerbate transport disadvantage in many areas of Melbourne, unless further action is taken
- Melbourne's population growth has exceeded forecasts and will bring forward pressures on the transport system
- The freight task has been forecast to grow rapidly and if this occurs, there will be significant impacts on the transport network.

The long term transport plan for Melbourne should include examination of a number of key issues, including the following:

- A comprehensive transport plan for Melbourne needs to be prepared which establishes the existing transport network's capabilities, determines the road and public transport projects and initiatives required over the 30 to 40 year period and ensures land is designated and reserved for the transport projects required to meet Melbourne's long term urban development
- Cross-town, heavy / light rail should be considered for the longer term to supplement the current radial only focus. The planning of major rail and road projects for Melbourne needs to move away from the outdated hub and spoke (or radial approach) prevalent in our existing rail and tram networks. The first part of such an expanded rail system will be the Eddington project for the rail tunnel from Footscray to Caulfield via Melbourne University, the central area of Melbourne, the St Kilda junction area and South Yarra. The aim of creating an expanded cross-town rail system is to realign the radially focused public transport system in Melbourne to create a larger central area with a high level of public transport access
- Land Use Plans for future Melbourne must be defined, including for example, higher density in selected activity centres and along tram routes with designated growth corridor strategies including public transport services (eg rail to Mernda/Epping North, buses in some)
- Road and public transport strategies and demands must be defined and projects identified
- Outer Western and possibly Northern transport corridors should be defined
- Planning for any rail and road projects identified should commence to specify requirements and secure land reservations for the future.

RACV recognises that the production of such a plan is not a quick or simple exercise and is likely to require a development timeframe of up to three years. Meanwhile however, there are clear urgent needs in Melbourne that need action in the short and medium term, including major projects that are already well defined and projects where planning must begin now.

## 5. Eddington's recommendations

RACV supports the twenty recommendations contained in the Eddington report with a number of additional comments on matters that need to be considered when preparing the implementation plan. The following section lists each of the twenty recommendations with comments below from the RACV on each recommendation.

### ***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.

#### *RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation and suggests that stations at Melbourne University and the St Kilda Road/Junction area need to be explored in addition to the stations at Footscray, the central area of Melbourne and South Yarra.

### ***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.

#### *RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation and notes that in particular it will free up rail capacity in the western suburbs and provide more opportunities for both regional and metropolitan passengers to use the rail system.

### ***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.

#### *RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation.

### ***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.

#### *RACV comment*

RACV supports the construction of the 18km cross city road connection including the tunnel between Eastern Freeway and Tullamarine Freeway/CityLink with extension of this route to join to the Western Ring Road, as it will form an alternative East-West link to the Westgate/Monash corridor. RACV is of the view that there should be a full connection between the East West Link and the CityLink route and additional connections from the west to the Hoddle Street and the Alexandra Parade area. The connection of the tunnel at one or two intermediate points (for example Royal Parade) should be explored as part of the business case for this route.

Improved operation of Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade with grade separations (eg Hoddle Street at Johnson Street and Victoria Street) should be included as part of the Governments response to Eddington, especially to improve the operation of cross tram and bus routes and reduce congestion.

**Recommendation 5**

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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation in principle but we are alarmed at the apparent high cost of this treatment. We note that more investigation will be needed to ensure this is the most cost effective solution.

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the extended DART Bus system for the Doncaster region as being the most appropriate solution for this quite low density population area. RACV notes that bus priority lanes will be required on Hoddle Street, Victoria Street and Lonsdale Street to ensure high grade connectivity to the central area of Melbourne. These bus lanes can be created with extended clearways on all routes and should not impinge upon areas where existing road capacity is inadequate and/or which are operating at unsatisfactory safety standards.

**Recommendation 7**

A number of specific links should be progressively built to improve cross city cycle connections and cater to the growing number of Melbournians cycling to work.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 8**

The Victorian Government should work with the local councils and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation.

**Recommendation 9**

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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation.



**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this view and believes that the Government needs to prepare a clear plan to maximise the carriage of freight by rail where practicable, especially dealing with interface issues at rail and road terminals. Recommendation 11 refers to this issue.

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation. RACV would welcome the opportunity to provide further comments as investigations into the road and rail issues outlined in this recommendation proceed further, in particular the transport requirements to the Port of Hastings.

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the Port of Melbourne Corporation being given overall responsibility for this function, but notes that this obviously needs to be carried out in close co-operation with the freight industry, rail operators and VicRoads.

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes subject to adequate safety and performance standards. We would welcome the opportunity for further consultation on this matter in particular on the proposal to ban large trucks from using the right hand lane on freeways with three or more lanes in each direction.

**Recommendation 14**

The Government should continue to implement *Melbourne 2030* and take stronger action to accelerate the development of vibrant suburban hubs in Melbourne's west, particularly Footscray, Sydenham, Sunshine and Werribee.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the need for stronger action to accelerate high density development in Melbourne's hubs and also that Melbourne 2030 should be reviewed in the context of ensuring that it can accommodate the expected growth in Melbourne's population of over one million people. In addition, issues on the metropolitan growth boundary and possible extensions of urban Melbourne into the growth corridors need further investigation.

**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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standards for motor vehicles.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the vehicle industry becoming more efficient with the adoption of European CO<sub>2</sub> emissions standards. We are however concerned with the cumbersome and slow process for adoption of vehicle standards in Australia (e.g. vehicle safety). European standards in emissions and safety are more advanced than those in Australia and we should be adopting many of these in a more streamlined fashion rather than trying to “re-invent the wheel”. RACV notes that this is one of the main mechanisms whereby emissions reductions can be achieved over the next 5 to 10 years.

**Recommendation 16**

The Government should develop a clear strategy for increasing the proportion of low emission, efficient vehicles operating in Melbourne.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports the submission by the Victorian Government for funding for a number of the Eddington projects and the other large scale projects recommended by RACV, from AusLink and also from the Infrastructure Australia Fund of \$20 billion. RACV further notes that if the Government does not have the budget capacity to deliver all projects in the project set of Eddington recommendations plus the other recommendations made by RACV, then the private sector should be engaged for selected projects on a public, private partnership basis.

**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).

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation and urges the Government to push for Commonwealth funding and to explore all other funding opportunities, especially relating to value capture from property owners and property developers.

**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 realised (including public transport priority, improved cycling opportunities, road network balance and improved local amenity).

*RACV comment*

RACV considers that the current tolling arrangements used for example on EastLink to deliver a total corridor solution are appropriate. This delivered a project which encompasses the road, space for rail in the median, joint use cycle paths, amenity improvements and upgraded public transport services on adjacent routes. The consideration by the Federal Government of a road pricing system to replace fuel excise is supported by RACV but we see this as a separate issue to tolling policy.

**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.

*RACV comment*

RACV supports this recommendation in principle, but is of the view that it should only apply to the major projects and as the forerunner to a future more intermodal approach to transport. We also note the need to establish co-operative arrangements with rail and road agencies and operators to ensure seamless delivery.

## 5.1 Melbourne's transport projects for the next decade

RACV notes that while the Eddington recommendations are critical, they form only part of the work required to develop Melbourne's transport network into the future.

There are a number of projects which should be progressed immediately in parallel with development of a new comprehensive land use and transport plan. These include:

- Completion of Melbourne's Freeway Network by closing the three critical gaps: Metropolitan Ring Road extension, Greensborough to EastLink at Ringwood; the Eddington East-West road tunnel extended to the Western Ring Road and the Frankston Bypass to Mornington Peninsula Freeway
- The backlog of metropolitan road projects, especially in Melbourne's outer suburbs. Some 80% of public transport services are on roads, therefore the need for integrated road and public transport improvements is critical. This backlog of projects should be addressed in packages as a big boost to outer metropolitan suburbs and then paid for by a "shadow toll" system. RACV will provide a comprehensive assessment of potential projects to the review team
- A ten year program to eliminate level crossings on busy arterial roads at a minimum of five per year. RACV will provide a "top 20" list of projects to the review team
- Immediate implementation of the congestion package announced by the Government to extend clear ways to free up tram operations and reduce traffic congestion, improve public transport services and expand Melbourne's bicycle network.

## 5.2 Contributory benefit of Eddington's road tunnel

RACV does not subscribe to the 'roads versus public transport' argument as both are critical components of a sustainable transport system. We believe that it is more appropriate to consider roads as a means to provide transport rather than as a mode of transport, especially given the indispensable role that roads play as critical links of the public transport network.

In this context, and given RACV's full support of the public transport recommendations contained in the Eddington report, it is then helpful to consider how an East West road tunnel may contribute to the transport system.

Many of the recommendations made in the EWLNAS have contributory benefits. These recommendations consist of a range of treatments that will provide significant individual benefits when developed in isolation and much more substantial benefits when developed as an integrated package.

These contributory benefits are obvious when looking at the two major rail recommendations. By providing the new underground rail link it allows the train services from the Sunshine line to be rerouted. This then provides additional capacity for the Vline services that will use the proposed Tarneit Link. The rail tunnel also enables rail services to be scheduled from east to west across Melbourne, bypassing the city loop. This frees up capacity for other services.

It is clear from the work that has been undertaken in the EWLNAS that the proposed road tunnel would provide contributory benefits to the other recommendations, specifically by:

- Assisting to remove trucks from the local roads in the inner west
- Reducing traffic on the surface roads thereby releasing capacity to be used for cross city cycle links and public transport priority
- Providing a more efficient freeway network to link freight distribution and intermodal hubs
- Providing a high quality linkage in Melbourne's road network with connections to the port which allows the operation of high productivity vehicles
- Providing increased accessibility to Melbourne's west, thereby assisting growth in the region to achieve the vision laid out in Melbourne 2030.

RACV therefore supports the road tunnel as a critical and interdependent component of the package advocated by Sir Rod Eddington.

## 6. Implementation and Funding

The major projects in this package should be implemented as a matter of urgency, with the Federal Government being asked to contribute to the funding. If the Government does not have the budget capacity to deliver all projects then the private sector should be engaged for selected projects on a public, private partnership basis.

Priorities for implementation will need to be determined and in broad terms the RACV contends that all of the investigations and planning work which are outlined in the Eddington recommendations together with planning required for the other major projects put forward by the RACV, should be commenced as a matter of urgency.

The projects for the next decade put forward by RACV should be committed with Government determining the priority order but ensuring implementation within the 10 year period. In relation to the Eddington recommendations a number of projects should proceed now, including; all of the bus projects, the Werribee to Sunshine Tarneit line, the east-west road tunnel extended to the Western Ring Road, the bicycle plan, tram and bus service issues, park and ride facilities and the adoption of emission control standards for new motor vehicles. Many of the other Eddington recommendations will require further investigations and business cases. RACV urges Government to determine the broad parameters for implementation of these projects and invite the private sector to put submissions forward for the major projects, as many innovative solutions will come forth as part of this action.

In relation to a number of the projects suggested by the RACV, including the backlog of outer metropolitan projects and the program to eliminate rail level crossings, RACV considers the Government should prepare implementation packages for these programs and invite the private sector to deliver these projects through PPP arrangements involving a shadow toll system.

RACV would welcome the opportunity to discuss both the priorities for implementation and the funding arrangements briefly outlined above.

## **7. Conclusions**

RACV welcomes the Eddington Report and supports the twenty recommendations it contains, noting the detailed comments made in Section 5 of this submission. We commend these recommendations together with the other projects we have identified, to the State Government as part of a more comprehensive approach to Melbourne's transport network and urge that all be implemented.

RACV notes however, that while the Eddington recommendations are critical, they form only part of the work required to develop Melbourne's transport network into the future. The other projects identified in our response should also be included in the Governments critical set of transport projects for the next decade.

Further, we note that Melbourne's transport network remains incomplete and there is no comprehensive transport plan for the next 30 to 40 years to provide a context and direction for ongoing development. RACV recognises that the production of such a plan is not a quick or simple exercise and is likely to require a development timeframe of up to three years.

RACV believes that Eddington's recommendations, together with the other projects identified in our response will not be incompatible with a revised overall strategy and there is already a clear and urgent need for action to progress these projects now.