



EASTERN TRANSPORT COALITION MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: Thursday, 14th December 2023

Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Hosted by: City of Greater Dandenong

Attendees:

Councillors

- Cr Stuart James, City of Monash (Chair)
- Cr Susan Laukens, Knox City Council
- Cr Anna Chen, Manningham City Council (alternate)

Officers

- Lucas Sikiotis, City of Greater Dandenong
- Christopher Marshall, City of Greater Dandenong
- Matthew Hanrahan, Knox City Council
- Yingnan Wang, Knox City Council
- Frank Vassilacos, Manningham City Council
- Michael Blowfield, Maroondah City Council
- Terry Tillotson, City of Monash
- Sandra Worsnop, City of Monash
- Karen O’Gorman, Yarra Ranges Council
- Kim O’Connor, Yarra Ranges Council

Secretariat

- James McGarvey, The Agenda Group

Guest Presenter

- Dr Allison Stewart, Deputy CEO, Infrastructure Victoria

Apologies

- Cr Tomas Lightbody, Manningham City Council
- Cr Tina Liu, City of Whitehorse
- Cr Richard Higgins, Yarra Ranges Council
- Cr Andrew Fullager, Yarra Ranges Council (alternate)
- Cr Tony Dib, Maroondah City Council
- Cr Rhonda Garad, City of Greater Dandenong
- Shane Hardingham, Knox City Council
- Winchelle Chuson, Knox City Council
- Emma Steele, Manningham City Council
- Chris Hui, City of Whitehorse

1. Welcome and Apologies

As Cr James wasn't available to attend the meeting in person, Cr Laukens assumed the Chair and welcomed the attendees.

2. Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were raised.

3. ETC Finance Report

The finance report for the ETC for November 2023 – December 2023 is as follows:

Opening Balance for November 2023	\$67,970.91
October Invoice from TAG	\$7,500.00
Income	\$0.00
Closing Balance for December 2023	\$60,470.91

Moved: Terry Tillotson
Seconded: Michael Blowfield Carried

4. Ratify Previous Draft Minutes and Actions Arising

Minutes of the November ETC meeting:

Moved: Lucas Sikiotis
Seconded: Matt Hanrahan Carried

5. Guest Presentation – Infrastructure Victoria

Dr Allison Stewart, Deputy Chief Executive Officer at Infrastructure Victoria joined the meeting to present on Infrastructure Victoria's recently released bus network report: [Fast, frequent, fair: how buses can better connect Melbourne](https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au) ([infrastructurevictoria.com.au](https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au)).

Infrastructure Victoria (IV) is the State Government's independent infrastructure adviser. As well as preparing and updating a 30-year Victorian Infrastructure Strategy every 5 years, IV also conducts research and provides advice to Government on specific issues.

In its report, IV argues that Melbourne needs a faster, more frequent and better-connected bus network. Priority reforms include:

- straightening out bus routes
- priority measures such as dedicated bus lanes
- operating them for longer hours and better connecting them to other public transport services
- growth areas need good public transport now and buses can deliver it.

These reforms are consistent with the principals set out in the Government's Victorian Bus Plan – *and with the policy suggestions put forward by the ETC for bus reform and investment*. IV's report complements the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning's ongoing program of work.

Specifically, IV's report recommends:

1. Increase the frequency of bus services beginning with outer suburbs and growth areas.
2. Optimise the existing bus network through fast and direct routes.
3. Extend operating hours to match passenger demand and improve timetable integration.
4. Strengthen the role of community transport.
5. Speed up buses through on-road priority and smarter technology.
6. Plan and deliver bus rapid transit across Melbourne.
7. Improve the bus stop and interchange experience.
8. Substantially reduce bus fares relative to other modes.
9. Update the Principal Public Transport Network.
10. Provide funding certainty for growth area buses.

A copy of Dr Stewart's presentation will be circulated with the meeting's minutes.

Infrastructure Victoria's previous report on public transport fares is available here <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/project/fair-move-better-public-transport-fares-for-melbourne/>.

6. Suburban Rail Loop

Mr McGarvey reported that the Suburban Rail loop Authority had released its draft precinct visions for the stations forming Stage 1 of the SRL route development ([First look at future of SRL East Neighbourhoods - Victoria's Big Build](#)), and sought guidance from Monash and Whitehorse Councils on their response.

Representatives of the two Councils suggested that they will need further time to consider the draft SRLA documents, and suggested that this matter be rescheduled for discussion at an ETC meeting in early 2024.

7. 2024 Advocacy Workplan

Priority issues for ETC advocacy in 2024

As flagged at the November ETC meeting, Mr McGarvey suggested a number of issues that the group could consider as areas for advocacy priority in 2024.

In discussion, the meeting identified and agreed in principle to the following items:

- **Continuation of the bus reform campaign**, building off the work the ETC has done over the past two years, and utilising supporting sources including the IV's recent bus report and its recommendations which closely mirror the ETC's themes and suggested initiatives for bus reform, as well as the Department of Transport and Planning's work on bus network reform pilots. The State Budget is key for bus funding decisions.
- Each ETC Councils' **advocacy plans and Integrated Transport Plans**, whilst identifying localised issues, may have many elements in common. This could provide a platform for the ETC to look at ways it could support the advocacy approach of each Council in pursuing these issues. A structured process of consideration by the ETC of opportunities to pursue over 2024 – and beyond – could be conducted in the early stages of the new year.
- The **Victorian Government's Housing Statement** released in late 2023 will impose housing targets on each Council. Whilst the numbers are to be determined, population increases will tax public transport infrastructure and services. Councils may benefit from responding to state government targets by identifying transport upgrades necessary to cater for the anticipated usage growth. Any work the ETC may do in this space would need to align with Councils' planning officers' approach, and that of bodies like the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG).
- The ETC has worked with representatives of the **Eastern Region Trails Strategy** working group to support an exercise in having the ERTS review and update its priority trail projects for future advocacy to state and federal governments. With a refreshed set of priorities, further work is required by the ERTS with ETC support in early 2024 to map out specific advocacy strategies and tactics. Mr McGarvey will meet with the ERTS working group in early 2024 to assist in finalising the considerations necessary to shape the advocacy approach the ETC will pursue.

- The state and federal government funded business case development process is well underway for the **Caulfield to Rowville Trackless Rapid Transport** project. Further advocacy for capital funding to deliver the project will be necessary in 2024 and beyond, working with other stakeholders to target government budget cycles and looming federal and state elections.

Identifying advocacy priorities for the ETC will remain a 'live' process throughout 2024, with further items considered for advocacy as determined by the group from time to time.

8. Local issue presentation

Given time limitations, Chris Marshall from the City of Greater Dandenong agreed to give his presentation on PlanWisely's People Movement Data module at the first ETC meeting in 2024.

9. General Business

Sandra Worsnop, Monash City Council raised the Bike Spot survey exercise which encourages members of the public to identify safe and unsafe spots where people cycle. Mr McGarvey reported that he had promoted the Bike Spot survey through the ETC's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Kim O'Connor, Yarra Ranges Council suggested it would be worth scheduling as an agenda item for the new year a discussion amongst ETC members about the best advocacy approach for Councils on schools crossing funding, and changes to assessment criteria, given the risk of the funding onus resulting from any changes falling on Councils to cover. It was suggested that this item be listed on the ETC's agenda for its February meeting.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be hosted online, and will commence at 6.30pm on Thursday, 15th February 2024.

Action Summary

Action Items	Owner(s)	Deadline
1. Secretariat to add discussion of options for advocacy on out-of-scope projects associated with level crossing upgrades as a future agenda item.	Secretariat	February 2024
2. ETC secretariat to meet with the ERTS working group to finalise advocacy approach for priority projects	Secretariat	February 2024
3. SRLA draft precinct visions to be listed as an agenda item for an ETC meeting in early 2024	Secretariat	March 2024
4. Reschedule the CGD local issue presentation on PlanWisely's People Movement Data module for the February 2024 ETC meeting.	Secretariat/City of Greater Dandenong	February 2024
5. List school crossing funding on the agenda for the February ETC meeting.	Secretariat	February 2024