



CREATING ACCESSIBLE, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

MEETING OUR TRANSPORT CHALLENGES Connecting Victorian Communities **ACTION NINE**

Background

Maintaining liveability in Melbourne and across Provincial Victoria requires residential and commercial development in areas with good transport links and the integration of public transport, pedestrian and cycling facilities into the design of cities, towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods.

By promoting growth and development around public transport – and by creating community, suburban and town centres that encourage less reliance on cars – we will deliver better social, economic and environmental outcomes and create more liveable local communities.

The Transit City program is a major initiative that aims to cluster urban development around high quality transport services to create safe, vibrant, accessible and liveable communities. Transit Cities in Melbourne and regional centres will continue to be at the forefront of planning and developing liveable, connected communities across Victoria.

An important feature of liveable communities is that they provide access to services for people with restricted mobility choices, such as older people, people with disabilities and young people. Providing better access to public transport for these Victorians will contribute to their quality of life and enable them to participate actively in society.

Key Elements

- \$710 million over 10 years to promote better urban planning, improve access to Victoria's transport network and create better community connections.
- Make public transport more accessible.
- Metropolitan Park & Ride.
- Improving metropolitan modal interchanges.
- Travel savings for seniors.
- Transit Cities.
- Planning for the future.
- Taxi services.

Making Public Transport More Accessible

Through the Public Transport Access Program, the Government will make the public transport network more accessible to people with disabilities and problems with mobility. The program will deliver substantial improvements in line with the standards outlined in the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA).

Funding will be provided for a 10 year program of projects to improve the accessibility of metropolitan train and tram services, regional and metropolitan bus services and V/Line passenger services.

Improvements made under the program will include:

- **Metropolitan train services** – access paths, ramps, surfaces, handrails and grabrails, stairs and tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs);
- **Tram services** – upgraded platform tram stops built primarily in medians, tram right of ways, wide safety zones where traffic impact would be minimal, and some upgraded platform stops in high use locations;
- **Bus services** – access paths, surfaces and TGSIs; and
- **V/Line services** – access paths, ramps, waiting areas, surfaces, handrails and grab rails, lighting, controls, furniture and fittings.

This program supplements other projects, such as new accessible rolling stock, Southern Cross Station, Think Tram, Smart Bus, Metlink signage and information and the new SmartCard ticketing system, all of which integrate DDA compliance requirements.

Funding

\$250 million

Timing

The access program has commenced and will be progressively rolled out.



Metropolitan Park & Ride

Park & Ride facilities enable passengers to combine a private car trip with a public transport trip. Providing this opportunity expands the catchment area of the public transport network and potentially diverts long car trips to public transport.

This combination of modes is already popular in metropolitan Melbourne, with 30,000 car parking spaces provided, including approximately 29,000 at suburban rail stations. The strong growth in demand for Park & Ride facilities at railway stations is expected to continue.

Current Park & Ride facilities are at or near capacity, indicating that the provision of additional places will support and encourage continued growth in this already popular program.

The Government will provide additional Park & Ride spaces to cater for growing demand. The first year of the program will include sites where Park & Ride facilities can be developed at grade on VicTrack land. Boom gates will also be installed at some existing locations to ensure spaces are used by public transport users only. The effectiveness of these measures will be monitored to ensure the ongoing program is sufficiently targeted to attract a high proportion of new public transport users.

Subsequent years of the program may include the provision of multi-storey car parks.

Funding

\$90 million

Timing

Commencement of project mid-2006.

Improved Metropolitan Station and Modal Interchanges

A modal interchange is a location where various public transport services meet (train, tram and/or bus services, including SmartBus services) and passengers are able to switch between services.

A key goal of any multi-modal public transport system is to ensure access to the system, and especially transfers between modes, is as seamless as possible. Transfers are increasing in importance in Melbourne as the public transport network expands away from fixed rail.

Improving transport interchanges and facilities will provide Melburnians with faster, safer and easier connections between different transport modes. It will also make cross-town travel by public transport a more attractive, viable and easy alternative to using a car.

The Government will introduce a 10 year program to improve access, transfers and amenity at key stations and modal interchanges across Melbourne. The program will identify and address the largest gaps in existing facilities, focus on the busiest points of access and aim to improve components within facilities that are most important to passengers.

Funding

\$130 million

Timing

Commencement of project 2007/2008.

Travel Savings for Seniors

The Government will introduce a number of measures to deliver significant travel savings to seniors on public transport.

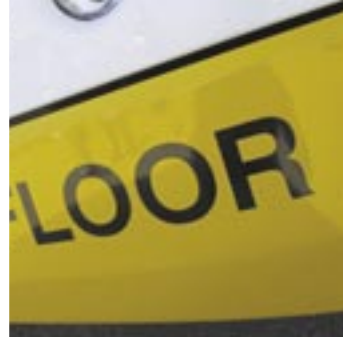
- Free travel will be provided to Victorian seniors on Sundays within metropolitan Melbourne and within major regional centres, such as Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. To obtain free travel, seniors will apply for a Sunday Seniors Pass at Premium Stations or staffed V/Line stations.
- Concessions for seniors on V/Line services will be aligned with metropolitan and regional city bus services, enabling seniors to travel on V/Line at the concession rate at all times. Victorian seniors will have the same concession entitlements on V/Line services as Australian Pensioners or Victorian Health Care Card holders.
- Victorian pensioners currently receive one free travel voucher per year. This voucher can be exchanged for a Daily Metcard, two single V/Line tickets or a Day Return V/Line ticket. The Government will expand this program and provide all Victorian seniors with two travel vouchers each year, providing free travel on off-peak V/Line and Metcard services.

Funding

\$30 million

Timing

New arrangements for seniors will commence in late 2006.



Transit Cities

The Transit City program is a major Victorian Government initiative that aims to cluster urban development around high quality transport services to create safe, vibrant and accessible communities.

The program will help link people to services, opportunities and each other by locating activities and development around frequent and convenient public transport. In each Transit City, the available public transport comprises a major railway station, supplemented by bus, taxi and/or light rail services.

The Transit City Program aims to reduce congestion by providing an urban environment that encourages a variety of sustainable transport modes and delivers better social, economic and environmental outcomes to the community.

Nine metropolitan and four regional centres have been strategically selected to adopt and implement the Transit City concepts. Metropolitan Transit Cities are Box Hill, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Ringwood, Epping, Footscray, Frankston, Sydenham and Werribee. Regional Transit Cities are Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and the Latrobe Valley.

The Government will provide substantial additional funding to upgrade public transport facilities to meet Transit City objectives, including improving facilities at train stations, providing or improving bus interchanges, installing DDA compliant access stops and improving pedestrian links between these facilities and with surrounding developments. Pedestrian facilities should also comply with the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act*.

Funding

\$170 million

Timing

Projects have already commenced in several of the designated Transit Cities across Victoria and will be progressively rolled out to other cities. For example, the \$200 million Revitalising Central Dandenong project will kick-start the regeneration of Dandenong and unlock the city's potential to become a thriving centre in Melbourne's growing south-east corridor.

Better Taxi Services

Victoria's taxi industry has a key role to play in supporting the liveability of Melbourne and Provincial Victoria – providing mobility for people with disabilities, supporting the state's tourism industry and allowing people to travel to and from events late at night.

In May 2002, the Government announced a 17 point reform program for the taxi industry, which will be fully implemented by the end of 2006. The program includes:

- The ongoing introduction of 600 new 'green top' peak service taxi cabs to ensure more cabs are available at night;
- The release of 22 new taxi licences between 2002 and 2005 to better cater for transport demands in regional areas;
- Launching a Customer Charter to explain the rights and obligations of taxi passengers and drivers;
- Introducing a 20 per cent tariff between midnight and 5am in the metropolitan taxi zone (payable entirely to the driver) to encourage more taxis to be on the roads during the late night and early morning periods;
- Introducing a new training course for drivers, requiring them to undergo 90 hours of training – more than double the previous 40-hour course; and
- Establishing greater transparency in the trading of taxi licences by requiring them to be sold through the Bendigo Stock Exchange.



The Government has also progressively reformed the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program to ensure that subsidised taxi travel for people with disabilities is targeted at those most in need.

While these reforms have achieved a great deal, more work remains to be done. In particular, the Government will:

- Enact legislation to establish a new accreditation regime for the taxi industry that will include strict standards and accountability measures to ensure taxi services meet the expectations of the Victorian travelling public;
- Introduce measures to improve the availability and reliability of taxi services for people who use wheelchairs, including subsidised training for wheelchair taxi drivers, an increased presence by the Victorian Taxi Directorate at Melbourne Airport to ensure wheelchair taxis are collecting wheelchair passengers, and giving VTD the power to implement disciplinary processes if a driver is found to be consistently refusing to do wheelchair work; and
- Increase the numbers, visibility and presence of Victoria Taxi Directorate staff in the field, with active policing of vehicle and service standards and strict, targeted campaigns against fraud and other illegal activity in the taxi industry.

Funding

To be funded within the Department of Infrastructure.

Timing

Taxi reform measures are already being implemented and will be ongoing.

Planning for the Future

Securing reservations for future public transport works and major road and transport corridors will make the delivery of future transport infrastructure faster, more timely and cost effective when it is finally required.

The Secure Reservations for Major Transport Corridors Project is protecting options for future transport links within the metropolitan area.

A reservation for a future Airport Transit Link is already being put in place. Reservations for future Epping North (Aurora) and North Werribee (Tarneit) Transit Links will be put in place as part of this initiative. While the transport projects under consideration are not intended for construction for 20 years or more, action is required now to ensure Victoria has the ability to proceed with these projects when needed.

Funding

\$40 million

Timing

Secure Reservations projects funded through *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* will commence in 2007/2008.