



Committee for Melbourne Transport Taskforce Response to the East West Link Needs Assessment July 15, 2008

The Committee for Melbourne Transport Taskforce (the Taskforce) has endorsed the majority of the recommendations within the EWLNA, describing the report as a very solid piece of work that has properly carried out its terms of reference. However, the Taskforce recognises that the terms of reference do not encompass a total transport plan for Melbourne so, in order to complete this, we recommend more work be done.

Additionally, the Committee's Climate Change Taskforce, which will release its final report on 24 July 2008, will advocate increased government investment in transport infrastructure which will assist in reducing emissions - particularly public transport. The Climate Change Taskforce stipulates that investment in public transport should be used to improve the coverage, span, frequency, speed and reliability of our public transport system because, until there are viable alternatives to personal car travel, people will not move on to public transport.

1. Overall feedback

The Taskforce congratulates Sir Rod Eddington on a serious and significant piece of work. We are supportive of an accelerated approach to delivering the smaller recommended projects as soon as possible in order to preserve the livability and prosperity of the city.

2. Detailed response of the Taskforce

2.1 The Taskforce believes Melbourne has the potential to be a showpiece for transforming a low-density city in the face of a carbon-constrained future. The impact on climate change of these recommendations needs to be taken into account and the Government must be satisfied climate change related goals can be achieved through the implementation of the EWLNA recommendations.

2.2 The Taskforce recommends careful planning evaluation of the east-west tunnel project and urges a detailed cost/benefit analysis as well as consideration of the completion of the ring road between Greensborough and EastLink.

2.3 The Taskforce urges the Government not to take on any of the major projects in isolation but to incorporate them into a properly integrated land use plan for greater Melbourne. The east-west study conducted by Sir Rod Eddington was limited by the Government to the east-west corridor. In addition to taking decisive action on the Eddington recommendations, the Government should also commence, as a matter of urgency, a comprehensive metropolitan transport plan in combination with the proposed land use plan. This transport plan needs to

consider the demand on the transport network and to set in place transport corridors with proposed land acquisition to address Melbourne's future transport needs. A comprehensive transport plan for the future development of transport is something that Melbourne has, arguably, not had for some 40 years.

2.4 A review of road pricing, excise and taxation is strongly recommended by the Taskforce. Motorists in Australia are taxed in a complex way – fuel excise, GST, sales tax, vehicle registration – with no proper attribution of externality costing. A national review of motoring taxation and its change to a comprehensive road user charging scheme should be instigated.

The components of such a scheme would include the following:

- A road infrastructure renewal charge;
- A charge relating to the externality cost of accidents;
- An environmental charge; and
- A congestion charge.

A critical part of the scheme must be the hypothecation of revenue from these charges to address the inherent issues in infrastructure, accidents, environment and congestion.

3. Analysis of the EWLNA report against the Taskforce's recommendations

3.1 Policy-Level Options

In relation to improving the performance of existing infrastructure, the Taskforce had a mixed response. The Taskforce suggested more emphasis must be given to:

- Optimising the use of the current road and rail network by increasing efficiency with the introduction of technology-based intelligent transport solutions (omitted from the EWLNA report); and
- Fast-track pricing of transport to account for all externalities. (The EWLNA report determined this was inevitable but should be postponed for approximately 10 years).

3.1.1 The Taskforce fully endorses the EWLNA's recommendation to restrict or allocate road space to give trams and buses priority.

3.1.2 Facilitating growth around transit cities is another area where the Taskforce is calling for more Government attention. As outlined in 2030, the Government can provide infrastructure and incentives to facilitate growth around designated transit cities that are both well served by public transport and located along established transport routes. Land use solutions include increasing the accessibility of key modal interchanges and extending public transport service frequency to designated areas to encourage population growth. The Taskforce does however endorse the EWLNA report's focus on the increase in cross town trips and the need for multimodal hubs to be established to deal with this increased patronage. This thinking was reflected in the recommendations which look at providing the established residential areas of Doncaster and Melbourne's west with better access to public transport.

3.2 Specific Options

The Taskforce agrees with the EWLNA proposals for an alternative road freight traffic route from the west to the Port of Melbourne; improved rail services through the western suburbs; and a rapid transit link to Doncaster. However, the Taskforce remains in favour of the linking of the Eastern Freeway to the CityLink/Tullamarine Freeway, including a transitway (as proposed in Taskforce's June 2005 policy statement) and enhancing connectivity between the Eastern Freeway corridor and the inner metropolitan area.

The Taskforce has identified the completion of the Metropolitan Ring Road from Greensborough to Ringwood to join with EastLink as a critical addition to Melbourne's network. This major project will have impact on Melbourne's east-west corridor and provide a connected freeway system in north-east Melbourne. EastLink will provide sharp focus on this missing link and the demand for travel from the eastern/south-east corridors to the north and west will increase.

The Taskforce also re-endorses its suggestion of a freight-rail connection between the Port of Melbourne and Dynon terminals (proposed in the Port@I Strategy) and an improved link between the Port and Ballarat Road. The Taskforce also believes that there should be an increase in the pace of delivery of the Cross Town Smart Bus Services proposed in 'Meeting our Transport Challenges' as an additional means of addressing the need to encourage a mode shift to public transport by car drivers.

3.3 Broad Objectives

The Taskforce is pleased that the EWLNA has considered facilitating greater access to employment, recreation, and service for Melbourne's residents and visitors by pursuing a demand-focused investigation. We also welcome the EWLNA's promotion of policy which enables efficient travel citywide for personal and commercial journeys, as well as facilitating greater access to employment, recreation, and service for Melbourne's residents and visitors by pursuing a demand-focused investigation.

The Taskforce would encourage the EWLNA to fast-track addressing lead growth corridors with major infrastructure. In the past, major infrastructure build projects have usually followed development in an attempt to back-build and compensate for increased demand on certain routes. The Taskforce believes there is a role for transport to play in leading growth corridors. Major build decisions should be considered with a view to directing future growth, not compensating for past growth.

3.4 Location-Specific Objectives

The following recommendations, adopted by the EWLNA, are also consistent with the Taskforce's submission:

- Reduce pressure on the Monash-Westgate corridor;
- Improve amenity in the western and inner northern suburbs;



- Connect the metropolitan area's main industrial areas with the Port of Melbourne and ensure connectivity between the Port and Dynon terminals;
- Increase public transport mode share; and
- Ensure sufficient infrastructure capacity around the Port to accommodate predicted growth in freight volumes.

Although the EWLNA did not specifically mention the Taskforce's proposal to ensure connectivity between the Eastern freeway corridor and inner metropolitan Melbourne, it acknowledges that the sentiment of this idea has had carriage in several places within the report.