



**Infrastructure Australia
National Infrastructure
Priority List 2021
Submission**



Contents

INTRODUCTION	02
WYNDHAM WESTLINK	03
MAJOR UPGRADES TO THE WYNDHAM VALE LINE	04
FAST RAIL TO GEELONG	05
WESTERN INTERSTATE FREIGHT TERMINAL	06
OUTER METROPOLITAN RING TRANSPORT CORRIDOR	07
RESOURCE RECOVERY AND ENERGY FROM WASTE	08
BAY WEST	09
PRESCHOOL AND SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE IN GROWTH AREAS	10
SOCIAL HOUSING	11

Introduction



Wyndham City has a diverse and friendly community, a relaxing lifestyle and endless business opportunities. It is the link between Melbourne and Geelong, the two largest cities in Victoria, making it an area of great economic significance that extends beyond its own region, impacting the rest of the state.

Wyndham City is also one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities, with our population expected to surpass 500,000 by 2040. A rapid population growth has created new opportunities for the 270,000 people that already call Wyndham home.

However, this continual growth in our population is creating issues that only major infrastructure projects and service improvements can solve. A clear example of the gap in infrastructure and services being faced by our communities is the fact that Wyndham has one of the highest proportions of people in Victoria who spend two or more hours commuting to and from work.

Infrastructure Australia's *National Infrastructure Priority List Update* provides an important avenue for Wyndham City to advocate for the important projects that will assist in addressing the exponential population growth in the western region of Melbourne.

This submission by Wyndham City focuses on the following:

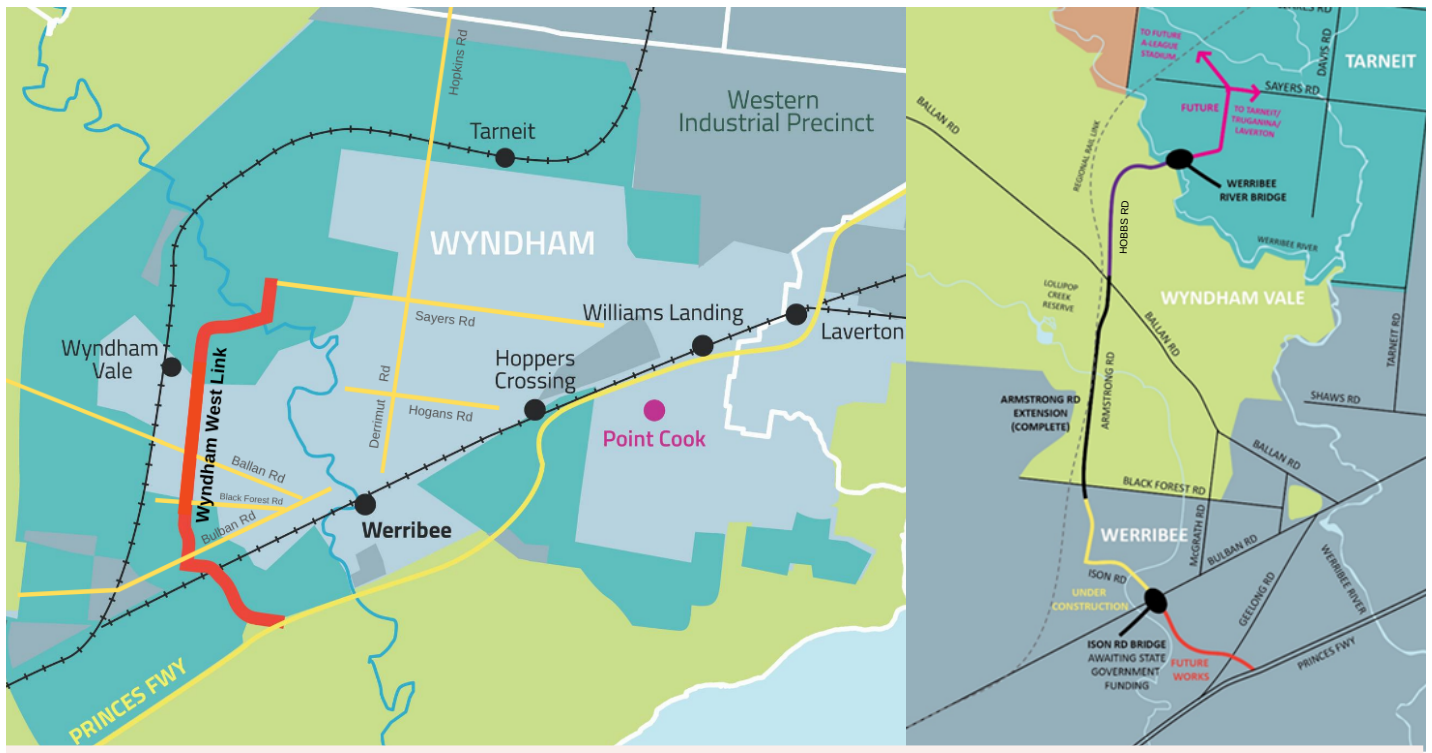
- Wyndham Westlink
- Major Upgrades to the Wyndham Vale Line

- Fast Rail to Geelong
- Western Interstate Freight Terminal
- Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor
- Resource Recovery and Energy from Waste
- BayWest
- Preschool and School Infrastructure in Growth Areas
- Social Housing.

These projects were the focus on Wyndham City's submission to the 2020 list and will reduce traffic congestion, create a more sustainable circular economy, address overcrowding in schools situated in growth areas, improve freight efficiency, and improve accessibility to essential services. Not only will these projects benefit Melbourne's west, but they will also have a positive flow on effect for the wider Melbourne metropolitan region and regional Victoria. Furthermore, these projects will support the nation as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic through job and economic stimulus and addressing the pandemic related transport impacts.

We thank Infrastructure Australia for the opportunity to present these projects for inclusion in the *National Infrastructure Priority List 2021* and we look forward to them being placed on the national agenda.

Wyndham Westlink



The Westlink project is a critical road infrastructure project to enable growth and development in the Wyndham West region, which is where around 70 per cent of Wyndham's growth is occurring.

A continuous link connecting rapidly developing residential areas in the west of Wyndham to the Princes Freeway, Westlink will relieve high levels of congestion from traffic currently funnelled towards the Werribee city centre and will open up a new corridor for development.

The Ison Road Bridge rail overpass is a key feature of Westlink. The rail overpass will connect two sections of the planned and funded arterial Ison Road across the Melbourne-Geelong railway line, enabling freeway access from Wyndham Vale, Manor Lakes and Tarneit.

Council and developers are already committed to the sections of Westlink that are within their authority either side of the Ison Road bridge location:

- Lendlease, the developers of the Harpley Estate, have nearly completed the construction of a duplicated Ison Road on the north side from the base of the Ison Road bridge to Armstrong Road, and have duplicated Armstrong Road from Ison Road to Black Forest Road.
- To the south, Council has allocated funding for the construction of a duplicated Ison Road between the Princes Highway and the base of the Ison Road bridge.

Approximately \$120 million in government funding is required:

- for the construction of a four-lane Ison Road bridge over the railway line and additional works required at the Princes Freeway interchange,
- to signalise the Geelong Road (Princes Highway) roundabout,
- for the duplication of Ballan Road and associated Regional Rail Link bridge at the Ballan Road/Armstrong Road/Hobbs Road intersection.

Major Upgrades to the Wyndham Vale Line



Electrification of the Wyndham Vale Line

The Victorian Government's Western Rail Plan includes a possible metro rail link from Wyndham Vale to Werribee as part of its western section, a critical connection to link the regional and metro lines not only for Wyndham but also for the broader region. This link is therefore an important component for connecting every rail line from Cheltenham to Werribee, as noted in the announced Suburban Rail Loop.

The Western Rail Plan also includes planning for the full separation of regional and metro services on the Geelong and Ballarat lines, the first step in the delivery of fast rail to these cities; as well as detailed planning for the electrification of two metropolitan train lines to Melton and Wyndham Vale with possible new stations and additional tracks between Sunshine and Melbourne.

The current rail service to Geelong via Wyndham is diesel powered, greatly limiting its capacity. Electrification of a separate line to Wyndham Vale is already required to enable fast rail to Geelong. Bringing this forward will provide urgently needed capacity for additional trains to Wyndham Vale and Tarneit, and future stations on the line to Wyndham Vale. This is supported by data presented in the annual VLine report, which showed significant growth on the line and patronage at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit Stations over the last year.

Wyndham City welcomes the Victorian Government's proposed Western Rail Plan and encourages the delivery of the vital rail link between Werribee and Wyndham Vale, as part of the Western Rail Plan, to benefit people travelling between Werribee, Sunshine and Geelong.

Council strongly supports this proposed link to improve the connection between Werribee and Geelong. The link would integrate the metro train line with the Regional Rail Link and create more employment, economic and lifestyle opportunities for businesses and residents. Early delivery of this link is also supported as it will provide a significant benefit for both the Western Rail Plan and Suburban Rail Loop.

Regional Rail Link Stations

The Regional Rail Link (RRL) was one of the biggest rail infrastructure projects ever undertaken, however it is already at capacity and will not continue to adequately service Wyndham's growth fronts. Wyndham City is calling on the Federal and Victorian Governments to embark on a revitalisation of rail infrastructure by building four new RRL stations in Wyndham, including:

- Sayers Road Station in Tarneit West as soon as possible
- Black Forest Road Station in Wyndham Vale within three years
- Truganina Station in Truganina within three years
- Davis Road Station in Tarneit West within three years.

Adjacent to the planned Sayers Road Station will be a major town centre and significant residential development around it. When completed, 34,000 people will call this area home. There is a steady and consistent spread of residential development moving North and West into this area. The Sayers Road Station catchment will exceed 100,000 by 2040.

In addition, the new 15,000 seat A-League stadium is also being built in Tarneit, next to the planned Sayers Road Station. These projects represent significant value capture and creative funding model opportunities. Wyndham City is continuing to call on the Victorian Governments to help build Sayers Road Station as soon as possible so Melbourne can capitalise on this unique opportunity.

Fast Rail To Geelong



In 2019, the Australian Government promised to invest up to \$2 billion towards the construction of the fast rail link between Sunshine and Geelong via Wyndham. This funding is to be matched by the Victorian Government.

The existing Regional Rail Link (RRL) service from Geelong to Melbourne, which stops at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit stations, is already at capacity. This line currently experiences limited capacity, low train speeds and the inability to run express services, limiting Wyndham and Geelong's potential to grow as economic hubs to complement Melbourne.

Faster travel times and increased rail capacity between the Melbourne and Geelong via Wyndham will address emerging demand in these growth areas.

As stated by Infrastructure Australia, the proposed initiative includes:

- Electrification of a separate line between Melbourne and Geelong via Wyndham, enabling the operation of higher-capacity trains. This will increase reliability and allow for inter-operability with the Melbourne metropolitan rail system.
- Duplicating the tracks along this line. This will enable express services to operate and result in quicker journey times between Geelong and Melbourne.

Increasing rail capacity between Geelong and Melbourne, with stops in Wyndham, is crucial to unclogging major roads and improving liveability for residents throughout Wyndham, Geelong and Melbourne. Wyndham City encourages Infrastructure Australia's continued recognition of this project's national significance and include it in its *2021 National Infrastructure Priority List*.

Western Interstate Freight Terminal



There is currently no terminal in Melbourne that has the capability to accommodate the Inland Rail service offering of double-stacked 1,800-metre trains.

The Australia and Victorian Government have been working together, ensuring that an intermodal terminal with sufficient capacity to accommodate such trains will become available in the near future. This will support Inland Rail in Melbourne, with services due to commence in the mid-2020s.

The Australian and Victorian Government are currently undertaking a joint business case to consider the terminal location as well as matters including market access/operating models, financing options and value capture opportunities. This is expected to be completed by late-2020. The Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT) in Truganina has been considered as one of the potential sites.

The WIFT would include the construction of an interstate rail freight terminal and warehousing precinct at Truganina and a rail link to the interstate rail freight network. Currently interstate containers bound for distribution in Melbourne are railed to terminals at Dynon, next to the Port of Melbourne, and then trucked to the outer suburbs. The Dynon terminals have limited space and capacity and can be difficult to access, contributing to traffic congestion throughout Melbourne.

Independent studies have confirmed Truganina as an optimal location for the WIFT as it is close to around 50 per cent of the existing interstate freight rail customers, with good road access to other parts of Melbourne. It is also large enough to include a significant precinct for co-located freight and logistics activities which would likely use the rail terminal. The WIFT site also has the necessary space to accommodate demand for rail freight well beyond 2050.

Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor



The Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR/E6) Transport Corridor is a proposed 100-kilometre-long high-speed transport link for people and freight in Melbourne's North and West. It will be transformative for Melbourne and the surrounding regional areas, creating better connections to key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport, the Port of Geelong, and the proposed Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT).

The OMR corridor will provide a more direct, high-speed alignment for Inland Rail. It will also link residential and employment growth areas in Melbourne, including Wyndham. Delivering this and the following project detailed in this report would help address key issues identified by Infrastructure Australia's 2019 audit, which found that capital cities are acting as "bottlenecks in our regional supply chains, limiting access to key markets for exporters and increasing costs for consumers", and that "congestion on key routes, land-use planning that doesn't consider freight and regulatory constraints on our gateways are common".

The OMR corridor is being planned to provide an ultimate high-speed transport link for freight and people that would:

- Enhance connectivity between key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport and the Port of Geelong
- Improve access to the proposed Donnybrook/Beveridge Interstate Rail Terminals
- Serve as an important route to interstate and major regional destinations
- Link residential and employment growth areas in the north and west of Melbourne, and
- Improve access in this major employment corridor which includes Avalon Airport, Werribee, Melton, Melbourne Airport and Donnybrook.

Wyndham City supports construction of the south-west section of the OMR freeway corridor (Princes Freeway – Western Freeway) and south-west section of the OMR rail corridor (Geelong line to the Western Interstate Freight Terminal), to connect the proposed WIFT to the national transport network.

Councils in Melbourne's western region support the road component from Princes Freeway to Western Freeway as the first stage of the project. Developing this section would provide significant relief to the Princes Freeway/M80 Freeway interchange and create the opportunity to bring forward the development of the WIFT and the freight transport connections to the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong.

The land required for the OMR corridor was defined and preserved in 2010 through a Public Acquisition Overlay. The next step in preserving the corridor is acquisition of land in the corridor as it becomes available and undertaking an Environmental Report on the OMR corridor.

Resource Recovery and Energy from Waste



Waste treatment and recycling are essential services and current infrastructure is inadequate to meet social, environmental, and economic demands of a growing Australia.

The importance of the Wyndham Refuse Disposal Facility (RDF) as one of Melbourne's major metropolitan landfills, now and into the future, is highlighted by the fact that Melbourne's waste generation will increase from the current 940,000 tonnes a year to 1.55 million in just over 25 years. In Wyndham alone, this increase could go from the current level of 103,000 to above 180,000 tonnes a year over the same period. This importance is compounded by the crisis being caused by China's recycling ban, which has seen many metropolitan Councils and commercial operators forced to send their kerbside recycling to landfill.

Infrastructure Australia's recent audit also noted that with a limited number of new waste treatment facilities and landfill sites have been approved and residential development encroaching on existing sites, without action, waste freight will have to transport their loads further from the waste generation point.

The Federal Government must look at waste treatment and recycling infrastructure and provide the funding needed to help deliver Australia away from its reliance on landfill, as well as promoting a Circular Economy. Considerable work has already been undertaken by the Victorian Government, with the recent implementation of the Recycling Victoria: A new economy action plan, and Wyndham City, having recently adopted the *Refuse Disposal Facility (RDF) Strategic Plan* and granted approval for a \$150 million Energy from Waste facility in Laverton North.

The Federal Government should work collaboratively with State and Local Governments on leveraging the considerable capital costs of developing facilities for resource recovery from waste, including Energy from Waste facilities with the highest environmental standards to dispose of those parts of waste that cannot be reused or recycled.

Bay West



The Port of Melbourne is the busiest shipping container port in Australia, handling 2.58 million twenty-foot equivalent units, or around 38 per cent of Australia's container trade in 2014-15. It is expected to reach its capacity of 8 million containers by around 2055.

The Victorian Government has committed to work towards building a second container port. Infrastructure Victoria has identified Bay West, between Point Cook and Point Lillias, as the preferred option over a location in Hastings.

As the Local Government Authority responsible for the growth and development of the Wyndham municipality, which takes in the location of the proposed Bay West option, Wyndham City has a strong desire and responsibility to ensure that any proposed development of a second container port within our municipality would bring a range of benefits that substantively outweigh the negative impacts of such an option.

The potential impacts on traffic congestion due to increased truck movements and possible environmental impacts caused by constructing the large-scale dock structure into the Bay have not yet been adequately addressed. Little consideration has been given to alternative options, such as an underground rail link from Webb dock to the Western Interstate Freight Terminal, which may be more viable and have less impact from environmental, congestion and land use perspectives. As such, we recommend that further in-depth investigation is needed as a minimum before Infrastructure Australia includes this project in its *2021 National Infrastructure Priority List*.

Preschool and School Infrastructure in Growth Areas



Wyndham recommends that the shortfall of preschool facilities and school infrastructure in growth areas be urgently addressed as a national infrastructure priority.

Many of Australia's peri-urban and outer metropolitan regions, including Wyndham City, have experienced rapid population growth – particularly among the younger population. For instance, between 2011 and 2016, the number of residents in Wyndham aged under 20 increased by 29.9 per cent compared to 4.2 per cent in Australia.

As noted in the Infrastructure Australia An Assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs audit report, due to this population growth, demand for school infrastructure is increasing in the outer growth and inner-city areas of fast-growing cities. However, Governments haven't been able to keep up with this demand, which has resulted in a shortfall of preschool facilities and school buildings. This lag in infrastructure will be further exacerbated by the introduction of Government funded three-year-old kindergarten in Victoria from 2022.

The timely provision of preschool and school services and facilities is paramount for the health and wellbeing of children and young people and delivers long-term social and economic outcomes.

Additionally, education infrastructure is central to building well-connected communities and do so even better when they're co-located with other community infrastructure such as kindergartens, community centres and libraries. Co-location and integration projects also ensure there is greater efficiency in the use of community resources and infrastructure and may assist in improving student engagement and participation.

Wyndham City calls on the Federal Government to work together with State and Local Governments to invest in kindergarten and school infrastructure that will meet the needs of families in our fast-growing outer suburbs and enable these communities to achieve their potential.

Social Housing



Over the next 20 years, it is estimated over 700,000 additional social dwellings will be required in Australia. In Wyndham City, approximately 11,700 units will be required by 2036.

Varying funding and financing models will need to be explored to ensure Governments are able to meet the increasing demand for social housing. These funds will be directed towards the construction, maintenance and renewal of social housing infrastructure.

These financing options may include direct public investment coupled with more efficient financing through the Australian Government's National Finance Investment Corporation. Studies by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute have found this is far more efficient compared to subsidizing the operating income of a commercially financed program.

Investing in social housing is paramount as they provide secure housing to the vulnerable and low-income groups. Social housing developments can also assist in fostering a more inclusive, diverse and active community.

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