

Improved access to transport and services needed, especially in outer growth areas and regions

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Four key transport projects delivered over the next 30 years will better connect Victorians to jobs, services and each other, says the state's independent advisory body, Infrastructure Victoria.

Presented to the Victorian Parliament today, Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021–2051 makes 94 recommendations worth around \$100 billion, spanning many types of infrastructure and based on extensive evidence, innovative land use and transport modelling, research and consultation.

To keep Melbourne moving as population grows, Infrastructure Victoria recommends the Victorian Government reconfigure the City Loop, extend suburban train lines in Melbourne's growing outer north and west, prepare for the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road, and upgrade road technology systems to ensure safer, smoother travel.

More detailed planning is recommended for Melbourne Metro 2, a city-shaping rail project that could also provide improved direct Geelong services.

Launching the strategy at the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) today, Infrastructure Victoria CEO Michel Masson says while large built infrastructure projects will continue to be important as Melbourne grows, they should be integrated with land use planning to ensure multiple benefits.

"Our final recommendations consider the medium to longer-term impacts of the global pandemic. Despite the current challenges, Victoria will continue to grow and transform," says Mr Masson.

"Our 30-year roadmap outlines how Victoria can make the most of the infrastructure we already have while ensuring new infrastructure, such as road and rail projects, deliver maximum value to areas where it is needed most."

More than half (56%) of the recommendations in the strategy relate to making better use of Victoria's existing infrastructure through policy development, legislative reform, and planning.

Forty-one recommendations involve infrastructure capital investment by government and around a quarter of recommendations focus on developing regional Victoria.

Mr Masson highlighted that much of the demand for new infrastructure is in outer growth and regional areas. Melbourne's outer-northern and western suburbs are expected to attract over 800,000 new residents over the next 30 years.

“By better connecting outer suburban growth areas and the regions to Melbourne, we can provide fairer access to jobs, transport and services for all regardless of postcode,” Mr Masson said. “Every Victorian deserves good access to jobs, services, and public transport whether they live in Mildura, Middle Park, Melton or Mallacoota”.

Infrastructure Victoria conducted a three-month community and stakeholder engagement program to develop final recommendations in the 2021 strategy, including more than 25,000 website visits, 675 participants in consultation events, and more than 200 formal, written submissions.

As a result of new evidence and feedback from the community and stakeholders, four new recommendations were added, and several others were changed or removed.

“Thanks to our conversations with Victorians, we adopted a faster timeline for phasing in electric vehicles and shifted our focus so that renters benefit from improved home energy efficiency. We also better understood the importance of libraries and aquatic centres to all communities especially growth areas and recommended a program to link outer suburbs to rail with ‘next generation’ buses,” Mr Masson said.

The 30-year infrastructure strategy is the second delivered by the advisory body since Infrastructure Victoria was established in 2015. The inaugural 2016 infrastructure strategy made 137 recommendations across nine sectors. Of these, nearly 90% have been completed or are underway.

Mr Masson said “Victoria faces some big challenges over the next three decades including a growing and ageing population, technological transformation, a warming climate and worsening congestion on our transport network.

“With statewide infrastructure planning, Victoria can be better prepared for the challenges ahead, get better use from what we already have, and ensure the value of every infrastructure project that is built is optimised.”

The estimated capital cost profile for the recommendations average \$3 billion a year to 2025, \$8 billion a year to 2030 and \$4 billion a year to 2035.

Under legislation, the Victorian Government is required to respond to the strategy's recommendations and deliver an integrated 5-year infrastructure plan within 12 months. Infrastructure Victoria will then undertake a detailed analysis and report on the government's progress in delivering on its plan each year in the advisory body's annual report.

To read the 30-year infrastructure strategy, appendices and supporting technical reports, visit www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au

Media contacts:

- Mandy Frostick: Mandy.Frostick@infrastructurevictoria.com.au
- Madeleine Brennan: Madeleine.Brennan@infrastructurevictoria.com.au