

Footpath Connect

Outer Melbourne footpaths



Almost one million more people will move into Melbourne's outer suburbs over the next 30 years putting increasing pressure on a transport network that is already struggling to keep up.

In 2012, RACV Growing Pains identified a \$7.4 billion backlog of road and public transport projects in outer metropolitan Melbourne. While strong investment has been made, public transport in these suburbs still doesn't go far enough, run often enough or during the times people need it. Having good public transport is critical in outer Melbourne. But none of the economic, environmental and health benefits of using public transport can be realised if it is not easy to get to.

Background

In 2009 RACV undertook an assessment of footpaths connecting to bus stops in Melbourne's outer growth areas. Bus services are an important means of connecting residents to local services, activity centres and other public transport services. However our 2009 research identified 183 high-use bus stops across 14 outer metropolitan municipalities which don't connect to existing footpaths. In this update, RACV looks at the current situation and what more is needed to complete these critical missing links to our bus transport network.

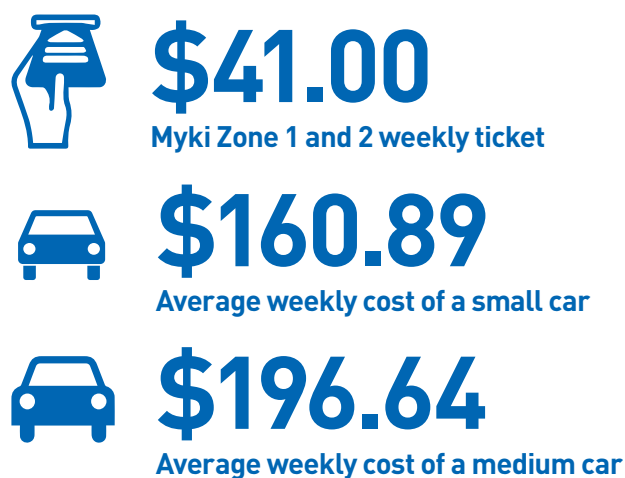


Figure 1.

Why footpaths?

Car dependency in outer Melbourne is high. The financial burden attached with owning and operating a private vehicle bears heavily on household budgets and heightens the need for better options (Figure 1). For example the average weekly running cost of a small car is \$160.89 while for a medium sized car this increases to \$196.64. Meanwhile the cost of a zone 1 and 2 weekly Myki ticket is \$41. Furthermore, not everyone can or wants to drive and not everyone has access to a private vehicle. Therefore it is essential that alternatives are available to provide equitable opportunities to access employment and community services. The ability to access these alternatives is equally important.

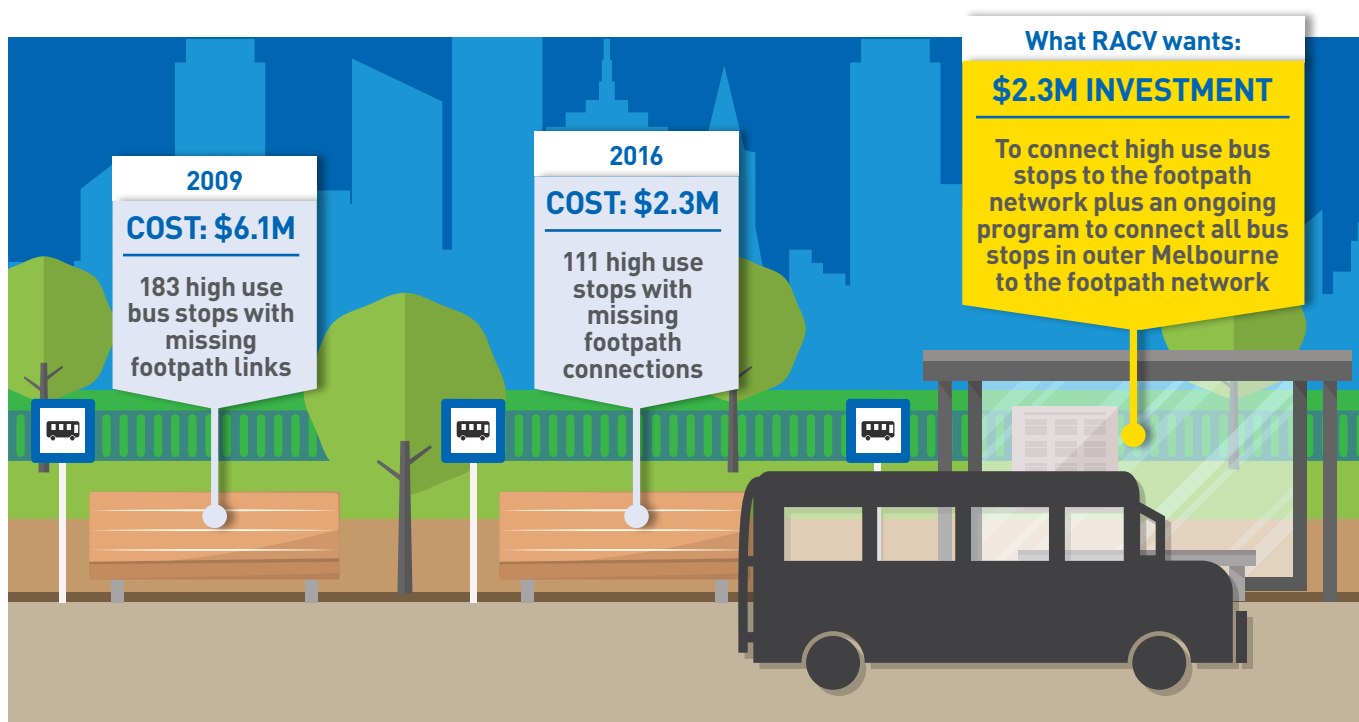
Footpaths are often overlooked in meeting our transport needs. A good footpath provides an even surface for walking and for those using strollers or wheelchairs. Footpaths keep us safe, off the road and in wet weather, out of the mud. For some a footpath can mean the difference between getting out and about or having to rely heavily on others for community access. A lack of footpaths, uneven walking surfaces and poorly maintained footpaths are all contributing factors to people walking less.⁴ This in turn can mean they head for the car keys instead of the bus which has implications for traffic and congestion. By connecting people to their bus stops there is an opportunity to ease congestion on the roads while providing a real benefit in overall health and safety.

¹A high-use bus stop is a stop used by 10 or more passengers each day. They are typically near schools, shops and workplaces

²<http://www.racv.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/racv/Internet/Primary/my+car/Operating+Costs/reimbursement-rates>

³<http://ptv.vic.gov.au/tickets/metropolitan-myki-fares-2016/>

⁴http://cotavic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/COTA2015_FreedomtoWalk_v4.pdf



Results

In 2009, RACV estimated that 183 high-use bus stops across the 14 outer metropolitan municipalities listed in Table 1 had missing footpath connections, and an investment of \$6.1m was required to complete those missing links.

In 2016, this figure has decreased to 111 bus stops (or 4.4% of high use bus stops), which shows that a number have been fixed, but an investment of \$2.3m is still required to complete the missing links.

RACV has also included low use⁵ bus stops in this update of Footpath Connect as the absence of a safe path of travel can prevent a bus stop from being used. Improving footpaths to these stops will improve access for many residents in surrounding areas.

Collectively, a total investment of \$17.7m is required to build 118km of missing footpath links across these outer metropolitan municipalities, which would reconnect 1485 bus stops.

What RACV wants

RACV calls on the State Government to work with Local Government to develop and fund an ongoing program to link all bus stops in outer Melbourne to the footpath network.

We advocate for an immediate State Government injection of \$2.3 million to fund the construction of missing footpath connections to high use bus stops.

While footpaths are generally the responsibility of Local Government, they form a critical component of a seamless public transport system and deserve more attention from the State Government.

Ultimately, all homes in outer metropolitan Melbourne should be within walking distance to a bus stop and these stops should include Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)-compliant and footpath connections as well as adequate lighting. The State Government, Public Transport Victoria and local government all have important roles to play in ensuring the upgrade of bus stops and the surrounding footpath network achieve these objectives. Councils should also ensure that during the planning phase, they require developers to build appropriate footpath connections to all pre-identified bus stops in new housing estates so that we do not continue to perpetuate this problem.

Buses play a vital role in keeping our outer suburban communities connected. They provide a social safety net in many areas where they are, and are likely to remain, the only public form of public transport available. RACV calls for more rapid deployment of new and expanded bus services to Melbourne's outer suburbs. But the question remains, what is the point of great public transport if you can't get to it?

RACV will share this research, including details of the missing links identified with State and local Government as well as Public Transport Victoria. This work forms part of our update of Outer Metropolitan Growing Pains which will map the road, public transport, cycling and footpath upgrades needed to support our growing outer suburbs. This update is due for release in late 2017.

⁵A low use bus stop is a stop used by fewer than 10 people each day.

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/dedjtr#1/vizhome/VISTA2012-13-Journeytowork/JTW-methodoftravel>

Table 1: High use bus stops with no footpath (2016 & 2009)

Municipality	High use stops with no footpath		Length (km)		Cost to provide footpath** ('000)	
	2009	2016	2009	2016	2009	2016
Cardinia	30	1	6.1	0.8	\$1,000	\$13
Casey	5*	5	1.2	0.5	\$200	\$71
Frankston	18*	3	3.7	1.5	\$500	\$225
Greater Dandenong	8	22	1.7	5.9	\$300	\$885
Hume	8	21	3.3	2.4	\$500	\$364
Knox	4	6	0.7	0.7	\$100	\$106
Manningham	6	3	1.1	0.3	\$200	\$45
Maroondah	11	2	3.1	0.1	\$500	\$16
Melton	9*	3	1.7	0.3	\$200	\$50
Mornington Peninsula	20	7	3.3	0.9	\$500	\$136
Nillumbik	14*	3	3.0	0.1	\$400	\$15
Whittlesea	15	4	4.1	0.3	\$600	\$42
Wyndham	5*	12	1.2	1.1	\$200	\$171
Yarra Ranges	30	19	5.7	1.2	\$900	\$179
TOTAL	183	111	39.9	16.2	\$6,100	\$ 2,318

*Denotes estimated figures **Footpath construction is based on a conservative estimate of \$150 per metre.

Table 2. Low use bus stops with no footpath (2016)

Municipality	Low use Stops with no footpath	Length (km)	Cost to provide footpath** ('000)
Cardinia	95	5.5	\$824
Casey	94	10.6	\$1,590
Frankston	83	7.8	\$1,166
Greater Dandenong	60	7.2	\$1,078
Hume	83	9.5	\$1,425
Knox	35	6.1	\$912
Manningham	65	10.2	\$1,526
Maroondah	20	2	\$299
Melton	30	2.4	\$352
Mornington Peninsula	303	16.2	\$2,427
Nillumbik	76	2.7	\$407
Whittlesea	46	1.1	\$165
Wyndham	59	3.6	\$545
Yarra Ranges	325	17.8	\$2,666
TOTAL	1374	102.7	\$15,382

Some footpaths required to connect low use stops to the existing footpath network overlap with previously drawn missing paths that connect to high use stops. In this table, these overlap lengths have been removed.

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2016

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