14 July 2008

East-West transport options review
Department of Transport
GPO Box 2797
Melbourne VIC 3001

Via e-mail: eastwestyoursay@transport.vic.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Please find attached the submission to the East-West transport options review from the Eastern Transport Coalition.

The submission is in two broad components;

1. COMMENTS ON EWLNA RECOMMENDATIONS
2. COMMENTS ON IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN THE EASTERN REGION

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Cr Mick Van De Vreede
Chairperson

Mission Statement: The Eastern Transport Coalition will advocate for sustainable and integrated transport services in the Eastern region of Melbourne which focus on the travel needs of the community and reduce the level of car dependency
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The ETC advocates for sustainable and integrated transport services to reduce the level of car dependency to secure the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Melbourne’s outer east and aims to work in partnership with Federal and State Governments to ensure the future sustainability of Eastern Melbourne.

In order to achieve this we need to overcome our key structural deficiency, a lack of public transport infrastructure.

In 2007 the ETC argued that the Federal Government should once again provide funding for major urban public transport. With the advent of the 2008-2009 Federal Budget and creation of the Building Australia Fund it is clear that this has happened. The change in funding priorities by the Federal Government opens the door for a generational step up in the provision of public transport.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ETC has reviewed the recommendations from the EWLNA and makes comment on them below. It is important to note that we have concentrated on the recommendations that directly relate to our region. We have then made a range of suggestions about how public transport needs to be improved in our area.

We hope that the suggestions about how public transport needs to be improved in our area will be considered by Government separately as they do not relate to the limited study area of the EWLNA.

The main recommendations of the ETC are;

1. Support is given for the rail tunnel as recommended by the EWLNA.

2. The State Government must produce a comprehensive and long term plan for a significant expansion in the cities public transport infrastructure.

3. Feasibility studies and business cases for the following projects need to be undertaken immediately;
   a. Rail to Rowville,
   b. Rail to Doncaster,
   c. Expansion of capacity of Belgrave/Lilydale lines.

4. The triplification of track from Caulfield to Dandenong must be undertaken as committed.

5. Improvements to passenger comfort thought upgrades or the creation of model interchanges at activity centres and transit cities must be undertaken.

6. A long term fund for fixing gaps in the tram and bus network be created.
COMMENTS ON EWILNA RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1
Planning work should commence for the staged construction of a new 17 kilometre Melbourne Metro rail tunnel linking Melbourne’s booming western and south-eastern suburbs and providing a major increase in the capacity of the rail network.

**SUPPORT.** The ETC supports the State Government’s project for the triplexion of the Dandenong line between Caulfield and Dandenong as announced in Meeting our Transport Challenges. In our view the new rail tunnel would have a significant positive impact on the capacity of the Dandenong line and, assuming a range of improvements to other items of infrastructure provide the backbone for the rail system in the next 50 years. It would also help to create the capacity in the system to extend a line from Huntingdale to Rowville and from the City to Doncaster.

It is critical from our view that the recommendation that the rail tunnel occur before any expansion in road capacity is implemented. Our area has suffered from underinvestment in public transport infrastructure over the last 40 years and it would benefit from such a project.

Recommendation 2
The Victorian Government should bring forward the construction of a new rail connection from Werribee to Sunshine (the Tarneit link) to significantly improve the frequency and reliability of services from Werribee, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo.

The Government should commit to using the new rail tunnel and Tarneit link as the foundation for extending the metropolitan rail network further to the west within the next 15 years.

**NO COMMENT.**

Recommendation 3
During the planning and construction of the rail tunnel, the Victorian Government should continue to make better use of the existing network to increase capacity, including commencing work on the electrification of the network to Sunbury to boost services on the Sydenham line.

**SUPPORT.** The ETC supports the idea that we should make better use of our existing assets while the major public transport projects such as the 17 Km tunnel are under construction.

Recommendation 4
Planning work should commence on the staged construction of a new 18 kilometre cross city road connection extending from the western suburbs to the Eastern Freeway.

**NO COMMENT.**

Recommendation 5
Community amenity in the inner west should be restored by implementing a Truck Action Plan to remove truck traffic from local streets in the inner west. The plan should include a series of targeted road improvements that form an effective bypass around residential areas, reinforced by local truck bans.

**NO COMMENT.**
**Recommendation 6**

Public transport to the Doncaster region is best provided by rapid, high quality bus services, additional bus priority measures and a major new bus-rail interchange at Victoria Park. To deliver this standard of services, the DART upgrade announced in the 2006 Meeting Our Transport Challenges plan should be introduced as soon as possible, along with additional service enhancements and bus priority measures undertaken in conjunction with Recommendation 4.

**SUPPORT.** The ETC supports improved bus services to Doncaster but does not believe that it should be the limit of the investment that is made.

The City of Manningham, with over 110,000 residents is the only municipality within Melbourne that lacks any form of rail or tram access. This places the region at a competitive disadvantage due to the lack of fixed rail infrastructure.

The existing bus services to Doncaster along the freeway has shown the high demand that exists for better public transport. The carrying capacity of the existing bus services is insufficient, resulting in severe overcrowding and the heavy congestion on the Eastern Freeway could be reduced with a rail line to Doncaster.

Recent publication of patronage data for the public transport network has shown that demand for trains far exceeds demand for other modes. The fact that the greater Doncaster region lacks heavy rails locks them out of being able to use public transport as the following model share data shows.

The ETC recently surveyed users of the buses at the Doncaster Park and Ride and found that;

- 71 per cent of commuters at the Doncaster Park and Ride want rail to Doncaster
- 27 per cent of commuters at the Doncaster Park and Ride believe the bus service meets their needs

Doncaster Hill is a designated activity centre and includes major landowners such as Westfield Shoppingtown. Fixed rail would significantly contribute to the urban revitalisation of Doncaster Hill.

There is no doubt to us that heavy-rail will be required along the Eastern Freeway to ensure efficient and competitive journey times to CBD bound destinations. Only rail infrastructure will be able to deliver the frequency and reliability of services required to increase public transport modal share.

While projects such as the Doncaster Rapid Transit are welcomed, it needs to be seen as an incremental step to delivery of fixed rail infrastructure. At the ETC summit Professor Currie commented that the central difficulty in using buses in the place of rail would be the access from the end of the eastern freeway into the CBD. In some ways rail, whilst initially more expensive would be easier. If the DART to is achieve train type journeys into the CBD road space must be taken away from cars.

Based upon public transport modal share data, it is clear that existing services within Doncaster and Manningham are not meeting expectations. Modal share in Manningham is significantly lower than neighbouring municipalities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Modes available</th>
<th>Public transport modal share</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manningham</td>
<td>Bus only</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banyule</td>
<td>Bus, trains</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehorse</td>
<td>Bus, trams, trains</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne average</td>
<td>Bus, trams, trains</td>
<td>9%</td>
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**Recommendation 7**

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

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**SUPPORT.** The ETC supports cycling and encourages greater use of bikes and the improvement of cycling facilities.

**Recommendation 8**
The Victorian Government should work with local councils and relevant agencies to escalate city-wide implementation and enforcement of priority measures for trams and buses.

**SUPPORT.** As most of the ETC region is mainly serviced by buses we recognise the importance and necessity of freeing up road space for buses. This allows buses to provide a more reliable and therefore more attractive service. This should particularly be the case for the road space that is freed up by the opening of Eastlink.

**Recommendation 9**
A dedicated fund should be established to facilitate the development of Park & Ride facilities, with priority given to improving access to rail services in Melbourne’s west and facilitating public transport patronage in the Doncaster corridor.

**SUPPORT.** Until fixed rail services are extended too much of the ETC area better facilities for bus users are strongly supported. For instance there is a lack of weather protection for passengers, particularly in areas of high passenger use such as the CBD, Huntingdale Station and the Doncaster Park and Ride.

**Recommendation 10**
The Victorian Government should re-evaluate its 30/2010 rail target (which aims to move 30 per cent of freight from and to all Victorian ports by rail by 2010), given the clear finding by the EWLNA that it cannot be met. The Government should create a new strategy and work with industry to develop and implement a detailed action plan for moving more freight by rail.

**NO COMMENT.**

**Recommendation 11**
The Government should take action to increase rail’s share of freight by:
- Ensuring the development of a single, common user, interstate, intermodal freight terminal north of the city on the Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor
- Developing the standard gauge rail freight network to connect the interstate intermodal terminal with the key metropolitan freight hubs
- Making and announcing concrete planning decisions about the future sites for metropolitan freight hubs
- Ensuring that all future transport plans build in the connection of the Port of Hastings to the interstate standard gauge rail network.

**NO COMMENT.**

**Recommendation 12**
The Port of Melbourne Corporation should be given overall responsibility for implementing an intermodal hub network in Melbourne, including responsibility for achieving the Government’s revised rail freight target.

**NO COMMENT.**

**Recommendation 13**
Given the projected increase in the metropolitan freight task, the Government should take further action to improve the efficient movement of road freight by permitting the introduction of high productivity freight vehicles on designated routes.
Recommendation 14

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

**SUPPORT:** The ETC supports the principles of Melbourne 2030 and the need to take stronger action to accelerate the development of vibrant suburban hubs. In this regard while the Eddington Inquiry referred specifically to transit cities within the western suburbs it is critical that a whole of Melbourne focus is adopted. As such nominated transit cities, such as Ringwood, Box Hill and Dandenong, along with activity centres like Knox, Glen Waverley, Croydon and Stud Park require an implementation plan and ongoing funding commitment from the State Government working in cooperation with the relevant local authorities.

As an example both Ringwood and Box Hill Stations require redevelopment to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and improvements so that they integrate within their urban precincts. Funding commitments and an implementation plan for these projects should be forthcoming from State Government.

Recommendation 15

Through the Council of Australian Governments – and working with the Australian automotive industry – the Victorian Government should pursue measures to bring Australia into line with European CO2 emissions standards for motor vehicles.

**NO COMMENT.**

Recommendation 16

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

**SUPPORT.** It is important that new road based public transport services are environmentally friendly.

Recommendation 17

The Victorian Government should seek early discussions with the Commonwealth Government regarding a funding contribution from AusLink towards some or all of the EWLNA recommended projects.

The Government should also work with the Commonwealth to extend AusLink to transport projects designed to relieve urban congestion.

**SUPPORT.** The ETC strongly supports the notion that the Federal Government should provide funding to major urban public transport projects.

It is interesting to note that the previous Federal Parliaments Committee on Environment and Heritage’s report into Sustainable Cities unanimously agreed that the provision of Australian Government transport infrastructure funds should ‘include provision of funding specifically for sustainable public transport infrastructure for suburbs and developments on the outer fringes of our cities.’ It is also a matter that our community agrees with.

In a survey of 1000 voters in 2007 the key finding was that a majority of people believe that the Federal Government should consider funding major additions to urban public transport in the same manner it funds roads.

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There were a number of reasons why people want better public transport. For instance 54% of respondents said the lack or poor quality of public transport infrastructure had a direct affect on their family, 67% said it increased their fuel costs and 65% said it increased their travel time. Only 21% said public transport was definitely a way to reduce their negative impact on the environment.

It is clear to us that if we don’t change our funding priorities that congestion on our roads will increase and this will harm our local communities, environment and economy.

The problem will only be solved by improving our public transport infrastructure and financial assistance from the Federal Government would allow a more rapid improvement to be delivered.

The problem will also only be solved by cooperation between the Federal and State Governments. To the detriment of areas such as ours there is currently cooperation on the issue of major roads and freight links, but not public transport.

It would be advantageous to our region if the state government made immediate application to the Federal Government for funding related to the undertaking of a full feasibility study for the Rowville Rail, Doncaster Rail and the capacity upgrade projects required for the Ringwood, Belgrave and Lilydale lines.

**Recommendation 18**

The Victorian Government should consider a funding structure for the proposed new Metro rail tunnel that includes contributions by beneficiaries (including public transport users and property owners across Melbourne).

**NO COMMENT**. State Government in cooperation with the Federal Government needs to determine the most efficient and equitable funding mechanisms for projects which do not include further cost shifting to local government.

**Recommendation 19**

The Government should re-evaluate its current road tolling policy to ensure that the long term benefits of new road investments can be fully realised (including public transport priority, improved cycling opportunities, road network balance and improved local amenity).

**NO COMMENT**.

**Recommendation 20**

A single statutory authority should be created to deliver the EWLNA recommended projects, using a ‘corridor approach’ to planning, managing and delivering the full suite of projects.

**SUPPORT**. The model has worked for a range of major projects and would be applicable to other significant projects.

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COMMENTS ON IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED IN THE EASTERN REGION

The ETC believes that the release of the EWLNA has highlighted a deficiency in planning for the whole of Melbourne. Over the past 50 years we have seen an orderly development of facilities for private vehicles, a development that has not been matched by public transport.

This is highlighted by the recommendations of the EWLNA which made the case for the improved rapid public transport services for the growing western suburbs. The EWLNA said that unless they received improved services they would be locked out of the CBD. The deficiency is magnified by the rapid population growth that the area is undergoing.

We applaud the acknowledgment that growth areas require rapid public transport services and ask for the same for older growth areas, the Doncaster area and Rowville area. In each case these regions grew without rapid public transport services and are now subject to higher fuel costs, longer travel times and a lack of options.

This was acknowledged in the well published public transport maps of the late 1960, but never delivered on.
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It is now time to develop a plan than provides all regions of Melbourne rapid public transport services. This was very much the theme of the ETC summit held on the 4th of July. The summit was attended by over 100 people representing Councils, State and Federal members of parliament, community and media.

Comments made at the summit included the following:

- A massive investment in rail is needed to meet growing demand for public transport,
- A massive investment in rail is needed to ensure families can access and be active in their local communities in the face of increased fuel costs,
- Public transport investment has not matched investment in roads,
- More dedicated bus lanes to give buses priority.
- Travel to a key economic hub for the region, Monash University and Synchrotron is very poor,
- Intermodal connectivity from is in need of improvement,
- We need to increase the delivery of modifications for DDA compliance,
- It is inequitable that users in the outer east pay more for an inadequate service.

From the ETC’s perspective a plan for the expansion of public transport in Melbourne would have the following four cornerstones as it applies to the outer east of the city;

1. A train line to Rowville

The case for the train line to Rowville is well known and would help link a centre of innovation, Monash University with the CBD and other population centres.

The case for the train line is further made in the pre-feasibility study which can be accessed at; http://www.knox.vic.gov.au/Files/RowvilleRailStudy.pdf

The ETC fact sheet can be accessed at; http://www.etc.org.au/content/2007/08/factsheet4-rowville.pdf

2. A train line to Doncaster

The ETC believes that it is inequitable that Doncaster residents are provided with only bus services when other areas of Melbourne are provided with rail.

A case for the train to Doncaster and possible links to the Ringwood line is made in the Metropolitan Transport Forum paper ‘Keeping People Moving in Metro Melbourne's North East’ which can be accessed at http://www.mtf.org.au/n/resources/northeast.html

The ETC fact sheet can be accessed at; http://www.etc.org.au/content/2007/08/factsheet5-doncaster.pdf

3. A rail tunnel to Caulfield and then 3rd line in Dandenong

The ETC supports the current State Government project to provide a 3rd track from Caulfield to Dandenong. A third track will enable the outer east to benefit from the proposed underground rail line to Caulfield.

We support the comments of the Minister for Public Transport who said that "We recognise the importance of the Dandenong rail corridor, which services 15 per cent of Melbourne's population and provides the rail link to eastern Victoria,"

For that reason we believe that the current timelines as proposed in Meeting our Transport Challenges must be adhered to. By way of background MOTC committed the following timetable on the entire project;

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• 2006 – 2011  Caulfield to Springvale - 3rd track
• 2011 – 2016  Springvale to Dandenong - 3rd track

The 2008-2009 budget makes provision over the forward estimates for the Westall project (BP 3, page 328) but not the entire Caulfield to Springvale project. As the forward estimates run to 2010-2011 and there is no provision for the Caulfield to Springvale 3rd track contained.

We would prefer that the project is fast tracked, but given the current failure to provide budget allocations we would be satisfied if the published program was adhered to.

It would also be sensible to plan for a 4th track in the future.

The ETC fact sheet can be accessed at;  
http://www.etc.org.au/content/2007/08/factsheet3-dandenong.pdf

4. A 3rd line from Box Hill to Ringwood and duplication of sections of track on the Belgrave and Lilydale lines.

The Belgrave and Lilydale lines, with approximately 93,000 daily boardings remain Melbourne’s most highly patronised rail line. Together they consistently carry 18,300 passengers per an hour during the peak periods. During 2004 to 2007 the lines have experienced patronage growth of around 3 percent and is rapidly approaching passenger and service capacity. The commuter patronage on this line is predicted to continue to grow as various economic and social factors make train travel a more attractive mode of transport. Resulting in a continued escalation of pressure on the existing ageing infrastructure and limited track capacity of the Belgrave and Lilydale lines.

The outer Eastern suburbs have not experienced the same increase rate of train travel as the central inner suburbs along these lines. The fringe Eastern suburbs are only experiencing a 4% increase in train trips for work commuting, compared to the 17% of the suburbs close to the city. This lower percentage of work commuting is somewhat due to the reduced service frequency available to the outer suburbs. The reduced service frequency is partly a consequence of the reduction of the rail lines from three tracks to two that occurs after Box Hill.

As the line currently exists there is minimal avenue to extend service capacity along the line during peak periods. The Departments of Transports own analysis indicates that there only remains capacity for 3 extra trains per hour and these frequency gains are predominantly during non-peak periods. In fact, at the moment trains services run more frequently on the weekend, than they do off peak during the week.

Extending the triplication to Ringwood would allow for greater frequency of train service on these lines, particularly between the major transport hubs of Lilydale, Belgrave, Ringwood and Box Hill. The extra track would provide the redundancy to allow for the extension of express services out to Ringwood. A train running express between Box Hill and Ringwood would potentially reduce travel times for commuters travelling from the outer suburbs by up to 5 minutes.

Finally the construction triplication of the Belgrave and Lilydale lines should be instigate with the grade separation of key roads that intersect these lines.

The ETC fact sheet can be accessed at;  

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IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED TO OTHER PARTS OF THE SYSTEM

The ETC believes that the following improvements are needed to public transport and should be part of a metropolitan wide public transport plan.

These improvements would help on two broad levels, firstly it would help people move from their area to the CBD and secondly it would help them move around their local area.

Rail

- Rail to Doncaster
- Rail to Rowville
- Increased capacity on Belgrave/Lilydale
- Increased capacity on Dandenong line
- North south line along Eastlink
- Develop and implement an under ground rail loop to circulate the Dandenong CBD area

Buses

Buses are an important part of our current public transport system and will remain so into the future. Whilst we don’t believe that they are the only answer to existing deficiencies in the system they are an important connector and tool for local transport.

There are therefore a range of improvements that are needed across the region.

- Rapid implementation of bus service reviews
- Increased frequency
- 5am to 11pm operating times
- 7 days a week operation
- Route reform which leads to increased coverage
- Main road priority for buses, and
- Improvements in reliability.
- Implement bus priority lanes on surrounding arterial roads such as Springvale, Stud & Cheltenham Roads
- Commuter bus services on Eastlink and on the Monash freeway

Trams

- A tram to Knox from existing terminus at South Vermont
- Extension of Tram Route 48 - from Balwyn to Doncaster Hill and beyond

Better facilities

- Modal interchanges in Box Hill, Doncaster, Ringwood, Stud Park, Dandenong, Glen Waverley, Croydon & Knox,
- More park and rides,
- Better and more equitable funding, and
- Effective pedestrian and cycling links
- New railway stations in Dandenong south industrial area to cater for journey to work patrons.

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