

Transport Advocacy Strategy 2022

‘Locals Know What Locals Need’

Interface and Growth Councils Overview

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Financial sustainability

Key Messages (Public Facing)

- Funding must ensure our transport infrastructure keeps pace with our rapidly growing residential and commercial areas.
- We want to deliver better and safer local streets and paths for our communities.
- We're calling on the Victorian and Australian Government's to provide growth councils with adequate funding to build safer roads, more walking and cycling paths and better local transport links to jobs and education facilities.
- Locals know what locals need. The Victorian and Australian Governments need to stop building big projects that don't solve local issues, and instead listen to local councils and communities.

Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)

State Government, including Victorian Budget 2022

- Local road funding contributions from the Victorian and Australian Governments need to be substantially increased in an ongoing manner, supplemented by grant-style programs with minimal administrative burden and greater flexibility.
- The Australian Government should commit to ongoing funding of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program and an increase in Financial Assistance Grants.
- The Victorian Government must release the final report of the Infrastructure Contributions Advisory Committee which was due to be provided to the Treasurer and Minister for Planning in May 2021. Victoria needs a fit-for-purpose contributions system that can support a range of development typologies to deliver critical local infrastructure, road network improvements, and safety enhancements across Victoria.
- Federal and State decision-making and engagement processes need refinement to better integrate into local planning and priorities and meet the needs of communities.

Federal Election 2022

- The next federal government to commit to Australia's economic recovery through funding:
 1. an initial injection of Financial Assistance Grants to local government of \$1.3b to support communities and jobs and also resolve the current practice of bringing forward two quarterly Financial Assistance Grant payments each year;
 2. a commitment to return Financial Assistance Grants to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.

- The next federal government to commit to building better transport and community infrastructure through funding:
 1. \$500m per annum for a four-year continuation of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program;
 2. A strategic local roads investment program of \$300m per annum over four years to address road transport first and last mile issues and congestion on local roads;
 3. An increase in Roads to Recovery to \$800m per annum (an additional \$300m per annum) and the Black Spot Program to \$200m per annum over four years.

Rationale and Background

- Victorian growth councils need greater support from the Victorian and Australian Governments to deliver safe and well-maintained roads. Existing funding from those tiers of government is rigid and unsustainable.
- Population increases are leading to infrastructure capacity constraints and baseline funding streams are not sufficient to support increasing demand.
- Growth councils need a larger allocation of roads funding to allow them to upgrade roads and safety treatments to meet the needs of a modern, metropolitan community.
- Funding and planning challenges (including developer contributions) are impacting growth councils' ability to deliver the required infrastructure for growing communities.
- Funding issues are further exacerbated by the Victorian Government's rate cap.
- Victorian Government funding should support councils to collaborate.
- Greater levels of Victorian Government consultation with councils on large scale infrastructure projects would support integrated decision-making and alignment with council plans and transport projects. This would ensure projects better meet local needs.
- Compounding factors, such as Victoria's Big Build and supply shortages, have seen the cost and availability of materials and contractors go up and timelines for capital works blow out.

Walking and bike riding

Key Messages (Public Facing)

- Everyone should have access to safe walking paths and bike tracks.
- Every kilometre walked or on a bike has health, environment and economic benefits.
- Walking and bike riding reduces traffic congestion and vehicle operating costs, improves health and the environment, and delivers more metres of infrastructure per dollar invested.
- Councils want to open more local streets to safe walking and bike riding, without increasing congestion.
- More footpaths, crossings and bike lanes help families to stay healthy and spend quality time together.
- Kids tell us they want to walk, scoot or bike ride with friends to school and schools are encouraging them to do so.
- Streets belong to everyone. We're upgrading streets so that whether you walk, bike ride, play and drive, everyone is welcome to enjoy them.
- Enjoying a walk to streetside cafes and bike riding in pleasant neighbourhoods should be available to everyone.
- The joy of exploring our local neighbourhood by walking or bike riding has become routine for many throughout the last two years.

Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)

- Victorian councils are calling on the Victorian Government to deliver \$230 million over four years to support local walking and cycling infrastructure. Funding would support

priority projects in all Victorian councils and provide targeted funds for strategic bike links in all suburbs of Melbourne.

Rationale and Background

- Encouraging walking and bike riding through better paths and crossings bike riding is a key priority of many councils and communities.
- Councils are responsible for local roads and paths, however, existing state government funding streams and grants are insufficient, unsustainable and too rigid.
- Investment in targeted, local streets paths and crossings for walking and bike riding is needed as a more efficient priority over large-scale infrastructure.
- There is an opportunity for more collaboration between councils, including across municipal borders. Victorian Government funding should deliver regional paths and support councils to collaborate.
- Greater levels of Victorian Government consultation with councils on large scale infrastructure projects would support integrated decision-making and alignment with council plans and local transport projects. This would ensure projects better meet local needs.
- A recent MAV survey of all Victorian councils (85% response rate) found that funding was the main barrier for more than 80% of councils in doing more to deliver increased walking and bike riding. External approvals were a barrier reported by 46% of councils.

Safer communities

Key Messages (Public Facing)

- Everyone should have access to safe travel choices.
- Our local communities are growing rapidly, so we are prioritising urgent safety upgrades to ensure that everyone can get to and from home safely.
- We're calling on the Victorian and Australian Governments to better support us to deliver safe roads and paths, especially in emerging communities and estates.

Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)

- The Federal Blackspot Program should be expanded to provide ongoing funding to deal with high-risk sites, while better supporting dangerous intersections and roads with smaller traffic volumes.
- The Victorian Government must implement a well-funded and ongoing Council Road Safety Fund enabling all local governments to access funding to implement urgent hazard mitigation works, without strict guidelines and a focus on specific issues seen in existing grant programs.
- Victorian Government road safety grant programs, such as the TAC's Community Road Safety Grants and Local Government Grants Program should be expanded to provide significantly more funding to councils to ensure everyone can move across the local road network safely.

Rationale and Background

- Growth in infrastructure demand across all interface councils is leading to inadequate safety treatments on roads.
- Local road safety issues could be dealt with in a timely manner with ongoing and sustainable funding.
- Road safety infrastructure could be better supported via enhanced developer contribution models.
- Local streets and roads in growth areas not getting roads upgraded to arterial standard due to funding constraints.
- Opportunities to better integrate projects across council boundaries would be welcomed.

- Greater funding flexibility, with realistic timeframes and less rigid grant eligibility criteria, would enable councils to better respond to emerging community needs and local priorities. More capacity to collaborate across municipal boundaries is needed
- COVID stimulus and state-led, large scale infrastructure projects have increased contractor costs and are leading to project delays.

Freight

Key Messages (Public Facing)

- We're delivering initiatives to better support a stronger local economy, business growth and new jobs in our local communities.
- Councils support businesses to grow, jobs to be created, and freight getting where it needs to go,
- We all want to ensure trucks stay off local streets, especially in emerging suburbs.
- Many of our emerging communities are traditional freight routes. We want to ensure a smooth transition that means freight is provided with even better connections and trucks stay off newly established residential streets.
- Strong economic growth is important for our recovery from COVID, however, we don't want to see more trucks on local streets.
- We want to make sure deliveries can get to businesses, shops, and homes on time, while minimising inappropriate noise impacts after hours and in quiet residential areas.
- Trucks should stay on major roads and only enter local streets when absolutely necessary.
- Councils are keen to deliver congestion busting active transport projects to help people get to where they need to be faster and safer, helping to support faster freight movements and a strong economy.

Advocacy Requests

- Ongoing, guaranteed funding to deliver improved network access, greater efficiencies and modern infrastructure would be welcomed by residents and businesses across Melbourne. Victorian councils and local communities support a stronger and more efficient freight network but want to ensure trucks stay off local streets.
- Ongoing funding to support improved local streetscapes, while ensuring trucks can access shops and distribution points away from pedestrians, cyclists and local residents would be welcomed by all Melburnians. This is in line with the Victorian Government's Movement and Place Framework.
- The Victorian Government needs to better consult growth area councils when planning and delivering major freight and transport infrastructure projects. Congestion busting projects are welcomed but they need to be better integrated with local council plans and projects so they can be delivered in a timely, integrated and sequenced manner.

Rationale and Background

- The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a surge in the scale of deliveries, shipping and freight activity across Australia. In Melbourne, this means more trucks on our streets more often.
- Victorian councils want to support a strong freight network and continued economic growth, while balancing the amenity needs of local communities.
- Ensuring dedicated freight routes on major roads rather than local streets is of critical importance. The Principal Freight Network (PFN) managed by the Department of Transport helps to support freight movement and economic activity.
- Councils welcome the opportunity to assist delivery of the PFN and ensure local communities are not burdened by trucks, noise, pollution and inappropriate road network access.

- Greater funding to councils to support more key transport and freight infrastructure upgrades, efficient approvals processes and more support for the industry are critical.