

# Transport Advocacy Strategy 2022 *'Locals Know What Locals Need'*

## Metropolitan Overview

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### **Walking and bike riding**

#### **Key Messages (Public Facing)**

- Everyone should have access to safe walking paths and bike tracks.
- Every kilometre walked or on a bike has health, environment and economic benefits.
- Walking and bike riding reduces traffic congestion and vehicle operating costs, improves health and the environment, and delivers more metres of infrastructure per dollar invested.
- Councils want to open more local streets to safe walking and bike riding, without increasing congestion.
- More footpaths, crossings and bike lanes help families to stay healthy and spend quality time together.
- Kids tell us they want to walk, scoot or bike ride with friends to school and schools are encouraging them to do so.
- Streets belong to everyone. We're upgrading streets so that whether you walk, bike ride, play and drive, everyone is welcome to enjoy them.
- Enjoying a walk to streetside cafes and bike riding in pleasant neighbourhoods should be available to everyone.
- The joy of exploring our local neighbourhood by walking or bike riding has become routine for many throughout the last two years.

#### **Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)**

- Victorian councils are calling on the Victorian Government to deliver \$230 million over four years to support local walking and bike riding. Funding would support priority projects in all Victorian councils and provide targeted funds for strategic bike riding links in inner and middle suburbs of Melbourne.
- The Victorian Government must fund long-term state-wide infrastructure plans and Victoria's transport plan, articulating sequencing and timelines for investment, in line with Infrastructure Victoria's 30-year Infrastructure Strategy. This must include early engagement with, and planning alongside, councils. Local government is best placed to make complementary investments if investment priorities places are clearly identified.

#### **Rationale and Background**

- Encouraging walking and bike riding through better paths and crossings bike riding is a key priority of many councils and communities.

- Councils are responsible for local roads and paths, however, existing state government funding streams and grants are insufficient, unsustainable and too rigid.
- Investment in targeted, local streets paths and crossings for walking and bike riding is needed as a more efficient priority over large-scale infrastructure.
- There is an opportunity for more collaboration between councils, including across municipal borders. Victorian Government funding should deliver regional paths and support councils to collaborate.
- Greater levels of Victorian Government consultation with councils on large scale infrastructure projects would support integrated decision-making and alignment with council plans and local transport projects. This would ensure projects better meet local needs.
- A recent MAV survey of all Victorian councils (85% response rate) found that funding was the main barrier for more than 80% of councils in doing more to deliver increased walking and bike riding. External approvals were a barrier reported by 46% of councils.
- Investment in active transport infrastructure would help deliver State Government commitments to increase active transport to 25 per cent mode share by 2030. It also helps deliver Plan Melbourne objectives, particularly the key theme of 20-minute neighborhoods.
- Infrastructure Victoria advises that “current infrastructure planning approaches are inconsistent, lack mechanisms to actively coordinate investments and services, hamper local government planning and investment, and frustrate private and not-for-profit investments.” The local government sector supports the need for the development and publication of long-term state-wide infrastructure plans and Victoria’s transport plan, including sequencing and timelines for investment.

## **Safer communities**

### **Key Messages (Public Facing)**

- Everyone should have access to safe travel choices.
- Separating vulnerable road users from cars, buses and trucks is a key priority for Victorian councils.
- Children should be able to safely walk, scoot or cycle to school. It helps them to stay fit and healthy and minimises unnecessary vehicle congestion around schools.
- Councils want to invest in safer, more attractive local streets to support strong community connections and local amenity.

### **Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)**

- The Victorian and Australian Government’s needs to better support councils with targeted funding to deliver safer options for people travelling to schools, workplaces, shops, and to visit their family and friends. Melburnians deserve safer walking paths and bike riding infrastructure separated from congested roads.
- The Victorian Government should properly fund school crossing supervisors and invest in local safety improvements. This would include indexed annual funding to match local government school crossing supervisor contributions.
- \$10 million is needed by Victorian councils to deliver safe system works to reduce need for supervisors and encourage safe active school transport.

### **Rationale and Background**

- In addition to the maintenance of the current 50:50 funding split for school crossing supervisors, local government would welcome the opportunity to work with communities to provide safer active transport access around school precincts.
- Department of Transport-led reforms, currently underway to the school crossing program, involve a safe system assessment of the school crossing environment.

- Funding is required to deliver on safety measures identified through this process. It can potentially reduce the need for supervisors while providing a safer street environment.
- Existing grant streams are welcomed but remain relatively small. Opportunities to better integrate projects across council boundaries would be welcomed.
- Greater funding flexibility, with realistic timeframes and less rigid eligibility criteria, would enable councils to better respond to emerging community needs and local priorities. More capacity to collaborate across municipal boundaries is needed
- COVID stimulus and state-led, large scale infrastructure projects have increased contractor costs and are leading to project delays.

## **Freight**

### **Key Messages (Public Facing)**

- Funding that delivers a safer and more efficient freight network will benefit both the economy and road safety.
- We want to ensure trucks stay off local streets.
- Strong economic growth is important for our recovery from COVID-19, however, we don't want to see more trucks on local streets risking safety and local amenity.
- We want to make sure deliveries can get to businesses, shops, and homes on time, while minimising inappropriate noise impacts after hours and in quiet residential areas.
- Trucks should stay on major roads and only enter local streets when absolutely necessary.
- Councils are keen to deliver congestion busting active transport projects to help people get to where they need to be faster and safer, helping to support faster freight movements and a strong economy.

### **Advocacy Requests (Direct to Government)**

- Ongoing, guaranteed funding to deliver improved network access, greater efficiencies and modern infrastructure would be welcomed by residents and businesses across Melbourne. Victorian councils and local communities support a stronger and more efficient freight network but want to ensure trucks stay off local streets.
- Ongoing funding to support improved local streetscapes, while ensuring trucks can access shops and distribution points away from pedestrians, cyclists and local residents would be welcomed by all Melburnians. This is in line with the Victorian Government's Movement and Place Framework.

### **Rationale and Background**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a surge in the scale of deliveries, shipping and freight activity across Australia. In Melbourne, this means more trucks on our streets more often.
- Victorian councils support a strong freight network and continued economic growth, while balancing the amenity needs of local communities.
- Ensuring dedicated freight routes on major roads rather than local streets is of critical importance. The Principal Freight Network (PFN) managed by the Department of Transport helps to support freight movement and economic activity.
- Councils welcome the opportunity to assist delivery of the PFN and ensure local communities are not burdened by trucks, noise, pollution and inappropriate road network access.
- Greater funding to councils to support more key transport and freight infrastructure upgrades, efficient approvals processes and more support for the industry are critical.

## **Federal Election 2022**

### **Advocacy Requests**

- The next federal government to commit to Australia's economic recovery through funding:
  1. an initial injection of Financial Assistance Grants to local government of \$1.3b to support communities and jobs and also resolve the current practice of bringing forward two quarterly Financial Assistance Grant payments each year;
  2. a commitment to return Financial Assistance Grants to at least one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue via a phased approach.
- The next federal government to commit to building better transport and community infrastructure through funding:
  1. \$500m per annum for a four-year continuation of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program;
  2. A strategic local roads investment program of \$300m per annum over four years to address road transport first and last mile issues and congestion on local roads;
  3. An increase in Roads to Recovery to \$800m per annum (an additional \$300m per annum) and the Black Spot Program to \$200m per annum over four years.