31 October 2016

Infrastructure Victoria
Level 34, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne
VIC 3000

Dear Sir/Madam

It is our pleasure to submit a response to *Victoria's Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy* for consultation, October 2016. We welcome Infrastructure Victoria's recommendations for the state's infrastructure needs and priorities over the next 30 years.

The Committee for Melbourne (Committee) has long had a remit to enhance the future prospects of Melbourne. Founded over 30 years ago, the Committee is an apolitical, not-for-profit member network that unites a cross-section of our city's leaders and organisations to work together to enhance Melbourne's economic, social and environmental future.

Our members represent around 120 organisations drawn from the city's major companies, academic institutions and civic organisations across a broad range of industries. We represent no single interest and seek to challenge conventional thinking and develop innovative policy that continues to maintain Melbourne's 'World's Most Liveable City' status.

The Committee's new flagship taskforce **MELBOURNE 4.0** that utilises a city strategy model, moves beyond traditional, linear thinking and introduces clever and innovative approaches to transform the way we position Melbourne in the age of the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*. The MELBOURNE 4.0 taskforce aims to develop a clear understanding of the future economic environment of Melbourne and provide reliable and informed policy programs to help prepare for the 'over the horizon' challenges and opportunities, including those related to Melbourne's infrastructure needs. The taskforce findings are due to be published by the end of Q1 next year.

The Committee is impressed with the considerable breadth and depth of the *Draft Strategy*'s 134 recommendations. Given the Committee's strengths and the limited time available we have chosen to focus particularly on four Needs relevant to the Committee's four pillars of Future Economy, Infrastructure, Urban Optimisation, and Liveability that fit into the MELBOURNE 4.0 objectives. These are:

Need 1: Address infrastructure demands in areas with high population growth

Need 5: Provide spaces where communities can come together

Need 10: Meet growing demand for access to economic activity in central Melbourne

Need 13: Improve the efficiency of freight supply chains.

The Committee notes that the raft of ambitious infrastructure initiatives, outlined in the *Draft Strategy*, are backed up by Infrastructure Victoria's research findings showing how value capture[1] can help fund the recommended infrastructure projects. We refer to the Committee's 2012 discussion paper, [Moving Melbourne](#), which examines alternative funding and financing options that could be used to advance Melbourne's future transport needs.

The Committee notes that other published strategic plans, known by Infrastructure Victoria, do not appear to have been directly linked to the *Draft Strategy, including Plan Melbourne*[2] currently referenced in the State Planning Policy Framework, and, Public Transport Victoria's rail, tram and bus projects[3] and *Network Development Plan – Metropolitan Rail.*[4] It is suggested that some form of strategic alignment oversight could ensure that developments and timing are consistent to optimising movement across Victoria.

The Committee feels that examples of costs, risks and measurable benefits would be useful to be included in the *Draft Strategy* to inform readers as to how the recommendations have been prioritised in terms of timing and measurement of overall benefits.

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[1] Infrastructure Victoria, [Value Capture – Options, Challenges and Opportunities for Victoria](#), Policy Paper, October 2016

[2] State of Victoria, [Plan Melbourne](#), May 2014

[3] Public Transport Victoria, [Projects](#), accessed 31/10/2016

[4] Public Transport Victoria, [Network Development Plan – Metropolitan Rail](#), accessed 31/10/2016

The Committee recognises the breadth of infrastructure activities proposed for Greater Melbourne and across Victoria in framing the following summary of key observations.

Need 1: Address infrastructure demands in areas with high population growth

The Committee strongly supports development of housing in and around employment centres (1.1.2) and the proposals for transport infrastructure (1.3). However, it believes consideration could also be given to strategies that would assist people working close to their homes, for example, flexible working hours to enable working from home and the establishment of consolidated work centres and tertiary study centres.

With regards to recommendations 1.4.3, 1.4.4 and 1.4.6 that pertain to upgrading, refurbishment and sharing of community space, the Committee suggests that some exemplars would be useful to increase understanding about how community shared use can work, what community assets exist and what opportunities there are to share space.

The following ideas and suggestions are put forward for consideration:

- Port Philip Bay has the potential, as a transport medium, to meet some of Melbourne's transport needs – it could be used as a 'moon shot' project to assess its viability. The Committee acknowledges that while recent and previous ferry attempts have underutilised the Bay's potential with restricted routes and availability, with better needs analysis and planning it could provide an attractive alternative to commuting on either congested roads or packed public transport routes in peak times.

- Priority corridors – A useful model for better use of Melbourne's tram corridors and priority bus lanes, is the example of the successful light rail and bus use of the same corridor of Downtown Seattle's public transportation.

Generally, the Committee feels that the timings for the Need 1 recommendations are appropriate. However, funding stream and industry capability build is dependent on Melbourne Metro 1 in terms of providing capacity on the network. There appears to be some gaps in describing how they will work together to strike a balance. State government collaboration is a critical factor in solving fragmentation problems and competing demands.

While there was mention about the state government working closely with local councils, the Committee proposes that state government collaboration within and between other agencies such as local councils, could receive more prominence to optimise and ensure ownership of the recommendations.

The Committee noted that Need 1 and Need 10 recommendations overlap. It appears that the Need 1 recommendations for densification is very light on detail and does not mention improving rail services, however this is picked up in Need 10.

Need 5: Provide spaces where communities can come together

The Committee recognises that this need is clearly important to the community and agrees (5.1.1 and 5.1.2) that community expectations are best managed by being transparent since communication is critical for cooperation and behavioural change. The Committee observes that while spaces such as community halls and schools are regularly used as polling booths because of their convenience and location, there is a lot more scope for using schools as halls and public facilities.

The Committee endorses the recommendation (5.1.2) of removing barriers to shared facilities and open spaces to enable potential shared spaces to become more viable. The following points are raised concerning shared community spaces:

- Planning for the complexity of new users is critical, including possible increases in traffic that could lead to unnecessary congestion at shared community locations.
- Responsibility for security needs to be addressed, since there are security reasons for schools not wanting to share their facilities. For instance, children and the general community are discouraged from using school facilities and playgrounds during out-of-school times because of security risks.
- Cooperation and leadership between state and local governments is integral to planning shared community spaces since local government is responsible for open spaces while the state government is responsible for schools.
- Since all schools receive some level of government funding it is reasonable to expect that all schools could share their spaces for community activities.

- Train stations or hubs could be used for shared facilities – not just schools – provided there is suitable accessibility around that hub.
- Consideration could be given to designated shifts for students to go to schools to increase facility-sharing. For example, school students could be at school in the mornings, while adult education could be located at school in the afternoons.
- Collaboration for sharing space between universities and schools could be considered.
- Technology could be better used when sharing facilities. Current technology-enabled platforms provide valuable examples of releasing latent capability.

The Committee endorses recommendation 5.4.1 which describes how relocatable buildings could be used if suggested facilities are in poor condition, particularly to reduce costs while addressing the need for pop-up flexible spaces in areas of high population growth.

The Committee recommends that the timing for turning schools into shared facilities for the whole community could happen within the next five years rather than over 5-30 years as stated (5.3.1) since planning for schools is happening right now with [15 high priority new government schools](#) expected to be delivered in 2017 and 2018 across some of Victoria's fastest growing metropolitan and regional communities.

A key observation is that community consultation and support is required to make the right decisions about shared facilities, particularly when different interest groups want to use the same facility. Hence the Committee believes that it is critical to indicate how the government will manage the right level of input required from the community with regards to final determinations about how specific facilities are to be used.

Need 10: Meet growing demand for access to economic activity in central Melbourne

The Committee suggests that moving towards a 24-hour city would contribute to maximising the performance from the current network. Peak demands could be managed by redefining peak times and changing the times when people travel into the city. Different start times for businesses could encourage and support increased capacity of public transport that is normally empty on peak hour shoulders. Some other examples include: shops could have two shifts; car park capacities could be increased with different start times; formalised routines on deliveries; and, garbage pick-up could be changed to non-peak times.

The Committee believes that a policy could be defined around taxes recovered from transport network pricing (10.2.2) and suggests that this 'congestion tax' should not go into general revenue but be fully allocated to the public transport sector. Futhermore, education about policy changes and acceptance of new policies is essential to engaging the community – and make it more palatable – regarding the benefits, particularly in the case of suggested changes to transport network pricing. People need to understand what they are paying for and allow for culture change as urban densification and transport congestion intensifies with our ever-increasing population growth.

The Committee proposes the following changes or improvements:

- Clearways across Greater Melbourne could be extended – such as 24-hour city clearways – to discourage people from bringing their cars into the city. Longer clearways in the suburbs could help with productivity and faster travel times. Clearways along tram networks could be open longer to increase capacity and faster travel times in built up areas.
- High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) – Hot lanes and road pricing incentives for HOVs could encourage cars to have more passengers. For example, in several countries HOVs do not get charged a toll while one-person cars are charged.
- Bicycles on trains – People could be encouraged to ride bicycles to train stations and take their bicycles in special areas set aside on the trains so they can ride to destinations at the other end. 10.5.2 recommends 10-car Metropolitan trains, of which one car could be used for bicycles and even wheel chairs.
- Park and ride – While the opportunity for park and ride exists at some stations, there could be more education about commuting advantages. Parking facilities at major rail stations could be expanded to accommodate the current numbers of commuters, however, planning needs to occur now to accommodate the growing numbers of commuters as the population continues to grow.
- Buses, trams and trains require better integration and coordination to improve the overall public transport system with better linked services that could encourage more commuters and ease congestion on roads.
- Driverless cars – The big unknown; more information is needed about how these will be used on our roads locally as well as nationally and how their use will be staged.

- Electric vehicles could be considered for their efficiency in terms of emission reduction and noise pollution, and how they can avoid infrastructure build through battery storage.

The Committee suggests that more transformational ideas could be explored to arrive at other approaches rather than business as usual. For example, a monorail to the airport running from the airport to Doncaster could use existing road space by building over existing roads. The advantages are that expensive land acquisition costs can be avoided and passengers already live there.

Need 13: Improve the efficiency of freight supply chains

The Committee believes that the transport network pricing (13.1.2) for the transport of freight is a critical issue in moving freight to off-peak times and limiting the time of day they travel on roads. While there does not seem to be a clear pathway on policies and regulation at this stage, it is imperative that the pricing of roads for freight and timing of freight transport is effective in the reduction of congestion.

The following suggestions are put forward for consideration as follows:

- Of importance is the right messaging around north-east freight and transport pricing fundamentals – changes that need the right approach about how we put a price on freight movement to manage media expectations and the community at large.
- Freight in and waste out could be included in the overall cost to make freight more sustainable. For instance, managing cardboard waste could be part of the overall price for freight.
- The funding regime could include third party charges as an income stream i.e. fixed price asset sales, that could beneficially change the recycling process. Urgent consideration and planning is required to identify and prioritise land for freight precincts in outer Melbourne (13.3.1 & 13.3.3), along with dedicated truck corridors and rail links to protect future freight precincts and corridors.
- The timing and planning of the potential second container port, currently being investigated by Infrastructure Victoria (p. 153 & 13.5.4) to handle expected increases in containerised imports and export, could be problematic without knowing where the next port is to be located for future connections.

- While the *Draft Strategy* (p. 159) indicates the possible construction of a new airport in south-east Melbourne is a decision for the private sector, the Committee is concerned that location of a new airport is a strategic matter and should not be at the discretion of private concerns.

Other – Need 18: Transition to lower carbon energy supply and use

Related to the improved efficiency of freight supply chains in *Need 13* is the dependency of Melbourne and Victoria on secure energy systems as outlined in *Need 18: Transition to lower carbon energy supply and use*. The Committee believes that a higher priority could be given within Need 18 to particularly securing a reliable, affordable, and sustainable level of electricity supply, which is fundamental to the effective operation of all infrastructure.

For instance, if there is a breakdown in electricity supply most urban activities will be adversely affected including public and private transport, communications, water and wastewater systems, households, businesses, seaports, airports and more (Refer Fig. 16 in the *Draft Strategy*). Moreover, due to the interdependency of Victoria's place within south-east Australia and the broader Australian economy, there could be a better coordinated National Electricity Market which requires energy to be managed across the whole system.

In light of quite recent and foreshadowed trends in Australia's energy markets, the Committee feels that Need 18 could well be expanded to read as follows: *"Maintain affordable, secure, reliable, high quality energy systems during the transition to lower carbon energy supply and uses"*. This would enable a link to *Need 19: Improve the reliance of critical infrastructure,* and the consequent development of recommendations to secure reliable and affordable, as well as sustainable energy systems for Victoria.

In conclusion

The Committee is encouraged by *Victoria's Draft 30-year Infrastructure Strategy* as it seeks to improve liveability and notes that collaborative partnerships between governments, industry and the community are critical to finding solutions and continuing improvements to ensure and sustain Melbourne's liveability.

The Committee considers that demographic changes such as our ageing population and the increasing need for hospitals and aged-care facilities could be addressed alongside of the infrastructure initiatives to improve working and living across Greater Melbourne and beyond.

With our broad membership, the Committee is eager to work with the government, as well as our community leaders, to safeguard Melbourne's future growth and prosperity.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Committee to expand on any of the points touched on in this submission.

Regards

Martine Letts
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Committee for Melbourne