

Better Transport Options for Melbourne's West

Melbourne's west is ready to take off.

Over 800,000 people already call the west home. Our population is set to more than double over the next 30 years, to 1.8 million.

It's no surprise our communities are the fastest growing in Victoria – the West is a great place to live.

But politicians need to do more make sure we have the transport services we need.

It takes too long to get to work, and there often aren't any alternatives if our normal route is disrupted.

Services don't connect well enough to our local schools, shops and community centres, and they are too disjointed, confusing, and infrequent to rely on.

Lots of our destinations are within cycling distance, but the routes don't feel safe and easy to ride.

This is holding us back. It means we have less time with our families; people struggle to take advantage of job opportunities; and too often there's no option but to drive in congested traffic.

With our region growing faster than any other part of Melbourne, it's time for politicians to listen to us and fix transport in the West.

Our Six Point Plan

To give more time to people in the west, we are asking the Victorian Government, along with key transport partners in the region, to commit to the following six-point plan of action:

1. A region-wide analysis of current and future transport needs;
2. Access to safe, frequent and reliable public transport across the west;
3. Safer, easier ways to walk and cycle in the west;
4. A new, high-frequency network of bus connections between major centres;
5. Well-coordinated connections into train stations and local centres; and
6. New transport services planned and activated at the right time in growing communities.

1. A region-wide review of current and future transport needs

To plan and implement an effective transport system in the west, we need a detailed understanding of the many ways people need to move around our region, and how this will change in the future.

Without accurate data, we cannot deliver an efficient public transport system that provides a genuine alternative to an inefficient and expensive dependency on private cars

A comprehensive, region-wide analysis of transport needs should be conducted and made publicly available, including:

- how people travel to work;
- where people go to shop, access services and engage with their community;
- what transport services are needed in key employment and education precincts; and
- what transport services will be required in new and growing communities.

This information will then be used to increase, change or implement new transport services, with the goal of maximising public and active transport use, and minimising dependence on cars.

2. Access to safe, frequent and reliable public transport across the West

To get a larger number of people using public transport, it must be reliable and available, as well as affordable and safe. Therefore, we need a commitment to a **Minimum Public Transport Standard** for Western Melbourne, regularly reported against by the State Government:

95 per cent of households and businesses in the west will have at least one public transport service that:

- *runs at least every 20 minutes, for extended hours and seven days a week;*
- *is within walking distance (400m) of the passenger's origin; and*
- *gives direct access to a Major Activity Centre or Major Public Transport Node within 30 minutes.¹*

This minimum standard would give people in the west the confidence to rely on the public transport network, particularly buses; which will increase patronage and allow for further service improvements.

3. Safer, easier ways to walk and ride a bike in the West

¹ This proposed Minimum Standard is based on the targets outlined in the Victorian Government's *Public Transport Guidelines for Land Use and Development* <<https://goo.gl/8m1BFQ>>

Melbourne's West has some of the lowest rates of physical activity in Victoria, along with some of the highest levels of obesity and preventable lifestyle diseases.

We can help to tackle these important issues, as well as problems of traffic congestion and parking by increasing the number of people who choose to walk and ride to where they need to go.

A *Western Active Transport Target*, which is regularly monitored and updated, would help to unite government, communities and individuals to consider leaving the car at home.

To achieve this target, we need **coordinated investment in cycling infrastructure**:

- Fixing missing links in off road bike path networks
- Building more connections to train stations, shops and schools
- Providing more facilities to keep bikes safe

4. New high frequency network of bus connections between major centres

Melbourne's west is already larger than many of Australia's small cities. Yet our public transport system is dominated by services that run to and from the CBD, rather than effectively connecting us to key destinations within our region.

To address this issue, **a new network of bus routes that run between our major centres** should be developed. This new network would:

- run at high frequency;
- run for extended hours, not just nine to five;
- be easy to use and understand, with clear signage, consistent timetables and logical routes;
- get you to your destination faster, with fewer stops than normal bus routes; and
- connect efficiently with other transport, including local bus routes, trains and trams.

As part of the development of a high frequency network, **all major roads should be upgraded to include priority bus infrastructure** like raised platforms, new shelters, bus lanes and bus signals at busy intersections. These improvements will make it much easier for:

- people who already live and work in the west to travel to work via public transport.
- for businesses to start and grow in the west; and
- for CBD commuters to consider moving to a job that's close to home.

To ensure that this new regional bus network is accessible to everyone in the region, we also need a **region-wide review of all levels bus services**, including neighbourhood buses, community transport services.

5. Well-coordinated connections into train stations and local centres

For bus and active transport networks to work effectively, they must provide strong links into local shopping, service and community centres; and seamless connections to higher density transport, particularly train lines.

To ensure that every resident in the west has this level of access, **we need better neighbourhood bus services that are responsive to different users' needs; and more separated walking and cycle paths to help people get to train stations and activity centres without needing to drive.**

This would help to tackle traffic congestion and parking problems that surround many transport hubs, and enable people to have an option to include more physical activity in their day.

6. New transport services planned and activated in growing communities

To address the specific needs of new and growing communities, we need to fast-track the delivery of transport infrastructure and services in new developments.

Most new suburbs promise high-quality public transport, but too often there is a major lag between new residents moving in and when these transport services are established. This means that new residents often need to buy an extra car, which entrenches transport disadvantage and creates a hard-to-shift dependence on car travel.

Planning and construction for all new suburbs or significant urban infill developments must therefore ensure that transport services are present from the time residents move in.