

# NEWSLETTER no 01

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Early delivery of equitable and healthy transport options in new suburbs: Critical reforms and tools



# Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of the “Early delivery of equitable and healthy transport options in new suburbs: Critical reforms and tools” project. This internal newsletter is to update RMIT’s project partners on activities both undertaken and planned, and to report preliminary insights.

## Activities this quarter

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This quarter the project team has focused on mapping out and exploring the current precinct structure planning process and financial models for transport, as well as some of its history. There have also been the early stages of interviews with practitioners on precinct structure

planning and transport delivery. This includes ethics documentation, preparation of surveys, sending out invites, as well as first interviews. In addition, the team has looked at existing travel patterns in the case study areas and started comparisons to other jurisdictions.

## Some points from emerging insights

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- Journey-To-Work Census data (2011 and 2016) shows that within Casey and Wyndham (SA2s) the share of car travel to work has dropped on average, while travel by train increased. Areas with the biggest decrease in car mode share were mostly close to new train stations, particularly regional rail link stations. This relationship will be further investigated.
- Regarding the PSP process positives are certainty of process and requirements; integration of clear guidelines for cycle and footpaths and for roads that can accommodate buses. In some areas the process needs to be clarified, e.g. sequencing of development, walkability and densities, as is also recognized in Plan Melbourne. Tensions exist between upholding quality and standards and flexibility/ individuality of PSPs.
- Victoria’s transport funding history shows the bulk of Melbourne’s suburban rail network was constructed during 1890s via so-called “Octopus Acts”. While creating an extensive high quality network, concerns arose about overspending and politically motivated decisions. Later approaches sought to avoid corrupt or wasteful transport spending, but built very few rail projects or extensions over the 20th century.

Melbourne’s tramways were mostly constructed by local governments via rates. Coordinated large scale funding for roads did not start until the 1970s.

- The 1970s were also an important turning point for strategic planning for growth areas, as the 1971 Planning Policies for Metropolitan Melbourne introduced the first corridor and development plans. This was to ensure essential services (meaning water, open space, roads) were integrated into newly developed areas. Another turning point was the 2000s with Melbourne 2030 and the introduction of the Growth Areas Authority to coordinate planning and development across Melbourne’s greenfields sites.
- Funding sources for transport in growth suburbs are shifting. Infrastructure contributions and Growth Areas Infrastructure Contributions (GAIC) and how they are or could be used for aspects of transport infrastructure and services will be a focus of ongoing research.

More detailed overviews of the project team activities and insights are set out in the comprehensive update on the next pages.



## About the Project

The Transport Options Project (TOP) aims to improve resident transport and health outcomes; government processes; and financing of transport infrastructure and services. This will be done by:

- Identifying ways to increase local transport options and improved mobility for residents in new suburbs from the start – to improve individual and societal health benefits and reduce resident economic and spatial disadvantage;
- Developing models for a more transparent transport infrastructure financing system and more efficient and equitable ways for spending public and private funds for transport infrastructure and services;
- Building of further government knowledge and ability to achieve its policy goals (reducing gaps between policy targets and realised outcomes);
- Improving certainty and clarity of regulations for developers; and
- Demonstrating the feasibility, equity and efficiency benefits of transport choice in new suburbs to residents, government and the private sector

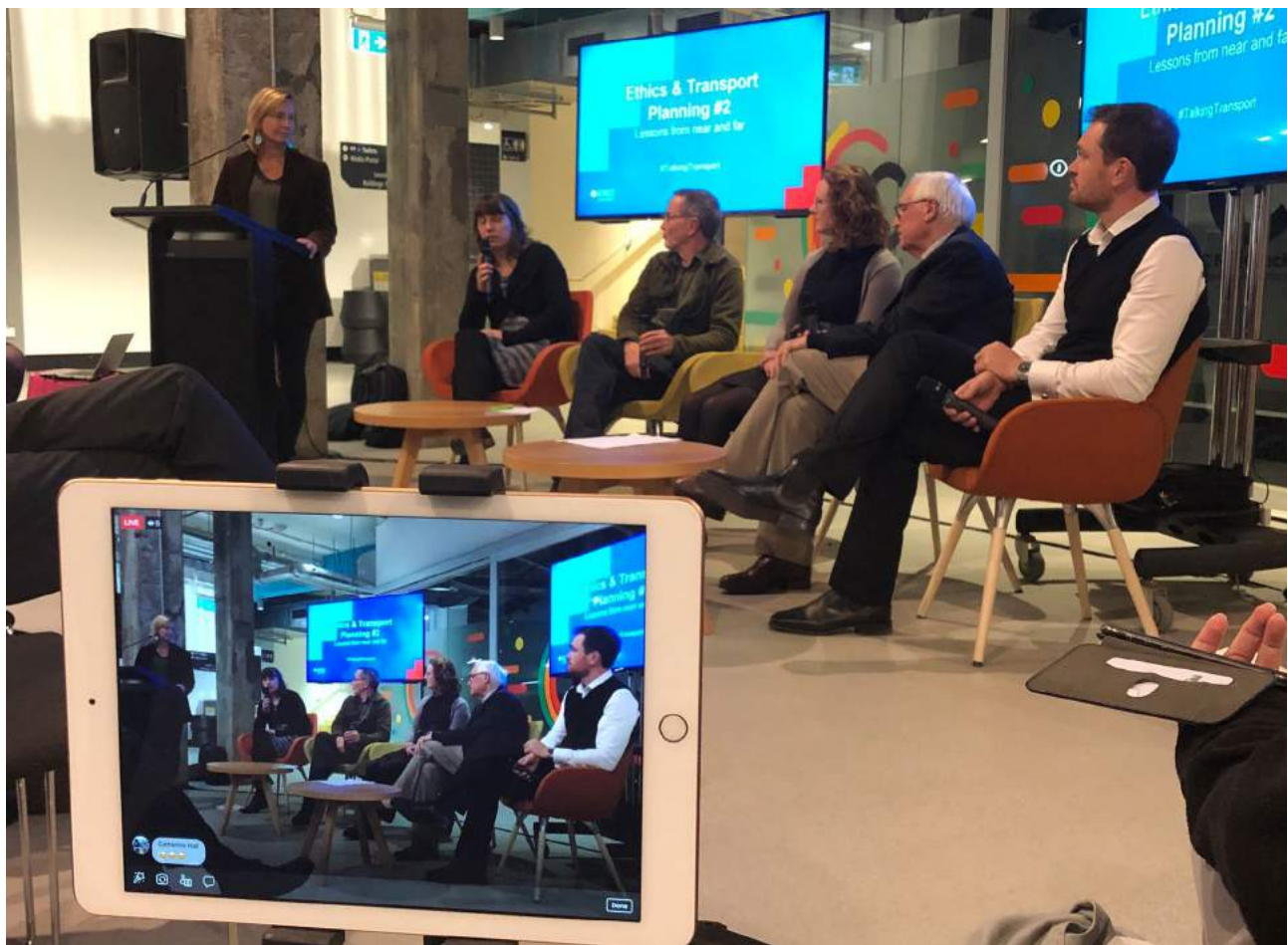
RMIT University funds the research through the Urban Futures Enabling Capabilities Platform. The project is co-designed and undertaken with the support of the following project partners: Transport for Victoria, Department of Treasury and Finance, Victorian Planning Authority, Infrastructure Victoria, Office of Suburban Development, the City of Casey, Wyndham City, Stockland Corporation and the Planning Institute of Australia (Vic).



## Activities June – September 2018

Work across the three work streams “Policy and process analysis”, “Funding approaches and modelling” and “Resident Research” has included:

- Preparation and approval of RMIT ethics application for interviews with government agencies and other professional stakeholders;
- Calls for interview participants being circulated, with interviews commencing late August;
- Review of current Precinct Structure Plan processes and guidelines (document analysis and meetings, e.g. with VPA, synthesis of workshop feedback);
- Review of structure planning history (document review and meetings. e.g. with Whittlesea)
- Review of transport funding and transport infrastructure financing history (document analysis, statistics, meetings with transport and planning historians and colleagues);
- Initial analyses: identifying for new suburban growth and transport planning in Melbourne – who pays for what, how, and when; comparisons of transport funding sources; analysis of Census data on mode share shifts;
- Preparation of questionnaire for resident survey (exploring potential questions, clarifying objectives);
- Participation in Casey’s “Completing the Picture Workshop”;
- Excursion to Wyndham: Regional Rail Link stations and Allora;
- Participation in workshops and seminars on Automated Vehicles, The Ethics of Transport Planning, MTF Leader Transport Forum, “Balance” Victoria, etc.



*Dr Elizabeth Taylor participating on the panel of The Ethics of Transport Planning. Image by Helen Rowe via Twitter.*

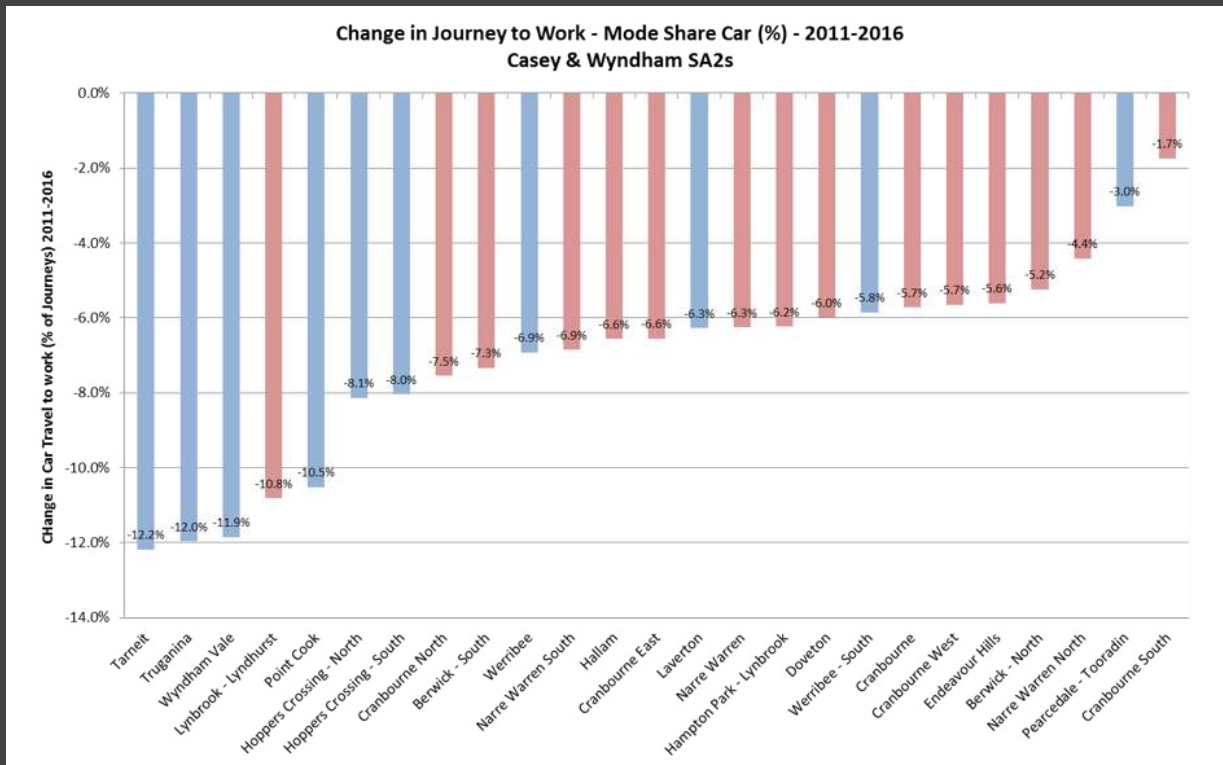
# Some preliminary insights

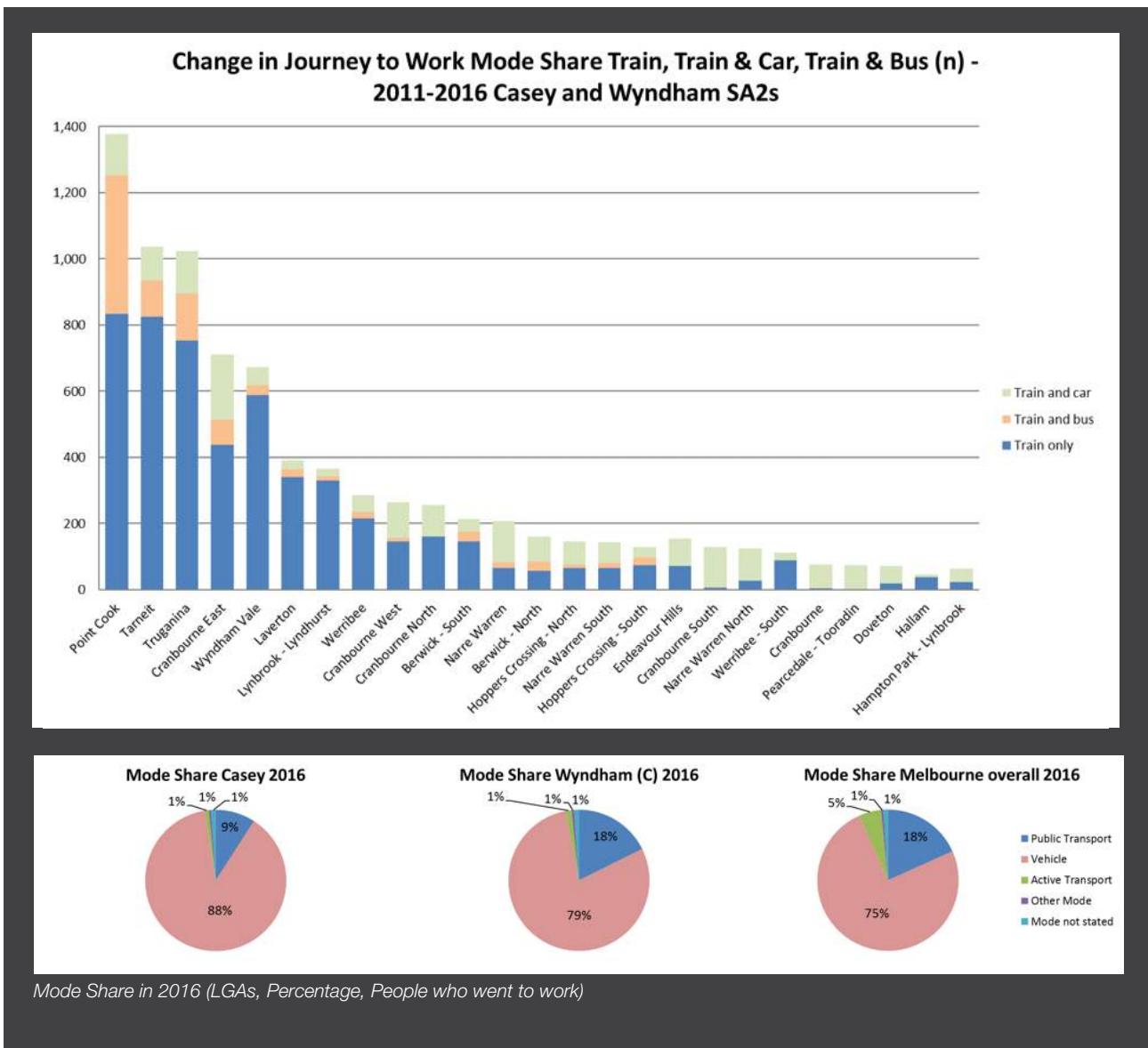
## Mode share shifts in Casey and Wyndham, 2011-2016

- Looking at Census data (2011 and 2016) for travel mode for journeys to work from areas within Casey and Wyndham shows on average, the share of car travel to work dropped by 7.1% (greater than Melbourne overall which dropped -1.7%); while travel by train increased.
- The biggest drops in car mode share were seen in Tarneit (-12.2%), Truganina (-12%), Wyndham Vale (-11.9%), Lynbrook – Lyndhurst (-10.8%), and Point Cook (-10.5%).
- Areas with the largest increases in train travel to work between 2011 and 2016 were Point Cook, Tarneit, and Truganina which each had over 1,000 additional work trips by train. Point Cook in particular saw large increases in combined bus and train travel.
- These trends most obviously suggest the influence in Wyndham of proximity to the Regional Rail Link stations (Wyndham Vale and

Tarneit, opened 2015); and of Williams Landing station (opened 2013). In addition, in Casey, Lynbrook Station opened in 2012.

- As many of these areas are active PSPs which grew substantially in population and journeys to work, net trips by car to work also increased from these areas. The biggest increase in number of trips to work by car was from Cranbourne East (5,620). While 75% of growth in work trips from Cranbourne East SA2 were by car; car travel from Wyndham vale accounted for only 33% of growth in journeys to work.
- The exact influence of provision of new rail connections to PSP areas on mode share between areas with new stations (RRL stations and others – e.g. Toolern) versus those without (such as Cranbourne East and others) will be the subject of ongoing exploration throughout the project.





### Some thoughts on the PSP process

- Positives: certainty of process and requirements; integration of clear guidelines for cycle and footpaths and for roads that can accommodate buses. Walkability as an important topic within the guidelines.
- 20-minute city as relevant topic – is already mentioned in Action 20 of Plan Melbourne, so will be in the renewed guidelines.
- Similarly, sequencing of development continues to be an important issue and is the subject of Action 21 of Plan Melbourne. Currently, development could be better coordinated with (different forms of) infrastructure with an organised sequence of development. 'Triggers' exist for some road infrastructure but not for other transport.
- Tensions between introducing flexibility and individuality into PSPs, while at the same time wanting to uphold quality and standards
- PSPs ensure the possibility that a bus can run along a road, and the provision of bus stops, but that does not influence the likelihood of there being an actual bus service. Question for us: How can a service be ensured? Who would need to enforce and support the implementation?
- Periodic review of PSPs is envisaged, but has only taken place for a few PSPs. The review could

help with the implementation of the PSPs, and for example review the delivery of transport options. We will be looking further into this.

- More of a sub-issue for us: What else could be done to plan for economic development and

employment? Currently the measure is hectares of employment land, but how can development actually be encouraged?

- How can PSPs respond more clearly to surrounding areas and plans?

### Transport funding – some thoughts from historical review

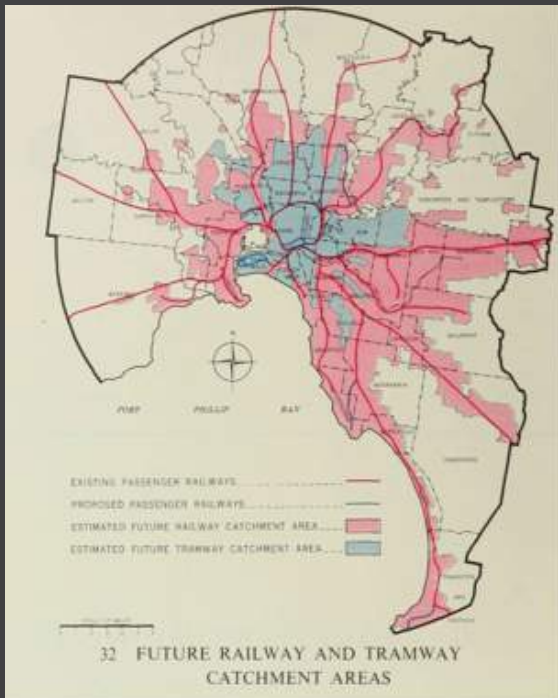
- The bulk of Melbourne's suburban rail network was constructed during the 1890s via so-called "Octopus Acts", with huge amount of funding for new rail lines. Decisions for line funding were made by Ministers.
- On the plus side: this built an extensive high quality rail network, much of it to the benefit of land speculators in new suburban areas. On the downside: strong concerns built about overspending, wasteful projects (famously the Outer Circle), and politically motivated decisions including favoritism in routes.
- Victoria Railways and Commissioners were set up in response to concerns about partishanship and speculative rail projects. On the plus side: this avoided corrupt, wasteful or inequitable projects. On the down side: very few rail extensions actually built. Through the 20th century most extension projects to suburban areas were vetted on financial grounds, although suburban growth was extensive. Of the few projects undertaken, such as the city loop and the Glen Waverley line, funding was partly through councils or by betterment levies.
- Melbourne's tramways were mostly constructed by local governments via rates , and run as separate Trusts before being merged into the Tramways Board.
- For most of the 20th century, and through the 1950s and 1960s, funding for roads in Victoria and especially for "bypass" (AKA freeway) roads was haphazard. The situation shifted over the 1970s via the Transport Plan and the 1971 Planning Policies for Melbourne. The 1970s also saw Federal Funding increase for road projects.
- With public subsidies to rail increasing by the 1970s, power shifted from statutory authorities (such as VR, the tramways board, MMBW) to

departments who increasingly looked for ways to rationalise existing services. Famously the Lonie Inquiry of the late 1970s proposed closing many rail and tram lines.

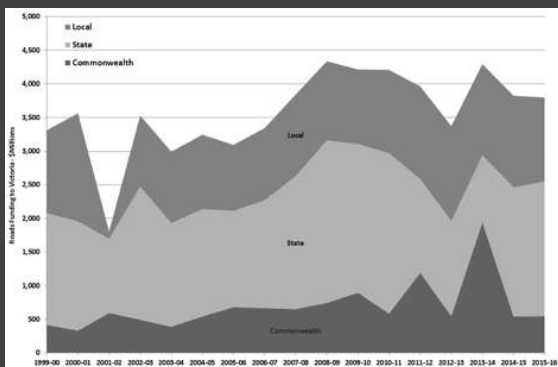
- From the early 1990s to 2014, Government spending on roads in Victoria outstripped rail, with sources split between local, State and Commonwealth. Rail funding in Victoria has had a recent upsurge. Some Commonwealth funding for rail has also occurred (via the Regional Rail Link – prompted by GFC stimulus spending).



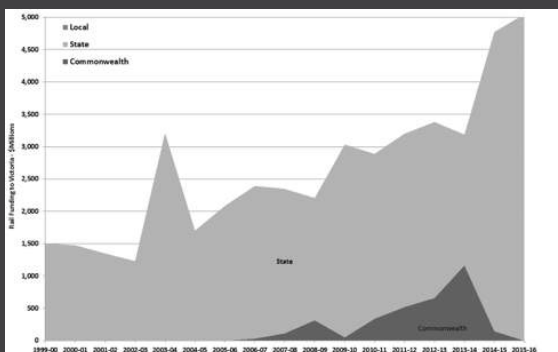
*While most of Melbourne's suburban rail network dates from the 1880s, concerns were rife about spurious projects – famously the Outer Circle line depicted here.*



The 1954 plan for Melbourne shows existing rail and tram service areas, and (if you look hard) some proposed extensions. Of these, only the city loop was constructed.



Road funding Victoria – Outstripped rail from early 1990s to 2014. Split between local, State, Commonwealth. (BITRE)



Rail funding Victoria – Recent upsurge in State funding. The Commonwealth blip is the Regional Rail Link. (BITRE)

### Strategic planning for growth areas – some history

- The 1971 Planning Policies for Metropolitan Melbourne introduced the first corridor and development plans – the plan for Berwick below is given as an example in the overview document. The process was to ensure that essential services such as transport networks, schools and hospitals, water supply, sewerage, drainage, gas and electricity were integrated in newly developed areas. Previously new areas were often lacking even basic infrastructure. The corridors defined areas into which new suburban growth would be directed, over 5-15 year time frames, separated by green wedges.
- The framework of these earlier plans is similar to current PSP plans. As today, the scope of what was considered essential did not explicitly include public transport. While new areas were in the vicinity of transport corridors, and plans had supportive comments about public transport, the planning, funding and provision of land for transport for new suburbs in practice meant the road network.
- The then planning authority, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW), had no real control over rail routes nor funding to build them. The metropolitan Improvement Rate (a levy paid through metropolitan property rates) that funded the MMBW was used for: planning, metropolitan highways and maintenance, metropolitan foreshores and maintenance and metropolitan parks.
- From the 1970s in Melbourne, planning for new growth suburbs has coordinated roads, parks, and land for schools and commercial areas. The process has been refined and more standards and checks integrated over time. However public transport, while always considered by planning and planners, has always sat outside this process. Decisions for funding public transport - beyond bus stops - were generally part of either former statutory agencies, or the central political

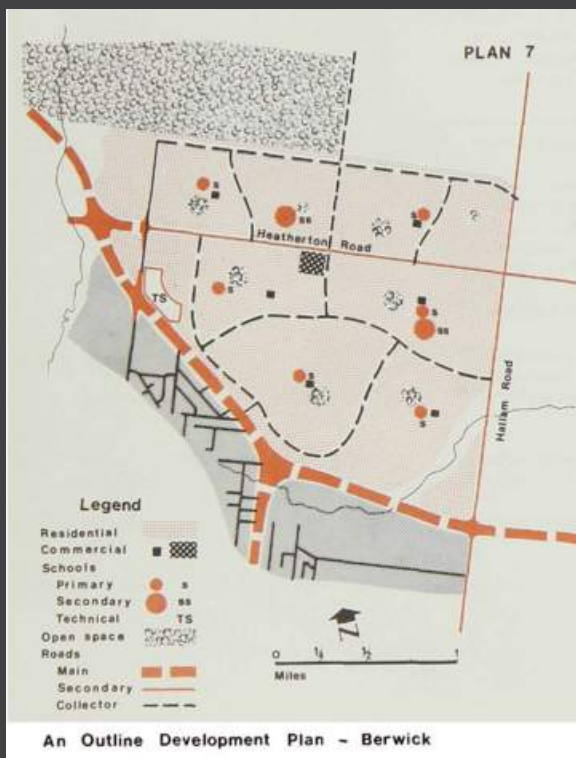


process rather than being central to the PSP or contributions process.

- The emerging role of GAIC in transport funding, and the effects on early provision of transport options in growth areas, will be the subject of ongoing exploration throughout the project.
- In 1983, the power to set broad planning policy for Victoria was transferred to the Minister for Planning and Environment, and the MMBW was subsumed into the Ministry for Planning and Environment in 1985.
- In the early 1990s, the Victorian government appointed a committee to report to the Minister for Planning on possible new planning systems focused on development facilitation. One of the principal recommendations, to develop a single state-wide planning scheme, led to the development of the Victoria Planning Provisions in 1996.
- For growth area planning, the new standardised zones of the VPP were challenging insofar as they were designed to be implemented at a stage of planning where clear boundaries

between types of uses could be set. In the context of growth areas planning, uses are usually less clearly defined in advance. The most fitting zone was the Comprehensive Development zone, although its use was contested to some extent.

- The experiences of Whittlesea Council, who developed some quite detailed plans as part of their growth areas planning, would flow into the development of the PSP guidelines later.
- In 2002 “Melbourne 2030 – Planning for sustainable growth” was introduced. Initiative 2.2.1 of the strategy promoted the development of new or revised plans for designated fringe growth areas, and more detail of the intended process was provided in the draft Growth Areas Implementation Plan.
- To inform the development of the growth areas plans, the Victorian Government appointed five Smart Growth Committees in late 2003. The committees included government departments and agencies; local council officers and councillors; development industry peak bodies; and the local community. They developed reports containing recommendations for the future growth of these areas.
- Following the work of the Smart Growth Committees the State government released “A plan for Melbourne’s growth areas” in 2005. This plan introduced the first version of the growth area framework plans, reviewed the location of the Urban Growth Boundary and announced the creation of an independent statutory body, the Growth Areas Authority (GAA), to work with local councils, developers and authorities to plan growth areas.
- The GAA was created by amendments made to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 in September 2006 through the Planning and Environment (Growth Areas Authority) Act 2006. Although an independent authority it was ultimately accountable, through its board, to the Minister for Planning.





*Detail of the Wyndham Growth Area Framework Plan from 2005*

- The role of the GAA was to coordinate planning and development across Melbourne’s greenfields sites and to ensure that planning for new communities was coordinated across government, so that decisions about land use patterns, transport, environment and other infrastructure investments, and the environment would occur in an integrated way. One aim was that new communities receive the services and infrastructure they need sooner.
- The Growth Area Framework Plans were included as an incorporated document into the planning schemes in September 2006, and clause 12.02 of the VPP was amended to require their implementation. As part of these changes to the SPPF, the amendment also introduced the requirement for the preparation of a Precinct

Structure Plan (PSP), consistent with the draft PSP Guidelines which were released at the same time, before land is zoned for urban settlement. In July 2017 the GAA was replaced by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

- PSP processes trigger infrastructure contributions, as well as, more recently, Growth Areas Infrastructure Contributions (GAIC). These can be used for aspects of transport infrastructure and services, although the mechanism and scope for doing so varies.
- This is the context within which Melbourne’s significant greenfields growth is currently planned. Our research track and assess the evolving ways in which transport provision and funding is integrated into this process.

## A comparison - Land Reallocation in Germany

In Germany, land can be reallocated during the development phase when lots or parts of lots are not suitable for independent development, e.g. when they are too small, or their shape is not suitable. The purpose of this procedure is to create suitable plots with regard to location, shape and size for residential or other uses and with this, to facilitate development including the provision of public infrastructure.

Land reallocation is regulated by the Federal Building Code by means of *land assembly* (Section 45) and the *adjustment of lot boundaries* (Section 80). The municipality orders and implements land assembly when it is deemed necessary to implement the local detailed building plan. In principle, land assembly is a land-swap procedure that reorganises specific areas of both developed and undeveloped land.

As a first step, the affected properties are put together

in a land pool or trust. Then transport areas (roads, foot paths etc.) and green spaces are deducted. After this, the remaining area is re-distributed among property owners so that they receive properties equal in value to the original property, however at the value of when it was decided to undertake the land reallocation. If it is not possible to hand back a property of equal value, the land owner receives compensation. The adjustment of plot boundaries works similar to land assembly, but is a condensed and simplified version, as it is generally applied to a relatively small number of adjacent properties.

The process is in some contrast to the PSP process in Victoria, within which the different landowners retain a direct financial interest in where land uses of higher or lesser value will be placed.

## Miscellaneous/News

There is a potential for exploring the merit and usefulness of **“trackless trams”**. The “trackless tram” is effectively a standard light rail, but it can run on roads rather than tracks (as the name suggests) and costs less to establish. It is usually electric and powered by lithium ion batteries located on the roof. It can be driverless, but doesn't have to be. Other researchers have approached RMIT looking for potential case studies / trial sites.

RMIT will hold an **“Engaging for Impact”** event in February 2019. This event aims to bring together academics, industry representatives, practitioners, policy makers etc. to identify collaborative opportunities and to explore how collaborative, value-driven, impact-focused research and innovation to improve our economy, environment and society. The Transport Options Project will take part in “Engaging for Impact” with a display booth.

There has been **big transport news** in Victoria and for outer suburbs in particular – the recent opening of

Mernda Rail extension following years of community and local government campaigning; and the announcement of the airport rail and the suburban rail loop projects as part of “Victoria's Big Build”. Other announcements for transport in suburban areas have been made ahead of the upcoming election.

A shared Google drive has been set up for the project, to enable and facilitate exchange of documents.



## Planned activities

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- Conduct interviews with government agencies and other stakeholders. The call for interview participants is available here: <http://cur.org.au/news/researchers-inviting-participants-for-transport-project/>
- Finalise Briefing Paper on PSP process
- Prepare for interviews with housing developers
- Finalising ethics process and questionnaire for resident survey
- Finalise partner contracts
- Project Advisory Group: 11th October 2018  
9.30am, Building 37 (411 Swanston Street), Level 2

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