



Submission to the 2050 Port of Melbourne Development Strategy Discussion Paper

The Rail Freight Alliance (RFA) is made up of Rural, Regional and Metropolitan Councils across Victoria. The Alliance membership has a strong belief that more freight on rail will add to the efficiency, productivity and prosperity of the nation.

Our Membership includes the Councils of Buloke, Central Goldfields, Ballarat City, City of Greater Bendigo, City of Melbourne, City of Wodonga, East Gippsland, Gannawarra, Glenelg, Greater Shepparton, Hindmarsh, Horsham Rural City, Loddon, Mildura Rural City, Moyne, Pyrenees, South Gippsland, Southern Grampians, Swan Hill Rural City, Warrnambool City, Yarriambiack, Latrobe City, Northern Grampians and West Wimmera.

In relation to the 2050 Port of Melbourne Development Strategy Discussion Paper, the Rail Freight Alliance believes the following areas are critical future considerations for the Port of Melbourne and the Victorian Community.

Port of Melbourne, Industry, Community and Infrastructure

Victoria's population is expected to grow by approximately 3.5 million people over the next 30 years (ref1). The overwhelming recipient of this population growth will be Melbourne. Freight volumes in Victoria are predicted to increase from 360 million to nearly 900 million tonnes by 2051(ref 1). This growth and increase in freight volumes will present a great challenge to provide a liveable, affordable and productive state and economy. Congestion, community safety, vehicle emissions, continued road depreciation and road way capacity are important considerations for Victoria. Urbanisation in Melbourne will need to be managed, government policy and strategic Infrastructure investments are vital to the future of the Port of Melbourne and the Victorian Community.

The Port of Melbourne and Victoria's Liveability and Economy

The Rail Freight Alliance believes that to maintain the Liveability of Victoria, while continuing to increase imports and exports, a far greater share of the freight task will need to transfer from road to rail in the next 20 years. Rail provides a cost-effective freight transport over longer distance, is a safe means of transport, reduces congestion and greenhouse gas emissions and prolongs the State and Local Government road networks.

The Victorian Community

Several issues need to be considered as part of an overall future for passenger and freight movements in Victoria. Victoria's predicted population growth and freight task is unprecedented. Being able to move people and freight while maintaining a liveable, affordable and productive state and economy, minimising congestion and enhancing community safety must be holistically planned.

Prepare for Population Change

Decentralisation of Melbourne's population, reducing disadvantage and creating a globally competitive transport logistics supply chain must be a priority for the Port of Melbourne and future Victorian Governments. Strategic investments in the Victorian Rail Network will improve Victoria's competitiveness, public amenity, public safety, reduce disadvantage and improve Victoria's sustainability.

Redistributing Victoria's Population

Regional Victoria can ease Melbourne's growing population. This can be achieved if regional areas have access to reliable transport links, electricity & gas, government services and telecommunication. Infrastructure investment must be increased outside Melbourne, if Victoria's population is redistributed across Victoria.

Drive Victoria's changing, globally integrated economy

An integrated freight plan, addressing first (farm gate & intermodal) and last mile (intermodal, Port and/or endpoint) issues, must be developed and adopted. Corridor protection against further urbanisation is a priority.

Ports and Connectivity

Connectivity to an existing or any new container Port will be essential to the liveability of Victorians. The Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Project is scheduled to be operational by 2025. A Future Interstate Freight Terminal (FIFT), must be planned, designed and constructed and have connectivity to a Port Rail Shuttle, the Port of Melbourne and any future second container port.

Intermodal Centres and On Dock Efficiencies

Significant investments have been made in Intermodal Centres, both in and around Melbourne and Regional Centres. These facilities have a positive impact on the longevity of Local and State Road Networks, public amenity and should be part of an efficient freight logistics system in Victoria. Currently the costs associated with delivery and receipt at these centres are cost prohibitive for many businesses. For the Port of Melbourne to increase its projected throughput a holistic approach is vital. Strategic investments and coordinated planning need to be made at intermodal centres, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service and On Dock Rail direct to Stevedores.

A Transport Plan for Victoria

The Victorian Government has recently released "Delivering the Goods" a Victorian Freight Plan and established Freight Victoria. RFA believes that Victoria's growing freight task must be planned and interfaced with passenger movements. Both freight and passenger use road and rail infrastructure. The Alliance considers that both freight and passenger transport must be planned in unison when investing in Victoria's transport infrastructure.

First & Last Mile Investments

The Victorian Government has supported several road projects that support moving freight to main roads, accumulation and or intermodal centres. Many of these projects have merit, however, they are not part of an overall investment in a transport plan for Victoria. Rail investment at the Port of Melbourne is a critical part of an efficient supply chain for the Port of Melbourne and a sustainable Victoria.

High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFV)

The Victorian Government has established a HPFV Network across Victoria. Most of these routes have access to rail. Regardless of the emissions of any future road freight vehicle a significant investment will be required in road infrastructure. For example, the main access to Melbourne from Gippsland is via the Monash Freeway. This route is currently gazetted as a HPFV route, creating further congestion on road pathway that is already at capacity. The Alliance does not support High Productivity Freight Vehicles where a Rail Freight option is available. The Alliance considers that rail must be part of an integrated transport solution.

Corridor Protection

There have been many examples of trying to create pathways through urban areas; the most recent being the sky rail project. Reengineering these pathways is expensive, creates community uncertainty and threatens social amenity. The areas identified for potential future development should be preserved. Corridors for rail shuttle linkages to Lyndhurst, Somerton, Dandenong and Altona must be planned and protected.