

## **Melbourne 4.0: Airport link Position Paper**

### **Position**

Committee for Melbourne (Committee) supports the design, planning, and construction of a rail link between Melbourne's central business district (CBD) and Melbourne Airport, via Sunshine (the Sunshine route), on the basis that it will deliver a fast, reliable, and competitive service which unlocks broader benefits for Melbourne and Victoria.

### **Background**

The Committee has been advocating for a mass, direct transit link to Melbourne Airport since November 2016. Under our Melbourne 4.0 program, it was identified as one of nine strategic needs Melbourne must address to help the city continue to thrive to 2030.

While SkyBus provides an excellent road-based service, a direct rail link is what Melbourne requires as a growing, global city.

The Committee created the Airport Link Taskforce and has run a series of forums with members and stakeholders, including Melbourne Airport and Infranexus Management (Southern Cross Station), to discuss the merits of the strategic priorities for delivery.

As a first step we developed five guiding principles for an airport link, outlined in our January 2018 submission; *Airport link: from concept to commencement*.

Following our most recent forum on 10 August, the Committee declared its support for the Sunshine route option. It did so while acknowledging that further detailed analysis of the preferred route is required, along with clarity around travel time, pricing, rapidly changing technology, flexibility to service the airport's needs for the long-term, customer-centricity, and opportunities to unlock broader benefits for Melbourne and Victoria. The Committee expects the Victorian Government to explore these issues as they conduct their business case.

A Melbourne Airport rail link must be a world-class, dedicated service for those travelling to and from the airport. It must be fast, efficient, and reasonably priced. Therefore, it should not form part of the current commuter train system, nor can the journey from the airport to the CBD exceed 20 minutes.

The construction of an airport link via Sunshine would be critical to unlocking road network congestion across Greater Melbourne. Underlining this observation is the fact it has been earmarked as a pivotal - if stand-alone - component of the *Suburban Rail Loop*, the proposed 90-kilometre, congestion-busting, underground suburban rail network linking every major rail line in Melbourne.

In the meantime, with the design, planning, and construction of an airport link set to take many years, the Victorian Government, and other relevant authorities, should do all it can to support SkyBus with providing fast and reliable bus services.

The Committee welcomes the Federal and State Governments' funding announcements for a Melbourne Airport rail link, and supports the private sector's involvement to top up any public funding shortfall.

## Alignment with Guiding Principles

The Sunshine route is consistent with the Committee's five guiding principles as follows:

Principle 1: The future is already here

- Melbourne's population is set to surpass 5 million people in August 2018, and is expected to reach 8 million people by 2050.
- Airport passengers are projected to grow at double Melbourne's rate of population growth over this period. We must act now.

Principle 2: An integrated and holistic perspective

- Ensures ease of mobility and access to the CBD, as well as allowing adequate connection to key employment hubs.
- Acts as a network-wide solution for a 'city of centres' linked to regional Victoria.

Principle 3: Flexibility

- Helps drive a longer term behavioral modal shift to sustainable transport.
- Enhances regional access to the airport.
- Allows for connection with any future high-speed rail to Geelong.

Principle 4: Customer-centric solution

- Offers a reliable, efficient, premium service rather than merging with a crowded conventional rail service with multiple stops.
- Optimises the airport's passenger catchments and future growth.

Principle 5: Cost-benefit analysis

- Supports decentralised employment opportunities in regional centres.
- Allows urban renewal opportunities arising from density improvement.

For more information about the Committee's advocacy work, visit [www.melbourne.org.au](http://www.melbourne.org.au)