Regional Victoria
Growing Pains
Keeping pace with transport needs in regional Victoria.
Foreword

Victoria’s liveability and economic wellbeing rely heavily on the ability of the transport network to meet the demands of our growing population. For over a decade, RACV has been mapping the transport issues facing Melbourne’s outer metropolitan suburbs, where rapid population growth has outpaced the provision of basic infrastructure like roads, public transport, footpaths and bicycle riding facilities. In 2012, RACV’s ‘Outer Melbourne Growing Pains’ report identified 160 road and public transport projects needed to combat the congested roads and overcrowded public transport occurring daily in these areas.

Looking to the future, Victoria’s population is forecast to grow to over seven million by 2030. Failure to deal with transport infrastructure issues now will leave governments with an unaffordable and insurmountable backlog of projects. Beyond Melbourne’s outer suburbs, Victoria’s regional centres and peri-urban areas are predicted to host a growing share of the state’s population growth, driven by the attraction of lifestyle, open space, job opportunities, affordable housing and services. Current planning strategies recognise the potential for regional cities to take the pressure off Melbourne by housing a concentration of jobs, educational facilities and essential services. However their success relies heavily on the provision of safe, efficient and equitable transport options to keep these communities connected to each other and to metropolitan Melbourne.

Regional Victoria has the opportunity to avoid the magnitude of transport problems being experienced in outer Melbourne by planning for future transport infrastructure needs now. To better understand the transport issues facing regional Victorians, RACV met with many community members at RACV regional shops across the state and we heard from just under 8,000 people through the RACV regional transport needs survey. We also consulted with key stakeholders, including state and local government departments, public transport operators and regional community groups. We used this information to determine the road, public transport, cycling and walking improvements needed to avoid the ‘growing pains’ too often associated with increasing population. RACV wants to see a balanced and integrated approach to the transport needs for regional Victoria so that our regional cities, smaller rural communities and urban fringe areas continue to be great places to live. Our ‘Growing Pains in Regional Victoria’ report presents a blueprint of the projects and initiatives needed to address current demand and ensure that regional Victoria’s population growth will be supported by adequate transport infrastructure. The front section of this report outlines the key transport planning policies which will enable regional cities and rural areas to connect to each other and to Melbourne. In the section ‘What RACV wants’ on pages 12 and 13, we outline the integrated transport plan which resulted from our consultation with the regional Victorian community. The regional transport maps on pages 14 to 17 show the major projects needed in regional Victoria that will bring benefits across the State. These include new roads, road duplications and upgrades, town bypasses, road safety upgrades and rail improvements. The more localised road, public transport, cycling and walking projects needed in the ten largest regional cities of Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Greater Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga are described on pages 18 to 37. These regional cities have well established economies with the possibility to expand further.

Victoria stands to receive a significant boost in transport funding over coming years, with recent budget allocations towards a number of major projects across the state. However, what is currently a relatively small backlog of transport projects within our regional cities will rapidly escalate as growth occurs unless we act now. The risk is that current funding arrangements will fail to keep pace. On behalf of our two million members, RACV calls on the Federal and State Governments to adopt our blueprint of road, public transport, cycling and walking projects needed in regional Victoria and deliver an accelerated and ongoing program of works over the next decade.
Regional Victoria –
the transport challenge that continues to grow

Over the next forty years it has been predicted that 800,000 more people will call regional Victoria home, with a majority of the people relocating from Melbourne. Victoria’s regional cities and peri-urban areas will therefore need to be prepared to accommodate a greater share of the state’s population growth. To encourage this shift, good transport links and regional economic development will be paramount, with country areas already providing most of Victoria’s agricultural output, food production and processing, energy and mineral resources. The job opportunities associated with these industries, lifestyle, open space, sense of community, affordable housing and cheaper services are all features that will attract more people to country Victoria. However, it is important that as people move to regional Victoria the transport problems faced in Melbourne do not follow.

In the ten years to 2011, 86 per cent of Victoria’s population growth occurred in Melbourne’s established suburbs and growth areas. In 2012, RACV’s ‘Outer Melbourne Growing Pains’ report identified a massive backlog of 160 road and public transport projects in 16 outer metropolitan municipalities where the transport system has failed to keep pace with population growth. This has resulted in disconnected communities, increasing levels of congestion and very limited transport options beyond the private car. RACV does not want to see the same problems perpetuated in regional Victoria and believes that it is timely to identify the transport projects needed to sustain future demand and maintain liveability.

House prices in regional Victoria are on average $200,000 cheaper than Melbourne. Many first home buyers and low income earners who are locked out of owning a home in Melbourne are able to afford to buy in the country. The cost of living in regional Victoria is also considerably lower. For example, the total cost of rent, childcare, transport, education, utilities and leisure in a regional area such as Latrobe City is $1,070 per week compared to $1,525 in metropolitan Melbourne. The cost of transport however, is one of the few components that is higher in regional areas, with Latrobe City residents spending an additional $10 per week on average, compared to their counterparts in metropolitan Melbourne.

The cost of transport for regional residents is driven up by higher than average petrol prices, dependence on the private vehicle and in many cases the absence of alternatives. Regional Victoria does not have an obvious petrol price cycle like Melbourne and petrol is on average six cents per litre more expensive. With 57 per cent of regional Victorians households owning two or more motor vehicles, the price of petrol is a significant concern and highlights the need for good transport alternatives.

Regional Victorians want public transport that is reliable, frequent and efficient. A number of rail and bus improvements are required to provide better connections within – and between – regional cities and also to Melbourne. While there has been significant investment in projects such as the Regional Rail Link, it is often difficult to justify investments in major upgrades in many smaller centres because of the low population densities. However, there are a range of lower cost services that can meet the mobility needs in regional communities, including telebus services, flexi cab, community transport, car pool programs, telecommuting and making school bus services available to the general public.

Regional Victoria is heavily reliant on a well-maintained, high quality road network to support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods across the longer distances that are travelled. A number of road improvements are needed, including highway duplications, fundamental safety upgrades and better maintenance of the network. RACV believes that an integrated approach that includes investment in road, rail and public transport service improvements is needed to meet the growing transport challenge in regional Victoria.

Number of motor vehicles owned per dwelling

1 Victoria in Future, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPD), 2012
2 Plan Melbourne, Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure, 2013
3 A Guide to Property Values, Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPIL), 2012
4 Monitoring of the Australian Petroleum Industry, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), 2013
5 Census data, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011

Melbourne

Not stated 3%
3 or more vehicles 16%
2 vehicles 27%
1 vehicle 50%

Regional Victoria

Not stated 3%
3 or more vehicles 16%
2 vehicles 27%
1 vehicle 54%
The importance of planning

Victoria’s regional cities already have well-established economies. Clustering jobs and services in key population centres improves communication between businesses, provides access to a skilled local workforce and attracts more suppliers and customers. Increasing the density of development in appropriate places – along transport corridors, in major redevelopments and infill sites and around community facilities and activities within towns – would condense physical space between people and services, hence reducing the need to travel.

Although units, apartments and houses on smaller blocks of land are not for everyone, a greater mix of housing types within a community means that as population profiles and individual housing needs change, people can stay within their community and their circle of family and friends. Smaller residences can cater for singles, couples, elderly people and those seeking low maintenance living. This will become even more important over the next twenty years as the number of family-with-children households is expected to decrease by five per cent resulting in an increase in one person and couple-only households. 7

Connections to Melbourne and regional hubs

Whether it is to access employment, education, specialist services such as a medical appointment or attending an AFL match, access to Melbourne is important. Good road connections are critical to ensure those who drive or use coach services can travel safely and efficiently. However, many residents are forced into the car because of a lack of suitable alternatives. Residents want railway stations to be more accessible, with connecting bus services and adequate car parking and they want services that run more efficiently, frequently and over a long span of hours to meet their needs. While Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat residents can expect improved V/Line services following completion of the Regional Rail Link in 2016, there are many other regional hubs that also need improved public transport.

Decentralising jobs and population growth beyond the metropolitan boundaries has the potential to not only take pressure off Melbourne, but to stimulate the growth of local businesses, hence reducing the need to travel.

Impacts on regional economies

Regional Victoria generates a quarter of Victoria’s economic output and one third of the state’s exports. Future growth in regional Victoria’s export market will result in the regional freight task increasing by an average annual rate of 4.5 per cent, faster than the growth rate in Melbourne. 8 The movement of freight efficiently contributes to productivity, particularly for the food manufacturing and processing sectors that are strong pillars of regional economies. There is a need for high quality road and rail links between producers and key locations such as ports and airports. Truck bypasses are important to divert heavy vehicles away from busy town centres. Intermodal freight terminals ensure regional businesses have access to the road and rail networks, helping their competitiveness in regional and global markets.

Regional Victoria is heavily reliant on tourism as it contributes 13.9 per cent of the total gross regional product (GRP) and 12.8 per cent of employment, compared to 3.2 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively in Melbourne. 7 Due to the importance of tourism for country areas, it is important that the increasing popularity of overseas holidays does not deter people visiting regional Victoria. The provision of quality road, public transport and in some instance air access will increase the appeal of holidays close to home. Many parts of regional Victoria experience significant increases in population during their tourist seasons, placing further pressure on local transport networks, especially roads.

RACV listened to member views about transport in regional Victoria.

We informed our members about this project through …

RoyalAuto magazine 2 million members

RACV enews 242,000 subscribers

A dedicated campaign website 28,000 views

Social media messaging With 10,000 Facebook fans and 3,000 Twitter followers

With just under 8,000 responses

With just under 150 community members

With just under 700 votes

1 Victoria in Future, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCCD), 2012
2 Victoria the Knight State, Department of Transport Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI), 2013
The long distance journey

Long distance travel is part of life in regional Victoria – often a necessity for residents to access jobs, services, shopping and recreation. People may need to travel from their rural home to their closest town centre, from one regional town to another or to Melbourne. Regardless of the trip that people make or the mode that is used, this travel must be safe, efficient and comfortable.

The regional highway network needs a continuous program to improve safety and capacity. RACV’s key projects that have been promoted for many years include duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell and continuing to the South Australian border, duplication of Princes Highway East from Traralgon to Sale, duplication of Princes Highway West from Geelong to Colac and the construction of the Shepparton Bypass. Continuing works to provide passing lanes and shoulders are also needed.

The journey needs to be safe

A staggering 24 per cent of federally funded highways in Victoria are an unacceptable one or two star safety rating. Of the 2,885 kilometres of Victoria’s national highways only 24 per cent of federally funded highways in Victoria are an unacceptable one or two star safety rating. A staggering 24 per cent of federally funded highways in Victoria are an unacceptable one or two star safety rating. A staggering 24 per cent of federally funded highways in Victoria are an unacceptable one or two star safety rating. A staggering 24 per cent of federally funded highways in Victoria are an unacceptable one or two star safety rating.

Another major safety risk in regional Victoria for both road users and train commuters is level crossings. There are 1,800 level crossings in Victoria and while it is pleasing that the State Government is undertaking a program to upgrade country level crossings, more needs to be done through Victoria participating in a national effort to ensure its crossings are as safe as possible. Some roads need to be realigned to make it easier for drivers to see approaching trains and decide to proceed or stop. The use of intelligent technology in vehicles being trialled in Melbourne and other states that alert motorists that a train is approaching could also be part of the solution for crossings on quiet regional roads.

The transport network needs to be well maintained

The current State Government has increased the funding for road maintenance and rehabilitation to more than $500 million over the next three years, arising from an obvious deterioration in the condition of Victoria’s road network highlighted by RACV and community campaigning. Despite this additional investment, the condition and maintenance of our roads remains the top road issue for 48 per cent of regional Victorians. RACV community consultation revealed many residents are scared to travel on regional roads and highways. Their rough and potholed state presents a hazard to the vehicle maintenance burden on regional families and businesses. At present, about only 4 per cent of the state highway network is being resurfaced each year. RACV estimates that this needs to be increased to over 8 per cent, which will require doubling the funding for road resurfacing and rehabilitation. The State Government has budgeted to spend over $500 million in 2014/15 on road repairs and maintenance, however more funding is desperately required.

Rail maintenance also needs to be given increased priority to improve track condition and to ensure that train speeds can be maintained, particularly on the rail freight network. Rail freight is best suited for certain types of exports, for example grain, where large volumes need be moved and ships loaded quickly. The 2012/13 state budget allocated $38 million over four years for ‘major periodic maintenance of the regional freight network’. This averages to $7.5 million per year, which is half of the $15 million per year that is required. To ensure the future success of regional rail freight, the State Government needs to allocate enough funding for regular maintenance to avoid the current 30km/h speed restrictions and deterioration evident on some sections of the network. Improved maintenance would encourage more freight to travel by rail and benefit the community through a reduction of trucks on the roads.

The journey needs to be comfortable

Rest areas on the regional highway network can ensure long distance journeys in regional Victoria are comfortable and provide opportunities for rest, through providing access to toilets, drinking water, rubbish bins and sheltered seating. Rest areas must be appropriately spaced along a route, well maintained, have safe entry and exit points and be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). Fencing between rest areas and highways is vital to keep children and pets safe and to discourage pedestrians crossing the road. Incorporating bike storage at major and minor rest areas could enhance bicycle tourism in regional Victoria. Appropriate facilities can encourage car and truck drivers to stop and sleep at rest areas, which is one approach to reducing fatigue related crashes that account for 20 per cent of road fatalities.11 Public perception about comfort and security at railway stations will influence the community’s willingness to use trains. Currently, satisfaction with railway stations is poor, with RACV’s recent surveys revealing that 86 per cent of regional train users identified a problem with the regional stations they use the most.12 Of the ten regional municipalities included in ‘Growing Pains’, 50 percent have railway stations that need to be upgraded. These upgrades include better facilities for passengers and staff such as toilets, DDA compliance, sufficient lighting and appropriate shelter and seating. To access the railway station, the interchange with buses and taxis should be enhanced and there should be adequate car parking. Some railway station car parks, such as Bendigo, are already at capacity and this can deter people from using public transport, resulting in additional cars on the road. Many railway stations have the potential to be focal points and centres of activity, but they must be amenable and easy to access in order to attract people and investor funds.

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Bicycle riding

Bike riding has the potential to make up a greater share of trips, with RACV’s surveys showing that 56 per cent of regional Victorians own a working bicycle yet only 20 per cent ride at least once a week.17 Well located bicycle paths and lanes and safe places to cross busy highways and railway lines may encourage people to ride to town centres, school and train stations. Appropriate end-of-trip facilities like secure and safe places to cross busy highways and railway lines should be readily available and eventually, for major stops in key cases, these will be the only viable options available for some time and it is important that these modes are catered for safely and efficiently.

Travelling to and within towns and regional cities

Regional cities and towns play an important role in providing services and economic and social links within their region. Their success relies on people being able to travel to and within their local town and in many locations the options are limited to the private vehicle, walking or cycling. In many cases, these will be the only viable options available for some time and it is important that these modes are catered for safely and efficiently.

Larger towns and regional cities are starting to face congestion and parking problems because cars are – and will continue to be – an integral part of people’s lives. Town centres should be easily accessible by private vehicles and as demand grows, councils may need to increase the supply of off-street parking and introduce clearways. The reduction of on street car parking can result in more road space and new facilities like wider footpaths, separated bicycle lanes and bus lanes. Councils and the State Government must work together to fund the necessary transport infrastructure and services to provide people with transport choices.

Traffic through town centres contributes to congestion and impacts on local road users, causing frustration and safety concerns for residents and reducing the amenity of shopping precincts along major highways. However, some local businesses become dependent on that passing trade. On major freight routes, bypasses may need to be built and traffic treatments implemented to encourage heavy traffic away from towns to enable urban renewal and improvements in road safety.

Some regional communities have alternatives to access the town centre, like local bus services and taxis. Community consultation has revealed that many people do not use buses because they do not travel when and where people want to go. A hierarchy of service levels needs to be implemented, including shuttle and feeder routes that are direct, reliable, high frequency and for extended hours. Bus timetables must be readily available and eventually, for major stops in key regional centres, real-time travel information should be provided, similar to the increasingly popular Melbourne SmartBus. For taxis to be considered an appealing option, the booking system needs to be user-friendly and the taxi needs to arrive on time.

Within central business districts (CBDs), connectivity is critical in creating a lively place that people want to visit. Footpaths must provide an even surface for walking and for those using prams or wheelchairs. Wayfinding is vital to assist residents and visitors to navigate the town and direct them to railway stations, bus stops, taxi ranks and safe riding routes. In larger centres, buses have a role in helping people move around the town, by running services along key routes in the CBD.

In the larger regional cities, new subdivisions should implement best practice transport planning. Residents in new estates often face a lack of basic infrastructure and can find that the lifestyle benefits that attracted them to move there are compromised by the limited transport options available. Building sustainable communities requires an emphasis on walkability, public transport provision and riding facilities. Residents of new estates need infrastructure and services as they start to move in, for social reasons and to provide better transport options. Unfortunately buses are currently being introduced – if at all – several years after people have moved in and they have already invested in a second or third car.
The strength of Victoria’s economy and its liveability rely heavily on the connections between Melbourne, the peri-urban areas that surround Melbourne and regional population centres. Projects such as the Regional Rail Link and freeway and highway upgrades have already strengthened the economies of those regional centres closest to Melbourne; however more needs to be done.

Since 2001, some of the fastest growing municipalities in regional Victoria are those located in areas immediately beyond Melbourne’s urban growth boundary. These include Drouin, Gisborne, Warragul, Kilmore and Bacchus Marsh. Meeting the growing demand for infrastructure and transport services to connect to Melbourne, whilst managing the mixed-land use and protecting the natural environment in these peri-urban areas, presents a significant planning challenge. These areas continue to attract people who prefer a more rural lifestyle with the benefits of access to employment and opportunity – rich urban centres.

As the state’s population grows, Victoria’s regional centres will develop further in their own right as centres of employment, population and activity. RACV has consulted with the regional Victorian community, our members, local government and industry to identify the transport projects needed to strengthen the transport links that connect regional population centres, not just to Melbourne, but to each other and to the communities surrounding them.

On the following pages, RACV presents a blueprint that includes significant road and public transport improvements to address the needs of the ten largest regional cities and other more general issues. The projects identified in ‘Growing Pains in Regional Victoria’ will improve travel to and within regional Victoria and provide greater transport choice for how people travel.

Key connections that affect the whole of regional Victoria are provided on pages 14 and 15. These major projects are necessary to provide safer roads and create the links and capacity to cater for current and future demand in regional Victoria.

Pages 18 to 37 list the road, public transport, cycling and walking projects needed in Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Greater Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga. These ten local government areas are home to the largest regional cities outside metropolitan Melbourne, with well-established economies and the potential to expand further.

While it is difficult to cover local issues in every regional town and community, RACV believes the relevant transport planning principles included in this report should be applied across the state. In all regional areas, roads should be safe and well-maintained and where possible, public transport access to and between towns and railway stations should be provided.

RACV wants to see a balanced and integrated approach to the transport needs for regional Victoria so that our regional cities, smaller rural communities and urban fringe areas continue to be great places to live. We simply cannot rely on the drip-feed of annual budgets to fill the backlog of projects needed in regional Victoria. An ongoing program of works is needed; one that includes the road network, the rail network, the principal bicycle network and the essential public transport services to operate on the infrastructure. Investment in roads should benefit all road users by providing footpaths, separated cycling facilities, bus stops and space for private and commercial vehicles. Strong bipartisan support is required for the transport vision and projects we have proposed now, rather than developing more plans that result in additional years of delay.

On behalf of our two million members, RACV calls on the Federal and State Governments to adopt our blueprint of road and public transport projects in regional Victoria and deliver an accelerated and ongoing program of works over the next decade. The State Government must work with regional Victorian councils and commit to a pipeline of regional transport projects that will be integrated with the ‘Plan Melbourne’ strategy for metropolitan Melbourne. The Victorian Government, with support from the Federal Government, needs to develop a long-term investment strategy. Innovative funding methods that include borrowing at a state and federal level and engagement of the private sector through public-private partnerships are needed to ensure successful delivery of this plan.
This map shows key transport connections for regional Victoria. These major projects include road duplications, new road bypasses, rail line upgrades and public transport projects that will require investment by the State and Federal Governments, as well as the private sector. Although these projects may not reside within the ten municipalities included in ‘Growing Pains in Regional Victoria’, they are critical in providing the additional capacity to the road and rail network to move people and goods more efficiently across the entire state. More localised projects for the ten municipalities are shown on pages 18 to 37, which together with the AusRAP map on pages 16 to 17 and the key upgrades highlighted on this map, form RACV’s transport blueprint for regional Victoria.

Railway station upgrades

Railway stations should be well connected to the surrounding transport network, be accessible for all users and have facilities such as adequate lighting, shelter and car parking. The following railway stations are located in one of the municipalities that house Victoria’s ten largest regional centres and require upgrades including additional car parking:

- Ballarat railway station
- Bendigo railway station
- Geelong railway station
- Marshall railway station
- Moe railway station
- North Shore railway station
- Warrnambool railway station.

Passenger rail line improvements

Although completion of the Regional Rail Link will improve regional train line capacity for some V/Line services, it is important that trains are frequent enough so that people have real choice when and how they travel. The following rail lines service the municipalities that house Victoria’s ten largest regional centres and require more frequent services:

- Ballarat rail line
- Bendigo rail line
- Echuca rail line
- Geelong rail line
- Shepparton rail line
- Swan Hill rail line
- Traralgon rail line
- Wodonga rail line.

Avalon Airport needs improved public transport options. This will give people real choice in how they travel to the airport.
The Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP)

AusRAP is a program run by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) and state and territory motoring clubs, dedicated to saving lives through safer road infrastructure. This map highlights how Victoria currently rates in terms of the inherent safety of its major regional highways.

AusRAP is part of the International Road Assessment Program (IRAP), a worldwide movement to improve the safety of roads and a proud supporter of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020, a global plan to reduce the number of road deaths worldwide.

A safe road system

A safe road system is designed and operated to account for human error. Safe roads minimise the chances of a crash happening and if they do occur, they minimise the severity of the crash. Simple, cost effective countermeasures to improve safety have the potential to prevent deaths and injuries for decades after they are implemented. We should strive to create a genuinely safe road system where improving the safety of drivers, vehicles and roads is of mutual importance.

A road system where we have five star drivers in five star cars on five star roads should involve no deaths.

Star ratings

AusRAP Star Ratings measure the inherent safety of a road’s infrastructure – that is, the degree to which built-in safety features prevent crashes from occurring and reduce the severity of those crashes that do occur. Roads with a speed limit of 90 kilometres per hour or above are assessed and assigned a Star Rating with one star being the least safe and five stars being the safest. This tells us how safe the road itself is and allows road safety improvements to be identified and costed.

What RACV wants

Of the 2,885 kilometres of Victoria’s national highway network classified from one star (least safe) to five stars (most safe), just two per cent of the Victorian rural highway network achieved the maximum five star rating, with 24 per cent rated at less than three stars. The RACV policy is that all existing sections of the National Highway Network should be upgraded to achieve a minimum AusRAP safety rating of three stars. Newly constructed sections of highway should achieve a safety rating of no less than four stars. RACV proposes that an investment of approximately $580 million would achieve the minimum three star standard on Victoria’s major highways saving at least 2,800 people from serious injury or death on these roads over the next 20 years.

Simple measures such as safety barriers along the roadside and in the median to prevent run-off-road and head-on crashes, improved skid resistance of road surfaces and rumble strips on highway shoulders and centrelines to reduce run-off-road crashes can save lives and reduce injuries from crashes on our roads.
Ballarat is strategically located at the junction of four major highways and is 80 minutes by car or train to Melbourne. The municipality is a service and employment centre for the western region, particularly the health care, retail and manufacturing sectors. These factors have contributed to a population increase of 1.8 per cent from 2011 to 2012, the highest growth rate of the ten largest regional centres in Victoria.

The Western Highway is the main transport corridor for Victoria’s western district and connects Melbourne to Adelaide. More than 5,500 vehicles travel the highway west of Ballarat daily, including 1,500 trucks. Traffic is expected to double by 2025; hence the duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell is vital to accommodate future demand and for safety. Stage one – duplication between Ballarat and Beaufort – is due for completion in 2015. The Federal and State Government needs to fund duplication of the remaining two stages hence the duplication of the Western Highway, between Beaufort to Stawell. This work will improve traffic flow and safety, not only for residents and tourists but for road freight, which is important for farming, grain production and manufacturing.

Population growth has created more traffic along Ballarat-Buninyong Road (Geelong Road) in Ballarat, magnified by the residential, school and university developments along the route.

Traffic is expected to double by 2025;4 of Ballarat daily, including 1,500 trucks. 5,500 vehicles travel the highway west of Ballarat, including 1,500 trucks. Although safety improvements are needed, duplication and road widening is restricted by the narrow road space. Peak delays along Geelong Road is restricted by the narrow road space.

Although safety improvements are needed, duplication and road widening is restricted by the narrow road space. Peak delays along Geelong Road encourage some motorists to use the parallel Yankee Flat Road. By the year 2031, traffic modelling predicts Yankee Flat Road will have 3,700 vehicles per day, an 85 per cent increase on 2009 traffic volumes.1 Yankee Flat Road needs intersection improvements and better delineation to enhance safety and capacity. Much of the future residential and industrial growth of Ballarat is planned to the west of the city. In the future, Ballarat West Employment Zone will provide an estimated 9,000 jobs and $5 billion of annual economic activity.1 The Ballarat West Growth Area Plan predicts that, in forty years, the greenfield site will provide 14,000 new houses for 40,000 people.2

Construction of adequate transport links is imperative to the success of Ballarat West. Roads that are built must be designed to accommodate future bus routes and separated cycling and walking paths. Ballarat Western Link Road (BWL) R, a 16 kilometre, two lane road between the Western Freeway and the Midland Highway, must be constructed to provide direct connections to the major transport corridors. The northern 4.2 kilometre section will be built in 2014, however the complete link needs to be built to accommodate and encourage the proposed future growth of Ballarat West.
Bendigo

BENDIGO: KEY FACTS
- Location: 150 km north of Melbourne
- Size: 3,000 km²
- Major centres: Bendigo, Echuca and Heathcoote
- Main industries: Manufacturing, education and finance
- 2012 population: 62,352
- 2031 projected population: 103,722
- Forecast average annual growth rate (2011–2031): 1.4%

Bendigo is a regional centre that attracts visitors from surrounding areas because of the diverse work, study, shopping and medical facilities. A combination of Bendigo’s services and proximity to Melbourne is attracting people to a regional lifestyle that is still close to Melbourne. This growth should increase following completion of Victoria’s largest regional hospital in Bendigo in 2016. However, future development to accommodate the additional residents is restricted to infill, as Bendigo is surrounded by dense parkland that limits opportunities for urban sprawl.

Ensuring people can move in and around the CBD is essential, given the importance of the town centre to Bendigo’s prosperity. The recently completed Inner Box provides a transport route around the CBD and completing the Outer Box would provide a ring route through the inner suburbs. Bendigo’s rail line is Australia’s fastest growing regional rail route, with patronage increasing by 114 per cent in the last five years.1 In 2006, the Bendigo rail line was upgraded as part of the Regional Fast Rail project, which included reduction of the track between Kyneton and Bendigo to a single line. However, the 18 daily train services are not enough to meet demand and while the Regional Rail Link will alleviate some pressure on the line, the single track ultimately restricts the number of additional trains that can be added. With steadily increasing demand for commuter services between Melbourne and Bendigo, planning for the reinstatement of duplicated track between Bendigo and Kyneton is urgently needed.

More demand for Bendigo train services and a lack of alternative transport options to access the station has resulted in overcrowding of the railway station car park. The 2013 RACV On Track survey revealed 65 per cent of people that use Bendigo railway station experience difficulty finding a car park.2 While expanding the car park is important, appropriate services and infrastructure should be available for people to walk, cycle or catch the bus to the station.

Marong is planned to be an important part of Greater Bendigo’s future growth. The town’s current population is less than 1,000 people, but forecasts it will grow to 8,000 people by 2030.3 At present, creating a strong, regional town centre is difficult as the Calder Freeway travels through the town centre. A bypass is needed to divert freight movement to the west. In Marong, 75 per cent of households have two or more motor vehicles, which is 19 per cent higher than Greater Bendigo.4 It is important to provide transport infrastructure like footpaths, bicycle facilities and bus services early in the growth of the town to encourage the use of alternative transport options and reduce dependence on private vehicles.

MAP KEY
- Highway
- Proposed passenger railway station upgrade
- Proposed public transport project
- Proposed road project

Transport Project | Description | Est Cost ($m)
--- | --- | ---
A | Echuca rail line | Upgrade the capacity and service standard of the Echuca rail line. | –
B | Swan Hill rail line | Upgrade the capacity and service standard of the Swan Hill rail line. | –
C | Outer Arterial Road improvements | Duplicate: Nillah Road and rail bridge, Bendigo–Echuca Rail Road, Midland Highway (White Hills), Marong Road (Calder Highway), Strawthaili Fawdyke Road and Chum Street (West). | $247
D | Calder Freeway/Highway | Upgrade Calder Freeway/Highway to a minimum of three stars AusRAP standard. | $107
E | North-Western truck route | Upgrade the road standard through shoulder sealing and intersection configurations for larger trucks. | $1
F | Epsom railway station | Construct a new station at Epsom on the Echuca rail line, including adequate car parks. | $7
G | Bendigo East Link Road | Construct a new arterial link between Midland Highway to Strawthaili Fawdyke Road. | $20
H | Integrated Transport Corridor (ITC) | Construct an alternative north–south highway corridor to the east of the rail line. | $166
I | Marong West Truck Bypass | Construct a truck bypass along the western boundary of Marong. | $26
J | Outer Box | Duplicate: Golden Square to Long Gully Road, Golden Square–Quarry Hill Road, Roswell Street and rail bridge and Bendigo–Redesdale Road. | $83
K | Bendigo railway station | Upgrade facilities at Bendigo railway station including additional car parks. | $1
L | Bendigo rail line | Upgrade the capacity and service standard of the Bendigo rail line. | –
M | Calder Alternate Highway interchange | Upgrade the interchange of the Calder Highway and Calder Alternate Highway at Rosewood. | $86

1 RACV On Track survey, 2013
2 On Track Survey, RACV, 2013
3 Marong Plan, City of Greater Bendigo, 2011
4 Census data, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2011
5 Railing Ahead: Rail Issues and Opportunities and Future-proofing in the Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
"Lack of reliability of Melbourne to Geelong road means I need to stay overnight in eastern suburbs of Melbourne to be confident of making my eastern suburbs appointments.”

Lisa aged 45–54

“Public transport options that actually work and deter car use are essential.”

Rod aged 55–64

As Victoria’s second largest city, and being close to Melbourne, Geelong holds a strategically competitive position as the principal service centre for business and industry in the south west as well as having a strong relationship with Melbourne. This also means Geelong experiences many of the same transport problems as outer Melbourne communities, including struggling to provide sufficient transport infrastructure for a growing population, traffic congestion and crowded trains. While some people move to Geelong and work locally, there are many people who live in Geelong and work in Melbourne.

For those that catch the V/Line train to Melbourne, completion of the Regional Rail Link in early 2016 will provide three extra services in the morning and evening peak hour and improve reliability. Further efficiency improvements that should be made to the Geelong rail line include a new crossing loop, track duplication between South Geelong and Grovedale and upgrades to North Shore, Marshall and Geelong railway stations.

For those who drive to Melbourne, investment in the Princes Freeway and Geelong Ring Road has added much needed extra road capacity, however there is still the problem of unreliable travel times, with the trip often taking much longer than the expected hour.

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RACV welcomes the Government commitment to fund the complete project, which will have benefits across the state.

Another area that is experiencing increasing congestion is Drysdale and most recent traffic counts reveal over 16,000 vehicles travel along High Street per day. Key intersections along High Street cannot cope with this traffic demand resulting in congestion that will continue to worsen amid nearby residential development. For just under 30 years, the City of Greater Geelong’s planning scheme has incorporated the Drysdale bypass however VicRoads has advised construction is at least ten years from implementation.

Funding for staged construction of the Drysdale Bypass is needed to benefit not only Drysdale, but the whole Bellarine Peninsula.

To accommodate Geelong’s growing population, Armstrong Creek is being developed as the largest contiguous development in Victoria providing housing for 55,000 people and 22,000 jobs. The aim is for Armstrong Creek to be a more sustainable community, with less dependence on the private vehicle. The State Government has committed $25.9 Million to construct the Grovedale railway station that will give Armstrong Creek residents more choice in how they travel.

Public Transport Victoria has identified five new bus routes for Armstrong Creek that RACV believes should be implemented as people begin to move in.

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Horsham

**Rural City Council**

**HORSHAM: KEY FACTS**

- **Location:** 300 km west of Melbourne
- **Size:** 4,267 km²
- **Major centres:** Horsham and Natimuk
- **Main industries:** Agriculture and manufacturing
- **2012 population:** 19,658
- **2031 projected population:** 22,571
- **Forecast average annual growth rate (2011–2031):** 0.5%

**AVERAGE TRANSPORT RATING/10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V/Line trains</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/Line coaches</td>
<td>5.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local buses</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeways/highways</td>
<td>4.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local roads</td>
<td>4.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>On road bike paths</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off road bike paths</td>
<td>5.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footpaths</td>
<td>5.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Horsham residents’ average transport ratings where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

**PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Public Transport Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Western Highway</td>
<td>Continue to improve the Western Highway, including complete duplication to Stawell and a minimum of three star AusRAP standard to South Australia.</td>
<td>$665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Horsham passenger rail service</td>
<td>Implement a passenger shuttle rail service that extends from Ararat railway station to Horsham.</td>
<td>$-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Melbourne to Adelaide rail line</td>
<td>Release the railway line away from the centre of Horsham.</td>
<td>$79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Horsham Bypass</td>
<td>Construct the Horsham Bypass for the Western Highway.</td>
<td>$157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Alternate road across the Wimmera River</td>
<td>Investigate an alternate road and foot bridge over the Wimmera River.</td>
<td>$-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Service improvements and planning studies have not been costed.
- The Western Highway Duplication – Ballarat to Stawell, VicRoads, 2013
- Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013

Horsham provides retail and business services to the predominantly rural farming industry in the Wimmera region. Located between Melbourne and Adelaide, the municipality is at the hub of a state and national highway system, namely the Western Highway, Henty Highway and Wimmera Highway leading to Geelong, Mildura, Portland and Bendigo. Public transport connections between Horsham and Melbourne include the Overland train operating twice a week, or a V/Line coach that connects with trains at Ararat and Ballarat. The Western Highway is the principal route between Melbourne and Adelaide. Road freight for livestock, grain production and manufacturing industries, as well as growing local and tourist traffic, rely on this highway. Everyday, 4,000 private vehicles and 1,500 trucks travel the highway west of Ballarat, with projections that this will double by 2025. Further improvements to the Western Highway are needed.

**EVERYDAY**

4,000 private vehicles and 1,500 trucks travel the highway west of Ballarat, including duplication from Ballarat to Stawell and safety and capacity improvements beyond Stawell to the South Australia border. These safety improvements include skid resistance, roadside barriers and protected turn lanes that have the potential to reduce serious injuries and fatalities on the Western Highway.

The Western Highway runs through the centre of Horsham, forcing traffic that would otherwise avoid Horsham to travel through the town. This causes issues for both through traffic and residents. Through traffic is forced to decrease speed, drive with local traffic and is confronted with eight sets of traffic lights, resulting in an increase in travel time and a decrease in safety. For locals, high car and truck volumes through the town negatively impacts the town’s amenity. While RACV acknowledges that government is currently planning for the Horsham Rail Bypass no funds have been committed for construction. A bypass is needed for Horsham to improve freight movement, road safety and town amenity and maintain the functionality of the road network.

To remove the need for two grade separations as part of the Western Highway Bypass, the Horsham Rail Bypass should be constructed concurrently. At present, the Melbourne to Adelaide rail line bisects Horsham, causing segregation and disadvantage for Horsham North. Community consultation has revealed that the rail line acts as a physical and mental barrier to entering Horsham North resulting in residents feeling socially isolated from the greater community. To reconnect Horsham the rail line should be realigned to the north of Horsham. This will benefit Horsham North residents and will provide significant urban renewal opportunities for the land occupied by the current rail line and yards.
**LATROBE: KEY FACTS**

- **Location:** 120 km east of Melbourne
- **Size:** 1,426 km²
- **Major centres:** Traralgon, Moe, Morwell and Churchill
- **Main industries:** Manufacturing and agriculture, electricity, gas and water supply
- **2012 population:** 73,929
- **2031 projected population:** 90,741
- **Forecast average annual growth rate (2011–2031):** 0.8%

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**AVERAGE TRANSPORT RATING/10 RACV SURVEY RESULTS**

| V/Lines | 6.59 |
| V/Lines coaches | 5.99 |
| Local buses | 5.99 |
| Freeways/highways | 6.02 |
| Local roads | 5.11 |
| On road bike paths | 3.90 |
| Off road bike paths | 4.33 |
| Footpaths | 5.49 |

Latrobe residents average transport ratings where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

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**PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Est Cost ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Princes Highway</td>
<td>Complete duplication of the Princes Highway from Traralgon to Sale. Upgrade the highway to at least a minimum of three star AusRAIL standard to New South Wales.</td>
<td>$425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Moe railway station</td>
<td>Upgrade facilities at Moe railway station, including additional car parks.</td>
<td>$21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Traralgon railway station</td>
<td>Construct a second platform at Traralgon railway station and upgrade facilities, including additional car parks.</td>
<td>$12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Traralgon rail line</td>
<td>Increase frequency and service standards on the Traralgon rail line.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Morwell railway station</td>
<td>Construct additional car parks at Morwell railway station.</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Traralgon bypass</td>
<td>Construct the Traralgon bypass on Princes Highway East.</td>
<td>TBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Gippsland logistics precinct</td>
<td>Implement a fully integrated industrial estate and transport hub in the Latrobe Valley at Morwell.</td>
<td>$10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Dandenong rail line</td>
<td>Implement operational and service level upgrades to the Dandenong rail corridor and plan for the South East Rail Link (SERL).</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**MAP KEY**

- Freeway
- Highway
- Proposed passenger railway station upgrade
- Proposed public transport project
- Proposed road project

---

**LATROBE VALLEY HAS FOUR MAIN POWER STATIONS THAT PRODUCE 90% OF THE STATE’S ELECTRICITY.**

- Power generation is a key industry and supporting infrastructure is vital to the success of the dairy, tourist, local and coach travel between Sydney and Melbourne. This route is vital to the success of the dairy, timber, paper, coal and gas production industries. At present, Princes Highway runs through the centre of Traralgon. Although the Traralgon Bypass has been on the government agenda for many years and land has been reserved, there needs to be funding commitments from the Federal and State Governments for construction to commence. In addition, Princes Highway needs to be duplicated between Traralgon and Sale. Government funding for Princes Highway upgrades has added capacity and enhanced safety. The full route between Traralgon and Sale needs to be duplicated for further improvements to travel times, freight movement and road safety. The current Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal (DIFT) is underutilised. Council has acquired a 64 hectare site adjacent to Princes Highway to establish a Gippsland Logistics Precinct (GLP), to facilitate freight movement to and from Gippsland, primarily through rail. A modal shift of freight from road to rail will become increasingly important, therefore the GLP should continue to be developed to encourage this change.

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**LATROBE CITY COUNCIL: THINKING BROADLY**

- From the Victorian Suburban Road Network Study: 80% of all vehicle kilometres are travelled on local roads and 9% are on major roads.
- From the Victorian Government’s Strategic Transport Study: the existing rail network is not only outdated but also incapable of supporting modern urban rail needs.
- From the Victorian Transport Assessment Committee: there are only 14 major centres that have a railway connection, compared to 33 per cent of the Australian population.
- From the Victorian Regional Rail Plan: the Dandenong rail corridor is the only major rail corridor that does not have a full rail connection between Melbourne and Sydney.
- From the Victorian Department of Transport and Infrastructure: a modal shift of freight from road to rail will become increasingly important, therefore the GLP should continue to be developed to encourage this change.

---

**“Better trains and more of them. Standing from Melbourne to Moe due to lack of seats/carriages is silly and dangerous.”**

Peter aged 55–64

“Duplication of freeway to continue through to Sale, and better road maintenance for flood damaged roads.”

Tamara aged 35–44
Mildura, Rural City Council

MILDURA: KEY FACTS
Location: 500 km north-west of Melbourne
Size: 22,083 km²
Major centres: Mildura, Red Cliffs, Merbein and Ouyen
Main industries: Agriculture and manufacturing
2012 population: 52,204
2031 projected population: 64,288
Forecast average annual growth rate (2011–2031): 1.1%

Mildura Rural City Council’s vision is to make it the most liveable, people friendly community in Australia. The regional centre sits on the crossroad of major transport routes that connect three capital cities and near the meeting point of Australia’s two largest rivers. This strategic location continues to foster development, but can impose a unique set of transport challenges in the region.

The remote location of Mildura is a defining characteristic. Many residents want to – and need to – visit Melbourne for medical appointments, business meetings or social outings. For those who can drive, the 540 kilometre journey is predominantly along the Calder Highway/Freeway. Although this is the most important road connection from Mildura to Melbourne, it is one of the least safe national highways in Victoria. A staggering 49 per cent of the Calder Freeway obtained an unacceptable one or two star AusRAP safety rating. An investment of $157 million into the Calder Freeway to install crash barriers, rumble strips and widen shoulders would eradicate dangerous one and two star sections of the road.

For those who cannot drive, transport options to Melbourne are limited. The passenger rail service was discontinued in 1993 and, while Mildura is serviced by Victoria’s third largest airport, with services difficult and confusing. There are high levels of community support for passenger train services to Mildura. The first step to restoring a passenger service is to improve the Mildura line for freight trains. Freight transport is particularly important for Mildura because it produces the majority of Victoria’s wine, dried fruits, citrus and stone fruits, olives and nuts. It has some of the largest processing and packaging plants in the world.

AVERAGE TRANSPORT RATING/10
RACY SURVEY RESULTS

V/Line trains: n/a
V/Line coaches: 4.50
Local buses: 5.70
Freeways/highways: 4.60
Local roads: 5.40
On road bike paths: 4.70
Off road bike paths: 4.30
Footpaths: 5.40

Mildura residents average transport ratings where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

The only other public transport access to Melbourne is by coach, which can take between seven and a half to nine hours. RACV consultation with Mildura’s residents revealed that people with a disability, children and the elderly find travelling on a coach undesirable and transferring between services difficult and confusing.

The first step to restoring a passenger service is to improve the Mildura line for freight trains. Freight transport is particularly important for Mildura because it produces the majority of Victoria’s wine, dried fruits, citrus and stone fruits, olives and nuts. It has some of the largest processing and packaging plants in the world.

RACY’s regional transport survey found that Mildura’s highways were ranked 4.6 out of ten, well below the state average of 6.2. Freight can negatively impact on freeways and highways through additional road surface wear and tear. Track standardisation, together with construction of the Transcontinental Rail Link and relocation of the Mildura intermodal hub to Mildura South, could result in a shift of freight from road to rail. It is critical that the State Government delivers its commitment from the 2014/15 budget for complete standardisation of the Mildura rail line.

For freight that must be transported on road, an appropriate truck bypass is needed. For now, Mildura’s truck route is along Benetook Avenue and work is needed to divert trucks from Deakin Avenue. Council’s vision is for Deakin Avenue to be “Mildura’s main boulevard, providing residents and visitors a grand avenue to be proud of”. Council’s vision is also for Deakin Avenue to be “Mildura’s main boulevard, providing residents and visitors a grand avenue to be proud of”.

In the long term, a Sturt Highway bypass of Mildura should be planned for, to reduce the impact of trucks on Mildura’s community and to ensure only those needing access to local businesses enter the town.

Region transport needs surveys have not been costed.

MAP KEY
Highway
Proposed public transport project
Proposed road project

PROJECTS

Transport Project | Description | Estimated Cost ($m)
--- | --- | ---
A | Transcontinental Rail Link | Plan and construct the Transcontinental Rail Link between Mildura and Menindee connecting to the Sydney-Perth rail line. | $320
B | Eleventh Street (East-West sub arterial/collector) | Improve Eleventh Street pedestrian facilities and traffic management. | $11
C | Start Highway | Improve the condition of the Start Highway, including upgrading to at least a three star standard as determined by AusRAI. | $10
D | Start Highway Truck Bypass | Construct a truck bypass of Mildura on the Start Highway. | $72
E | Mildura Airport bus | Implement a new bus connection to Mildura Airport. | –
F | Mildura intermodal freight hub | Relocate the Merbein intermodal freight hub south of Mildura. | $20
G | Calder Highway | Duplicate the Calder Highway between Mildura and Red Cliffs. Upgrade the Calder Highway to at least a three star standard, as determined by the AusRAI program. | $232
H | Mildura rail line | Complete standardisation of the Mildura rail line. Investigate the return of passenger rail services to Mildura. | $220

STATE AVERAGE 6.2. RACY’S REGIONAL TRANSPORT SURVEY RESULTS SHOWED THAT MILDURA’S FREeways/VHighways RAnkED 4.6 FAR BELOW THE STATE AVERAGE OF 6.2.

Northern Loddon Mallee Regional Strategic Plan, Mildura Rural City Council, 2010
Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
City Council Plan, Mildura Rural City Council, 2013
Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAI), RACV, 2013
Mildura Planning Scheme, Municipal Strategic Statement – Clause 21.03, 2013

“...my husband and I have missed a number of family occasions (funerals, weddings, etc.) due to lack of affordable transport to Melbourne. If you have to get to the city in a hurry it is too expensive to fly and takes hours by car on substandard roads.”

Deanne aged 50–66

Footpaths: 5.40
Local buses: 5.70
Freeways/highways: 5.70
Local roads: 5.40
On road bike paths: 4.70
Off road bike paths: 4.30
Average transport rating/10 results showed that Mildura’s freeways/highways ranked 4.6 far below the state average of 6.2.
Greater Shepparton
City Council

“For a regional city that relies on train services just as much as Albury, Bendigo and Ballarat, to have three return services a day is just pathetic.”

Toni aged 35–44

“A bypass around Shepparton needs to be completed now, not in 10 or 20 years.”

Bian aged 55–64

Greater Shepparton is situated in the centre of the Goulburn Valley, which is considered the ‘Food Bowl of Victoria’ generating approximately 20 per cent of Victoria’s agricultural production. With an international reputation for quality fruit and dairy products, freight transport is focused on transporting these goods to processing facilities and distribution centres. As a result Greater Shepparton is often referred to as the transport hub of regional Australia, with the largest truck sales and service centre in Victoria.

The Goulburn Valley Highway runs through the centre of Shepparton and is a part of the road link between Melbourne and Brisbane. Construction of the Shepparton Bypass is needed to provide a smoother and more efficient movement of goods between Australia’s eastern capital cities. High quality road links will maximise the value of freight by speeding delivery to markets and reducing damage to fresh produce in transit. The bypass would be beneficial for residents and surrounding communities as it would decrease traffic in the CBD and enable through traffic to safely bypass the town.

Shepparton needs adequate road connections to neighbouring towns such as Benalla and Bendigo via the Midland Highway. Recent duplication of the Highway between Florence Street and Doyles Road has eased congestion. However, to cope with the 27,000 vehicles using the highway each day (of which 10 percent are heavy vehicles) and to accommodate future growth, the Midland Highway needs to be duplicated to Shepparton East, including upgrade of the intersection with the Shepparton Alternative route.

Residents need choice in how they travel and they need to be able to easily access public transport services. The redevelopment of the Vaughan Street precinct will enhance the CBD and improve pedestrian access to the Shepparton railway station, the suburban bus network and taxi services. Stage One was completed in December 2013. The full benefits of this project can only be achieved through construction of the final two stages, including redevelopment of Maude Street and relocation of the bus interchange.

RACV community consultation revealed the three Shepparton train services per day are not enough. Residents who want to catch public transport are forced to drive to Melbourne or drive an hour to Seymour railway station, which has resulted in parking issues at Seymour. Shepparton needs a more frequent train service that is on par with similar regional centres like Traralgon. These two areas are a similar population and distance to the Melbourne CBD, however Shepparton receives only one fifth the number of Traralgon services. A more frequent train service would improve access to education facilities in Shepparton, support tourism in the region and provide residents with better transport options.

GOULBURN VALLEY, WHICH IS CONSIDERED THE FOOD BOWL OF VICTORIA GENERATES:

20% OF VICTORIA’S AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION.

Shepparton railway station, the suburban bus network and taxi services. Stage One was completed in December 2013. The full benefits of this project can only be achieved through construction of the final two stages, including redevelopment of Maude Street and relocation of the bus interchange.

 Greater Shepparton residents average transport ratings where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

V/Line trains: 2.98
V/Line coaches: 4.25
Local buses: 5.39
Freeways/highways: 6.52
Local roads: 5.29
On road bike paths: 5.09
Off road bike paths: 5.86
Footpaths: 5.61

AVERAGE TRANSPORT RATING/10
RACY SURVEY RESULTS 1

Transport Project Description Est Cost ($m)
A Goulburn Valley Highway Safety upgrades to the Goulburn Valley Highway from Shepparton to New South Wales, to a minimum of three star AusRAP standard. $25
B Shepparton Bypass Construct the Shepparton Bypass to a minimum of four star AusRAP standard. This includes construction of the North Shepparton Arterial East-West Link, which is a new arterial road between the Shepparton Bypass and the Shepparton Alternative Route. $250
C Shepparton bus interchange Construct a new bus interchange on Maude Street, including improved pedestrian access and parking facilities. $5
D Midland Highway Duplicate the Midland Highway to Shepparton East. $8
E GV Link Construct a freight and logistics centre in Shepparton, including an intermodal terminal for rail freight. $17 (Stage 1)
F Shepparton rail line Improve frequency of passenger rail services between Shepparton and Melbourne. –

1 Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
3 Traffic Volume Data for Victoria – Midland Highway Between Albert Street and High Street, VicRoads, 2012

Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013


Traffic Volume Data for Victoria – Midland Highway Between Albert Street and High Street, VicRoads, 2012

– Service improvements and planning studies have not been costed.
Wangaratta is located in Victoria’s central north east, in the Hume region. There are over 27,000 residents living in the municipality, of which 17,000 live in urban Wangaratta.2 Future residential growth will predominantly occur in urban Wangaratta, rather than rural towns. It is important that the Central Activities Area (CAA) continues to grow as a key centre providing a mixture of commercial, residential, tourism, educational, civic and recreational land uses. Future residential development should occur around the town centre to provide close access to these key services. For those that choose to live in a rural area or township, there needs to be adequate connections to the Wangaratta CAA.

Car parking is the number one issue that choose to live in a rural area or township, there needs to be adequate connections to the Wangaratta CAA. It is critical that the road network caters for the movement of traffic through town and RACV supports the removal of on street car parking where competing demands for road space exists. Any additional car parks must be provided off-street and in satellite car parks adjacent to the CAA. Promotion of alternative transport modes for travel to and within the town centre would reduce the need to provide additional car spaces. Community consultation has revealed cycling is the preferred mode of travel for residents, however cycle connections and facilities must be improved.4

Pedestrian facilities in the CAA should be improved through simple measures such as pedestrian refuges in the centre of wide streets. For public transport to be appealing, it should be better integrated into the town centre.

While improved access to public transport is important, the quality of the service is another key factor contributing to people’s transport choice. At present, the Wangaratta train service is unreliable and this has resulted in community reluctance to use the train. Compared to the ten municipalities with the largest regional centres, Wangaratta residents ranked their train services the lowest, with a score of 2.53 out of ten.5 In January 2014, only 75 per cent of services on the Albury line were delivered on time.6 The track needs to be appropriately upgraded so that services are reliable and punctual and provide a desirable transport option for residents.

Improved public transport connections to growing satellite towns around Wangaratta are very important. The rural township of Milawa for example, is expecting strong growth driven by its popularity as Australia’s first gourmet region, an increase in local events and commercial activity and closure of a number of nearby rural primary schools. Residents from Milawa commute to Wangaratta for shopping, work and to access the various other services in town. A more regular and timely bus service would ensure that people who do not or cannot drive can still access the services needed in Wangaratta.

**PROJECTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Est Cost ($m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Wangaratta rail line</td>
<td>Improve reliability and upgrade the service standard of the Wangaratta rail line.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Hume Freeway</td>
<td>Improve the Hume Freeway, including upgrading to at least a three star AusRAP standard.</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Bus connection to Milawa</td>
<td>Implement a regular bus service that connects Milawa and Markwood residents with Wangaratta.</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
2 Annual Report, Rural City of Wangaratta, 2012
3 Wangaratta Central Activities Area Future Planning, DAMEC, 2013
4 Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
5 Track Record, Public Transport Victoria (PTV), 2016

Wangaratta residents average transport ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Transport Rating/10</th>
<th>Wangaratta Central Activities Area Future Planning, SMEC, 2013</th>
<th>Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V/Line trains:</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V/Line coaches:</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local buses:</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>5.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeways/highways:</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local roads:</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On road bike paths:</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off road bike paths:</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>6.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footpaths:</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wangaratta residents average transport ratings

Where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

**WANGARATTA: KEY FACTS**

- Location: 250 km north-east of Melbourne
- Size: 3,645 km²
- Major centres: Wangaratta and Glenrowan
- Main industries: Manufacturing and agriculture
- 2012 population: 27,236
- 2031 projected population: 31,556
- Forecast average annual growth rate (2011-2031): 0.4%
“More train services are required daily. It is just not good enough that people who live in the country areas of Victoria are so disadvantaged.”

Helen aged 55–64

“Princes Highway needs to be properly maintained and vastly improved due to increased road traffic volumes.”

Bevan aged 65–74

Warrnambool is Victoria’s largest coastal city outside of Port Phillip Bay and is an important regional centre for the Great Southern Coast. Many people who live in Colac and Port Fairy commute to Warrnambool for employment or to access the health, education and professional services. Warrnambool is also a significant tourist destination as it is the largest town on the Great Ocean Road.

Currently, car use dominates access to the city centre. To encourage alternative travel to and within the city centre, there needs to be a higher priority for cyclists and pedestrians, and better access by bus services. Princes Highway West (Raglan Parade) forms the northern border of Warrnambool’s city centre. Reducing delays along Princes Highway West will benefit the growing local, regional and interstate transport movements. The duplication of Princes Highway West between Geelong to Winchelsea is due for completion in 2014. State and Federal Governments have committed $362 million in future years to continue the highway duplication beyond Winchelsea to Colac. This investment in Princes Highway West is welcome; however more needs to be done.

RACV community consultation revealed that for people that travel to and from Warrnambool, the limited overtaking opportunities on Princes Highway West near Warrnambool is a safety concern. Duplication of Princes Highway West, from Warrnambool towards Colac and between Port Fairy and Warrnambool is needed to improve road safety, benefit freight and support Warrnambool’s connection to neighbouring towns.

Although Warrnambool traffic volumes are increasing, train patronage is also experiencing growth at 2% per year. Warrnambool residents need more than three return train services per day to give people more choice in when and how they travel. Currently, train frequency is constrained by the lack of passing opportunities. A passing loop between Colac and Terang needs to be constructed. Following construction of the passing loop, train frequency should be increased, including implementation of shuttle services that directly connect Warrnambool with Geelong. Having a faster, more direct connection will encourage residents to catch the train to Melbourne and tourists to catch the train to Warrnambool.

Warrnambool railway station is a heritage building that has potential to be a key transport interchange, however improvements need to be implemented. Facilities at the railway station are poor and the current link between the railway station and the city’s retail core is confusing. Railway station upgrades that are needed include improved lighting, seating, shelter and car parking. Better physical integration of the railway station, buses and the city centre is also needed. These upgrades are particularly important as Warrnambool railway station is considered the ‘front door’ to the city centre.
**Wodonga**

**WODONGA KEY FACTS**

**Location:** 300 km north-east of Melbourne  
**Size:** 433 km²  
**Major centres:** Wodonga and Baranduda  
**Main industries:** Manufacturing and retail

**Forecast average annual growth rate (2011-2031):** 1.3%

**2014 REGIONAL VICTORIA GROWING PAINS**

City of Wodonga

"I had an appointment in Melbourne at noon, I caught the 6.45 am train from Wodonga, due in Melbourne at 10.35am – I did not arrive until 11.58am."  
Ruth aged 65-74

"My aged and unwell parents wanted to catch the train to Melbourne to see a medical specialist; however the trains are extremely unreliable (late and insufficient seating)... so they had to rely on other family members to travel to Melbourne to see a medical specialist; however the Wodonga rail line and station will be transformed into a residential, retail and commercial precinct known as Junction Place.

The key transport issue for Wodonga is the poor performance of the rail line. Since 2007, significant work has been completed: the broad gauge track was converted to standard gauge, timber sleepers were replaced with concrete sleepers, the train signalling system was upgraded, passing lanes constructed and platforms built. Despite the significant investment the Albury/Wodonga line remains the most unreliable in the state. Recent treatment will correct most ballast and drainage problems but additional works are required. This will reduce track maintenance and enable temporary service restrictions to be eased; therefore enhancing quality, reliability and punctuality.

At present, there is no bus service that connects with Wodonga railway station. For those that do not have a car or are unable to walk or cycle because of distance, a bus service that connects to the railway station would ensure equitable transport. Access to the railway station via bus could encourage a mode shift from those that currently require a mode shift from those that currently drive and reduce demand for car parking at the station.

To accommodate population growth over the next 40 years, the Leneva-Baranduda growth area will supply enough residential land for 14,000 homes, 35,000 people and 6,000 jobs. The Baranduda town centre will become a secondary centre to the Wodonga CBD. Adopting a planning approach that includes major employment and activity centres closer to where people live is fundamental. When people do need to travel to Wodonga, sufficient transport links are required. Baranduda Boulevard is the main arterial route between Wodonga, Leneva Village and Baranduda. With the associated traffic, this road link should be duplicated before significant development of the growth area to avoid congestion. The design of this new development needs to consider all modes of transport.

The Wodonga Trails Network should be extended into the growth area and roads should be designed to accommodate buses and have separated paths for bicycles and pedestrians.

Another key project for Wodonga is the 610 hectare Logic site. Funding is needed to develop this site as an intermodal distribution hub for southeast Australia. Logic’s strategic location at the intersection of the Hume Freeway and Murray Valley Highway helped secure Woolworths as the largest tenant, with a $90 million distribution centre and over 400 employees. Several other companies have expressed interest in Logic, however a common prerequisite is a rail terminal.* Construction of an intermodal rail container terminal that adjoins the North East railway line connecting Melbourne to Sydney would provide direct access to the Port of Melbourne, Port Botany and the National Rail Network from Wodonga creating competitive advantage for businesses and encouraging job growth.

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**Average Transport Rating/10 RACV Survey Results**

V/Line trains: 2.54  
V/Line coaches: 5.03  
Local buses: 6.08  
Freeways/highways: 8.08  
Local roads: 6.41  
On road bike paths: 5.65  
Off road bike paths: 7.16  
Footpaths: 6.10

Wodonga resident average transport ratings, where 1 is very poor, 5 is average and 10 is excellent.

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**Transport Project** | **Description** | **Est Cost ($m)**
--- | --- | ---
A Logic Wodonga | Construct a rail freight link to Logic Wodonga. | $15
B Murray Valley Highway | Duplicate Murray Valley Highway from Logic Boulevard to the Hume Freeway interchange, to support the development of the Logic logistics centre. | $6
C Wodonga rail line | Improve reliability and upgrade the service standard of the Wodonga rail line. | $-
D Hume Freeway | Upgrade the safety of Hume Freeway to a minimum of three star AusRAF standard to New South Wales. | $100
E Melrose Drive | Investigate appropriate access and funding for the proposed freight terminal. | $10
F Kiewa Valley Highway | Duplicate Kiewa Valley Highway from Murray Valley Highway to Baranduda, to support planned urban development. | $6

* Projects not shown on map

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**Projects not shown on map**

- Regional Transport Needs Survey, RACV, 2013
- Discussion Draft Leneva-Baranduda Growth Area Framework Plan, City of Wodonga, 2012
- AUSLINK Strategic Regional Infrastructure Funding Application for Logic Wodonga Container Terminal, City of Wodonga, 2008

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**THE LENEVA–BARANDUDA GROWTH AREA WILL SUPPLY ENOUGH RESIDENTIAL LAND FOR 14,000 HOMES, 35,000 PEOPLE AND 6,000 JOBS.**

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**MAP KEY**

- Highway  
- Proposed public transport project  
- Proposed road project
2014
Regional Victoria
Growing Pains