



## **RACV SUBMISSION FOR THE 2017 VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT BUDGET**

Efficient, safe and affordable transport continues to be a key concern for our members and an ongoing challenge for our State as it continues to grow. RACV has long called for the development of a longer term land-use and transport strategy for our State and we have welcomed Infrastructure Victoria's 30 year strategy which encompasses the key transport priorities on RACV's agenda.

We acknowledge the Government's commitment and progress to date with several of our priorities including, the removal of level crossings, the Metropolitan Rail Tunnel project, the Western Distributor and addressing two of RACV's top 3 Redspots. In particular, we acknowledge the recent commitment to deliver the missing link in the Metropolitan Ring Road - North East Link.

The most critical initiatives RACV is seeking in the 2017/18 budget and forward estimates are:

- Substantial increases in funding to repair and maintain Victoria's highway network, which has deteriorated alarmingly in recent years and is now causing increased safety risks;
- A commitment to complete the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough with the forward estimates reflecting the funding arrangements;
- Addressing Point Cook Road between Princes Freeway and Dunnings Road in Seabrook, which is the third of our Top 3 Redspots;
- Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) service improvements and bus lane priority improvements linking to the central city; and
- The upgrade of Hoddle St/Punt Rd from the Eastern Freeway to the Yarra River.

RACV's total list of road and public transport priorities are highlighted in the attachment below. Further details of these proposals and our market research may be found in RACV Directions 2015, which can be accessed on our website.

## ATTACHMENT

RACV has undertaken market research with our membership and identified a number of major transport projects and initiatives which we believe should be considered as the State's highest priority needs, with funding allocated to them in the 2017/18 State Budget. Details of this market research may be found on our website.

### Road Maintenance

RACV commissioned an independent review of the funding and condition of Victoria's regional highway network that has found that the network is seriously underfunded and its condition is declining. RACV is seeking a road restoration program of \$1.2B to strength and resurface the State's most distressed roads within four years. A program of this scale should achieve efficiencies that will also enable safer infrastructure to be included.

In addition, ongoing funding beyond the four year period should at least resurface 8-10% of the network each year.

RACV has highlighted its concern about insufficient road funding in our budget submissions for several years, including warning that failing to maintain roads would see the State highway network become so degraded that more expensive reconstruction works will be required. RACV believes that this point has now passed. We have attached our independent consultant's report as Appendix 1.

### North East Link

The North East Link has long been RACV's top priority and the need for it is now supported by Infrastructure Victoria, the Victorian Transport Association, AusVEG, the Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the community action group Resolve Rosanna Road.

RACV acknowledges the recent commitment to the North East Link and we seek more details on the funding arrangements to deliver the link. RACV considers the North East link a project of national importance and we urge the Government to push hard for Federal funding of the link.

### Redspots

The 2016 RACV Redspot Survey attracted a record number of submissions from our members and identified the top ten locations that most frustrated motorists. RACV is pleased that the State Government has commenced the process of removing past top 10 Redspots, including Chandler Highway in Alphington/Kew, and grade separated level crossings in Reservoir and along the Dandenong Line for example.

We note that six of the Top 10 redspots from the 2016 survey would be addressed by the completion of the **North East Link**.



The outstanding issues from our 2015/16 and 2016/17 budget submissions are related to better access to and from Point Cook. The Western suburbs road upgrade plan released in November 2016 will see Dunnings and Palmers Road duplicated, but there has been no commitment to simplified freeway access improvements at Aircraft and improvements along Point Cook Road. We believe that VicRoads has been investigating options for improving the interchange.

Details of the remaining Top 10 Redspots from the 2016 Redspot Survey are available at [www.redspotsurvey.com.au](http://www.redspotsurvey.com.au).

### Major infrastructure projects

RACV acknowledges the substantial infrastructure projects already underway. We seek a strong commitment from the State Government, over the next budget period, for several significant Victorian projects which have been included in the 30 year plan by Infrastructure Victoria and are of state and national significance as they provide key connections in the Victorian transport network (see figures 1 and 2 for maps of our metropolitan and regional priorities).

- **Metro Rail Tunnel**

Our long term support for this project is reiterated as it will enable increased metropolitan train services across Melbourne to satisfy the ever increasing demand. It will also release rail capacity for freight services through central Melbourne and contribute to improved freight services. In particular we seek clarification of the funding arrangements to deliver the project.

- **Melbourne Airport Rail Link**

A dedicated direct fast rail line between Melbourne Airport and the city is vital to improve access to and from the airport for commuters and airport employees. A commitment to planning and future construction of this critical link is needed to enable its delivery to commence within 15 years. RACV urges the Government to ensure that all options are explored, including advanced technology proposals to deliver a direct fast rail service.

The use of technology and minor works on arterial roads to provide improved bus priority to Melbourne Airport should be implemented as a high priority, in conjunction with the existing CityLink-Tullamarine Freeway Widening between Footscray Road and Melbourne Airport.

- **Upgrade of Hoddle St/ Punt Rd from the Eastern Freeway to the Yarra River** - This corridor is the only major north-south arterial through the inner suburbs, immediately east of the CBD. It carries significant volumes of traffic including trucks and the DART bus services that connect Melbourne's north east with the city. The route suffers from extended delays and is in need of a significant upgrade. Permanent 24/7 clearways and northbound bus lanes must be completed in the short-term in addition to the State Government's proposed intersection upgrades. Options such as grade separations or tunnels should be considered as part of the medium to long term solution.

- **Duplication of regional interstate highways**

The duplication of Victoria's major highways should continue – including the Princes Highway East to Sale, the Princes Highway West to Colac and the Western Highway to Stawell. The duplication projects should be designed to result in at least AusRAP four-star roads which have been proven to have better safety records through reduced frequency and severity of crashes. The State Budget should continue funding construction of these duplication projects in 2017/18, and also the planning for further stages of safety and capacity improvements through to the State borders on each of the four highways, including implementing centre of road barriers with overtaking lanes (known as 2+1 treatments).

- **Construction of the Shepparton Bypass** - The Shepparton Bypass is important for safer travel on the Goulburn Valley Highway, and will reduce delays for the movement of freight to and from New South Wales and Queensland. It will also provide significant relief from through traffic and congestion for the residents of Shepparton. A commitment to commence the Shepparton Bypass is needed.

- **East-West Link – Stages 1 and 2**

RACV supports the complete East West Link, from the Eastern Freeway to CityLink and the Western Ring Road and other road and public transport projects as part of an integrated and balanced transport plan to improve safety, reduce congestion and improve the communities liveability. Even though the State Government has no plans to continue with this project, the corridor and government owned land within it should be protected as recommended by Infrastructure Victoria. RACV acknowledges the Government commitment to the Western Distributor as it delivers an alternate to the WestGate Bridge.

### **Outer suburban transport package**

RACV has identified a backlog of over 150 projects, worth over \$7 billion that are needed in Melbourne's outer suburban Councils, Geelong and the Surf Coast Shire. These same areas remain the focus for Melbourne's urban growth; even though they are the poorly supported and serviced areas of the city. RACV documented the extent of the backlog in Growing Pains in Outer Melbourne and Geelong (2012, see [www.racvgrowingpains.com.au](http://www.racvgrowingpains.com.au)). In November 2016, the government announced a roads package for western Melbourne. Similar commitments are needed for Melbourne's northern and south-eastern suburbs, along with funding for the public transport improvements which are documented in Growing Pains and as we have detailed below.

### **Regional Victorian transport package**

A \$4.6 billion package of road and public transport infrastructure improvements is needed over the next decade to support growth in regional Victoria and its ten largest cities, as identified in RACV Regional Victoria Growing Pains (2014, see figure 2 and [www.racvgrowingpains.com.au](http://www.racvgrowingpains.com.au)). RACV acknowledges the Government's commitment towards a \$1 billion package over a period of four years, which will go some way towards addressing this backlog. However, it doesn't go far enough.

We seek the release of AusRAP star ratings for the Victorian highway network in partnership with RACV, using the star rating assessments that VicRoads has completed. This will show Victorians both the safety benefits that have been achieved from the recent mass-action treatments delivered by the TAC and VicRoads, and where further road safety investments can be expected.

### **Bicycle Infrastructure**

RACV supports the State Government investment in separated infrastructure that will improve safety and encourage more people to ride. RACV is undertaking a study to determine the critical missing links in the bicycle network and we will report more on this work later. In particular, for the budget, RACV seeks a State Government commitment to two critical projects to address significant safety issues on popular riding corridors.

1. St Kilda Road, between Linlithgow Avenue and St Kilda junction. A higher standard separated bicycle facility should be provided, whilst retaining three traffic lanes. RACV supports removing on-street parking, closing median breaks, more turn restrictions and DDA compliant tram stops.
2. Sydney Road. RACV supports a separated bicycle lane, on-street parking being removed, with wider footpaths, vehicles and trams sharing a lane in each direction, and DDA compliant tram stops. Intelligent Transport Technology will be required to enable more sophisticated traffic management that reduces delays for trams and vehicles along Sydney Road.

### **Managing congestion**

RACV has long supported 24/7 Clearways on selected major traffic routes, to improve traffic flow, and reduce delays for trams, and also to enable separated bicycle infrastructure to be provided. Removing parking will also reduce dooring related crashes for bicycle and motorcycle riders.

RACV's submission to the review of the Local Government Act called for the responsibility for parking on arterial roads to be removed from local government and managed by VicRoads. This would provide a more consistent approach to how arterial roads should function and also additional revenue to VicRoads, and enable it to better manage its assets so they are optimised for the movement of people and goods. The present situation in which local government controls parking on State roads cannot be allowed to continue because it stifles the ability of VicRoads to properly manage the road network.

### **Better access to train stations**

RACV's 2015 'On Track' rail satisfaction survey ([racv.com.au/ontracksurvey](http://racv.com.au/ontracksurvey)) identified a lack of car parking as the most common concern held by commuters when it came to accessing their local train station. It is important to recognise that there are a range of reasons why people will use a combination of public and private transport to meet their needs. While investment in additional car parking capacity at key locations is welcome, it is equally important to recognise that commuters need better options to access their train station. This can be delivered through investment in better connecting bus services and connected walking and cycling paths. Secure parking facilities for bicycles should be rolled out across the rail network.

### **Improvements to the Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) bus service**

An enhanced busway to the Doncaster area is supported, with improved priority bus lanes on both sides of Victoria Parade and Hoddle Street, linking to the bus priority lanes in Lonsdale Street. The existing bus lanes in Victoria Parade are substandard and potentially hazardous. The bus lanes weave around parking areas, which forces traffic and the buses to make several changes in direction on what is a straight road. The buses in particular often have to use two lanes to make these manoeuvres which cause confusion and safety issues.

### **Improved bus network**

Investment is needed in the necessary operational, service and infrastructure improvements to enable our bus networks to better service the transport needs of Victorians, particularly in cross town movements. An expansion of the Smart Bus network is needed across Melbourne, together with more direct and frequent bus services in middle and outer metropolitan growth areas to support rapidly growing communities, as well as in Victoria's regional cities.

### **Support for Community transport services**

Community transport services across Victoria play a critical role in supporting people who cannot drive themselves and whose mobility needs are not being met, or cannot be met by traditional public transport services alone. RACV research and engagement through our 'Mobility Beyond Driving' program has identified the need for better coordination, collaboration and support for these services and we consider that the State Government should play a stronger role in this space. For example, there is significant potential to improve the efficiency and scale of services if better online systems were available to manage bookings, volunteers and allocation of resources. There are also many private and municipal buses which are underutilised and options for leveraging these assets to deliver expanded services should be considered.

### **Connect bus stops in outer Melbourne to the footpath network**

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. Recent RACV research has identified 118km of missing footpath links to bus stops in outer Melbourne. 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. We advocate for an immediate State Government injection of \$2.3 million to fund the construction of missing footpath links we have identified, starting first with connections to high use bus stops and rolling out to cover all bus stops over time. RACV can provide details of these projects.

### **Supporting innovation in public transport provision**

There are a growing number of smartphone applications and sharing platforms around the world which have the potential to improve access to the public transport network and the delivery of more demand responsive services here in Victoria. RACV would like to see the Victorian State Government support trials exploring how these emerging technologies can be used to make public transport a more viable option for more people. The government should engage with industry partners and the private sector to facilitate trials.

### **Encouraging innovation in trip planning tools**

Recently at the ITS World Congress held in October 2016, RACV partnered with Intelematics and a host of government departments, including PTV and VicRoads to run a hackathon event. The aim of the event was to bring together app developers in a competition aimed at generating transport and trip planning apps to help consumers make smarter decisions about their travel. The move to multi-modal travel information apps, and also a new paradigm – Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is needed in Victoria. RACV proposes that the government continue to foster innovation in this way, with the support of industry and other partners. RACV is keen to partner the Government in this initiative.

### **Supporting Trials of Automated vehicles**

There are a number of car companies now exploring the use of advanced technology to improve safety and mobility in their existing and next generation vehicles. To keep up with this new wave of technology the road rules need to be reviewed to make sure they cover the testing of highly automated vehicles on our roads. The National Transport Commission has released a report on a national approach to consider regulations for the trialling of automated vehicles. This report has been endorsed by Federal and State Ministers and it is important that Victoria engage in these trials to encourage the uptake of advanced technologies in our vehicle fleet. VicRoads has launched an initiative to explore these trials and RACV is keen to partner with the Government to explore the issues for the community in the adoption of these technologies.

Figure 1: RACV transport priorities: Major metropolitan Melbourne projects



**What RACV wants**

// The following metropolitan transport projects should be delivered:

- Metropolitan Ring Road completion
- Melbourne Airport Rail Link
- Melbourne Metro Rail Capacity Project
- East-West Link

// Ongoing works programs are needed to:

- remove level crossings across metropolitan Melbourne commencing with five a year for ten years;
- address major bottlenecks on the transport network commencing with those identified by Victorians in RACV's biennial Redspot Survey;
- eliminate the road and public transport backlog in outer metropolitan Melbourne [see RACV Outer Metropolitan Growing Pains, 2012].

// The following operational and service improvements are required:

- improve the operation of Hoddle Street, particularly the intersections of Johnston Street, Victoria Street and Swan Street;
- increased SmartBus services, including upgrading Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART);
- provide four lanes on the M1 Monash Freeway at the Warrigal Road Bridge and increase speed limits east of Toorak Road;
- adopt and implement a prioritised list to extend existing clearways in Melbourne and introduce 24/7 clearways on major arterial roads;
- ban trucks in the right hand lane on all freeways with three or more lanes in each direction;
- implement an expanded program to address the deteriorating appearance of our road and rail corridors through immediate removal of graffiti, weeds and litter.

**Figure 2: RACV transport priorities: Major regional Victorian projects**



### What RACV wants

/// A package of road and public transport infrastructure improvements is needed over the next decade to support growth in regional Victoria and its ten largest cities, as identified in RACV Regional Victoria Growing Pains (2014).

/// Improve V/Line train frequency, upgrade railway stations and improve local public transport, walking and cycling connections in regional Victorian population centres.

/// Upgrade the following sections of the regional highway network to at least a 4-star AusRAP standard:

- Complete the duplications of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell; Princes Highway West from Geelong to Colac and Princes Highway East from Traralgon to Sale.
- Construct bypasses of Shepparton on the Goulburn Valley Highway and Traralgon on Princes Highway East.

/// Upgrade 1 and 2-star sections of the freeway and major highway network to a 3-star minimum AusRAP standard within five years.

/// Newly constructed sections of highway should achieve an AusRAP safety rating of no less than 4-stars.

/// Road maintenance funding should be progressively increased from four per cent to ensure that by 2017 at least eight per cent of the State highway network is resurfaced or rehabilitated every year.