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Joint statement from the Committee for Ballarat, Committee for Gippsland, Committee for Greater Shepparton, Committee for Melbourne and Committee for Wyndham.

VICTORIA NEEDS A WORLD CLASS AIRPORT TRAIN WITH A NEW RAIL TUNNEL AS ITS FOUNDATION

Victoria's leading development committees are calling on the Victorian and Federal Governments to deliver on their commitment to develop a world-class airport train that enhances travel times to the city, provides a dedicated service for travellers, reduces suburban rail network congestion and links the state's aviation gateway to its cities and the regions.

We applaud Premier Andrews' vision for a world class, game changing airport train which he stated would "create extra capacity in the congested rail corridor between Melbourne and Sunshine, give Melbourne's booming west access to the electrified metro rail services and untangle the regional and metropolitan network on the Geelong and Ballarat lines".

This can only be achieved with a new rail tunnel for the airport train between Sunshine and the Southern Cross Station.

With media reports indicating that a decision on the final design for the airport link is imminent, we have united to ensure that Victoria does not squander a once-in-a-generation opportunity to develop the best possible airport rail line and which lays the foundations for upgraded rail connections to Greater Metropolitan Melbourne and the regions.

A new rail tunnel for the airport train between Sunshine and the Southern Cross Station will enable a transformational increase in regional train services and faster journeys to Melbourne from the regions. This new tunnel would also enable the Geelong Fast Rail Project.

The wrong solution will leave the growing regional and western suburbs commuters facing decades of slow and overcrowded trains and continue the crippling dependency on some of Australia's most congested roads.

The airport train must provide a dedicated service rather than a stopping-all-stations option for travellers arriving and departing from Melbourne Airport. It should utilise specialised rolling stock to cater for travellers' baggage and it should be quick and affordable, with a journey time of 20 minutes or less to the city.

Importantly, the train should link in seamlessly with regional rail services to provide a fast and efficient journey to the airport for country travellers, also opening up Victoria's



magnificent regional areas to domestic and international visitors with world class connectivity.

Of the 10 fastest growing cities in Australia this past year, six of these cities were in the State of Victoria. The number two, three and four fastest growing cities were Melbourne, Wyndham, and Melton. This trend is expected to continue.

Wyndham Vale, Tarneit and Melton should not have to rely on V/Line country trains for rail services into the city. Commuters from regional centres, the Cities of Wyndham and Melton have had enough of slow and overcrowded country trains. With Government predicting Wyndham and Melton will experience a further population growth of almost 400,000 people over the next 18 years, it is difficult to expect this to continue, particularly when Geelong and Ballarat, which share the same rail corridors, are expected to grow their populations by almost 150,000 people over the same period.

An airport rail link with dedicated tracks between Sunshine and Southern Cross is essential to cater for more regional services and to unravel the competing needs that exist between V/Line and suburban trains across the congested rail network.

We simply cannot afford to build the wrong solution for the Melbourne airport train. If we get this wrong and build a second-rate airport train, Victoria will be left with an infrastructure white elephant that fails to meet the needs of our growing and dynamic state.

After more than 50 years of waiting for an airport train, we must build a link that caters for all Victorians now and for decades to come.

Key Statistics

| Key Local Government Area | Population 2018 | Population 2036 | % growth |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Geelong | 252,220 | 360,250 | 43% |
| Ballarat | 107,330 | 145,930 | 36% |
| Bendigo | 116,050 | 153,760 | 32% |
| Wyndham | 255,320 | 459,200 | 80% |
| Greater Shepparton | 66,010 | 77,690 | 18% |
| Melton | 156,710 | 332,050 | 112% |
| Inner Metropolitan Melbourne | 381,680 | 588,530 | 54% |
| Sub-Total Local Govt Areas | 1,335,320 | 2,117,410 | 58% |

Source: Victoria in Future 2019

Committee for Melbourne in conjunction with sister Committees, is hosting the fourth Melbourne Airport Rail Link Forum on March 4, for further information and to register your interest, please contact Laura Kerr Melvin lmelvin@melbourne.org.au



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