

# WYNDHAM CITY 2020-21 FEDERAL BUDGET SUBMISSION

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wyndhamcity

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# INTRODUCTION

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Wyndham is one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities, with its population expected to surpass 500,000 by 2040. It is the link between Melbourne and Geelong, the two largest cities in Victoria, making it an area of great economic significance that extends beyond its own region, impacting the rest of the state.

More than 270,000 people already call Wyndham home and with our population growing at almost triple the rate of regional hubs Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo combined, this number is expected to double over the next 20 years.

Wyndham's rapid population growth is creating issues for our communities that only major infrastructure projects can solve. A clear example of the gap in infrastructure and services being faced by our communities is the fact that we have the highest proportion of people in Victoria who spend two or more hours commuting to and from work.

We need true collaboration between all levels of government to help deliver the projects that will reduce traffic congestion and take advantage of

Wyndham's strategic location as the gateway between Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and western Victoria. This collaborative approach is also needed to provide the services that will improve community safety and reduce the environmental impact being felt in communities across Australia.

Wyndham is also home to more than 3,100 children who are currently enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten. Without a long-term funding commitment from the Federal Government, many of these and other children throughout Australia may fall through the gaps and families could suffer from significant financial impacts.

This submission further details Wyndham City's calls for ongoing Federal kindergarten funding. It provides summaries of Wyndham City's priorities for the Federal Government's investment in the 2019-20 budget. Council has been advocating for action on these priorities for many years and they are linked to objectives of the Australian Infrastructure Plan, which aligns with Wyndham's City Plan 2017-21.



# BUDGET SUBMISSION SUMMARY

The below budget priorities will deliver significant outcomes for Wyndham, Melbourne's West, and western Victoria. They align with Wyndham City's and the Federal Government's priorities and should be delivered in collaboration with all levels of government. Details on each project are provided throughout this submission.

## Economic Development and Industry (page 6)

Project	Recommendations
Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor	Fund land acquisition and an Environmental Report.
Western Interstate Freight Terminal	Fund the Melbourne component of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail and a Port Freight Rail Shuttle between the Port of Melbourne and the WIFT.
Enhanced Employment Services	Fund employment trials through the regional Employment Trial.
Avalon Airport	Support the development of Avalon as Melbourne's second international airport and maintain a shuttle bus connection between Avalon and Tullamarine airports.

## Urban Development and Financial Sustainability (page 08)

Project	Recommendations
Financial Assistance Grants	Restore Financial Assistance Grants to a level of at least one per cent of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue.

## Early Childhood and Family Services (page 09)

Project	Recommendations
Kindergarten Funding	Commit to long-term funding that guarantees universal access to 15 hours of four-year-old kindergarten per child, per week.

## Public Transport and Roads (page 10)

Project	Recommendations
Westlink (Ison Road Bridge grade separation)	Fund a duplicated four lane bridge and overpass which is the last section in a major project.
Geelong Fast Rail Connection, via Wyndham	Work with the Victorian Government to fund a fast-rail link between Sunshine and Geelong, via Wyndham.
Electrification of Wyndham Vale Rail Line and Extension to connect to the Werribee Line	Provide funding for both planning and construction stages of this project.
Regional Rail Link Stations and Capacity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sayers Road Station</li> <li>• Black Forest Road Station</li> <li>• Truganina Station</li> <li>• Davis Road Station</li> </ul>	Embark on a revitalisation of rail infrastructure by building four new RRL stations in Wyndham that recognises Sayers Road Station as the most immediate priority.
Commuter parking at train stations	Fund the provision of additional commuter car parks at Wyndham's railway stations.

## Environment and Sustainability (page 13)

Project	Recommendations
Recycling, Energy from Waste, and the Circular Economy	Fund the early delivery of waste and recycling infrastructure markets and other priorities identified in the Circular Economy Plan.
Werribee Irrigation District	Fund the Federal Government's share of the Werribee Irrigation District upgrade.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

*In 2016 Wyndham's economy grew faster than the Victorian average, yet 66 per cent of Wyndham's workers still leave the municipality to go to work, greatly adding to Melbourne's traffic congestion. We need greater invest in infrastructure and support programs that will attract a diverse range of industries and support local enterprise which can create more diverse employment opportunities so that more of our residents can work close to home.*

## Outer Metropolitan Transport Corridor

The Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor (OMR)/E6 is a vital infrastructure project. A 100-kilometre-long high-speed transport link for people and freight, it will be transformative for Melbourne and surrounding regional areas. It will create better connections to key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport, the Port of Geelong, and the proposed Western Interstate Freight Terminal. The OMR will provide a more direct, high speed alignment for inland rail and will also link residential and employment growth areas in Melbourne, including Wyndham.

Infrastructure Australia has identified acquiring the land necessary for this corridor as a national priority. Wyndham City agrees with this analysis and is eager to work in partnership with both the State and Federal Governments to deliver this important project. As well as setting aside funds for land acquisition, Wyndham City believes that an Environmental Report on the OMR/E6 should also be funded.

## Western Interstate Freight Terminal

The proposed Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT) will include the construction of an interstate rail freight terminal and warehousing precinct at Truganina and a rail link to the interstate rail freight network. Currently interstate containers bound for distribution in Melbourne are railed to terminals at Dynon, next to the Port of Melbourne, and then trucked to the outer suburbs. The Dynon terminals have limited space and capacity and can be difficult to access, contributing to traffic congestion in Melbourne.

Independent studies have confirmed that Truganina is an optimal location for the WIFT as it is close to around 50 percent of the existing interstate freight rail customers, with good road access to other parts of Melbourne.

Wyndham City supports calls for the Federal Government to fund the Melbourne component of the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail to facilitate easy connection to the WIFT; fund a Port Freight Rail Shuttle between the Port of Melbourne and the WIFT and fund the Outer Metropolitan Ring Transport Corridor (as outlined above), to remove regional and interstate rail and road freight traffic from urban areas.



## Enhanced Employment Services

Wyndham is an extremely diverse community, with almost half of our residents born overseas in 162 different countries. Wyndham is also younger than Greater Melbourne, with 58 per cent of people under the age of 35. Unfortunately, Wyndham also has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in Victoria, with one in 10 young people not engaged in work or study.

Grants provided by Federal, State and Local Governments are working in conjunction with private industries to foster the change we need.

Wyndham City urges the Federal Government to work more closely with the Victorian Government in rolling out an integrated employment service for disadvantaged job seekers. It is vital that the place-based approach to rolling out employment services trials is built on, and that Wyndham is identified as a preferred location in the lead up to the end of the current Jobactive funding in 2022. Additional components of the employment trials funded through the Regional Employment Trial should be funded, while existing funding opportunities must be capitalised on.

## Avalon Airport

Melbourne's air traffic continues to grow and Avalon Airport is well positioned to service Melbourne's West – Victoria's fastest growing region – as well as Geelong and surrounding regional areas.

The commencement of international flights at Avalon Airport adds impetus to the further development of the terminal as an international destination utilised by a multitude of carriers.

In December 2018 Avalon Airport officially became Australia's newest international airport, opening up Melbourne to 500,000 new visitors from Malaysia within the first 12 months alone. In October 2019, Avalon Airport partnered with Vietnamese airline, VietJet Air, adding another estimated 140,000 passengers annually.

Avalon Airport's Master Plan (2015) outlines its long-term plans for the development of the airport as an international aviation centre of excellence, with four pillars of activities including freight operations. Wyndham City supports the master planning process and the progression of major projects that will meet its strategic objectives in 2020-21 and into the future.

We urge the Federal Government to continue to support the development of Avalon Airport as Melbourne's second international airport and to maintain a shuttle bus connection between Avalon and Tullamarine airports in order to boost local tourism and businesses.



# URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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*Poor access to infrastructure and services leads to a lower quality of life. It also means people have fewer opportunities to reach their potential. With proper planning and investment from the Federal Government, we can improve living standards and build a strong, nationally-significant local economy.*

## Financial Assistance Grants

Victorian Councils have missed out on more than \$200 million in untied Federal Government funding support for local roads and community services since the Federal Government froze indexation of Financial Assistance Grants (FAGs) in 2014.

In 1996, FAGs were equal to around one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue. However, a freeze on the indexation of FAGs has seen a 43 per cent decline in relative terms over the past 20 years. Wyndham City, along with the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Australian Local Government Association, calls on the Federal Government to restore FAGs to a level of at least one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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*Research shows that high-quality early childhood, health and support services have huge benefits in terms of children's lifelong wellbeing. We want to give our children the start in life they deserve, but local services are having trouble keeping up with demand.*

## **Kindergarten Funding - Universal Access to 15 Hours Per Week**

The State and Federal Governments have agreed to fund 15 hours of kindergarten per week for four-year-old children in Australia. Under this agreement, State Governments fund 10 hours per week, while the Federal Government funds the remaining five. However, considerable uncertainty exists for both service providers and Australian families as the Federal Government has only committed to funding until December 2020.

Without a commitment from the Federal Government, local children will only have access to 10 hours of kindergarten per week, instead of 15. If this happens, families could be forced to pay an average of \$2000 extra every year and many children may fall through the gaps.

In comparison, the New Zealand Government funds 20 hours of kindergarten per week, while the United Kingdom government covers 30 hours for parents who are working. Australia spends less on preschool education than most other developed countries.

Wyndham City strongly urges the Federal Government to commit to long-term funding that guarantees 15 hours of four-year-old kindergarten per child, per week.



# PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND ROADS

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*Wyndham has the highest proportion of people in Victoria who spend two hours or more commuting to and from work. Our residents consistently tell us that road congestion and poor public transport are top priorities to be fixed.*

*Our new suburbs have too few bus services and our train station car parks are full. Regional Rail Link and Werribee line trains are overcrowded, and our roads are too congested for residents to quickly and easily go about daily life.*

*This has happened because investment in transport infrastructure and services haven't kept up with high population growth. Greater Federal Government investment and collaboration is needed to help solve these issues.*

## **Rail Projects**

### **Geelong Fast Rail Connection, via Wyndham**

In 2018 the Victorian Government announced plans to invest \$50 million for detailed investigation of a fast-rail link between Sunshine and Geelong, via Wyndham. With \$4 billion already invested in the Regional Rail Link, Wyndham City supports calls for the Federal Government to capitalise on this opportunity and help fund this connection as a way of unlocking major employment opportunities.

A 97 per cent increase in Victorian rail patronage since 2012/13 is one of the reasons provided by the Victorian Government for the need to investigate a fast-rail connection with Geelong to slash travel times between Victoria's two biggest cities, as well as creating a rail connection to Melbourne Airport.

It is vital to note that Wyndham's population is already greater than Geelong's and connecting Melbourne, Geelong and Wyndham by fast rail would unlock major employment opportunities while reducing traffic congestion. As noted in Infrastructure Australia's recent audit, there is a disparity of transport availability and affordability between inner city and outer suburban areas, and unless this is addressed our transport networks will continue to be inequitable.

Increased rail capacity between Geelong and Melbourne, with a stop in Wyndham, is crucial to unclogging major roads and improving liveability for residents throughout Wyndham, Geelong and Melbourne.

### **Electrification of the Wyndham Vale Rail Line and Extension to Connect to the Werribee Line**

The Victorian Government's Western Rail Plan includes a possible metro rail link from Wyndham Vale to Werribee as part of its western section, a critical connection to link the regional and metro lines not only for Wyndham but also for the broader region. This link is therefore an important component of connecting every rail line from Cheltenham to Werribee, as noted in the announced Suburban Rail Loop.

The Western Rail Plan also includes planning for the full separation of regional and metro services on the Geelong and Ballarat lines, the first step in the delivery of fast rail to these cities; as well as detailed planning for the electrification of two metropolitan train lines to Melton and Wyndham Vale with possible new stations and additional tracks between Sunshine and Melbourne.

The current rail service to Geelong via Wyndham is diesel powered, greatly limiting its capacity. Electrification of a separate line to Wyndham Vale is already required to enable fast rail to Geelong. Bringing this forward will provide urgently needed capacity for additional trains to Wyndham Vale and Tarneit, and future stations on the line to Wyndham Vale. This is supported by data presented in the annual VLine report, which showed significant growth on the line and patronage at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit Stations over the last year.

Council strongly supports this proposed link to improve the connection between Werribee and Geelong. The link would integrate the metro train line with the Regional Rail Link and create more employment, economic and lifestyle opportunities for businesses and residents. We urge the Federal Government to support this project and commit to providing funding during both the planning and construction stages. Early delivery of this link is also supported as it will provide a significant benefit for both the Western Rail Plan and Suburban Rail Loop.

### **Regional Rail Link Stations and Capacity**

Trains in Wyndham are regularly overcrowded and there are not enough stations to cater for our growth areas. This means our residents are more reliant on cars, increasing congestion on local roads and causing an overflow of car parking around existing stations. The Regional Rail Link (RRL) was one of the biggest rail infrastructure projects ever undertaken, however it is already at capacity and will not continue to adequately service Wyndham's growth fronts. Wyndham City is calling on the Federal and Victorian Governments to embark on a revitalisation of rail infrastructure by building four new RRL stations in Wyndham, including:

- Sayers Road Station in Tarneit West as soon as possible
- Black Forest Road Station in Wyndham Vale within three years
- Truganina Station in Truganina within three years
- Davis Road Station in Tarneit West within three years.

Adjacent to the planned Sayers Road Station will be a major town centre and significant residential development around it. When completed, 34,000 people will call this area home. There is a steady and consistent spread of residential development moving North and West into this area. The Sayers Road Station catchment will exceed 100,000 by 2040.

In addition, the new 15,000 seat A-League stadium is also being built in Tarneit, next to the planned Sayers Road Station. These projects represent significant value capture and creative funding model opportunities. Wyndham City is continuing to call on the Federal Government to help build this station as soon as possible so Melbourne can capitalise on this unique opportunity.

### **Commuter Parking at Train Stations**

The rapid population growth in Wyndham, and wider western suburbs area, has given rise to an unmet demand for transport and particularly public transport. This is evidenced by the rapid growth in patronage drawn to the RRL which opened in 2015 and was operating at near capacity during weekday peak periods within two years of opening. Patronage has continued to grow, with the number of commuters using new train stations at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit growing by 20 per cent and 17 per cent respectively in the 2018/19 financial year. Similarly, demand on the Werribee Line leads to overcrowding on trains and commuter car parks.

Faced with a scarcity of parking at rail stations, many residents opt to complete their journey in a private vehicle, which causes congestion and road safety issues. The Federal Government has announced \$300 million in funding to build car parking spaces at 30 Melbourne train stations, however none of these are in key western region growth areas like Wyndham. This is greatly disappointing and should be rectified in order to help relieve pressure on some of Melbourne's busiest roads.

From a regional perspective, attracting more patrons onto public transport in Wyndham will lead to significant benefits by reducing congestion on roads in inner areas, thus providing the potential to repurpose road space for dedicated public transport and active transport corridors. Wyndham City supports the provision of additional commuter car parks at railway stations.

## Wyndham Westlink (Ison Road Bridge grade separation)

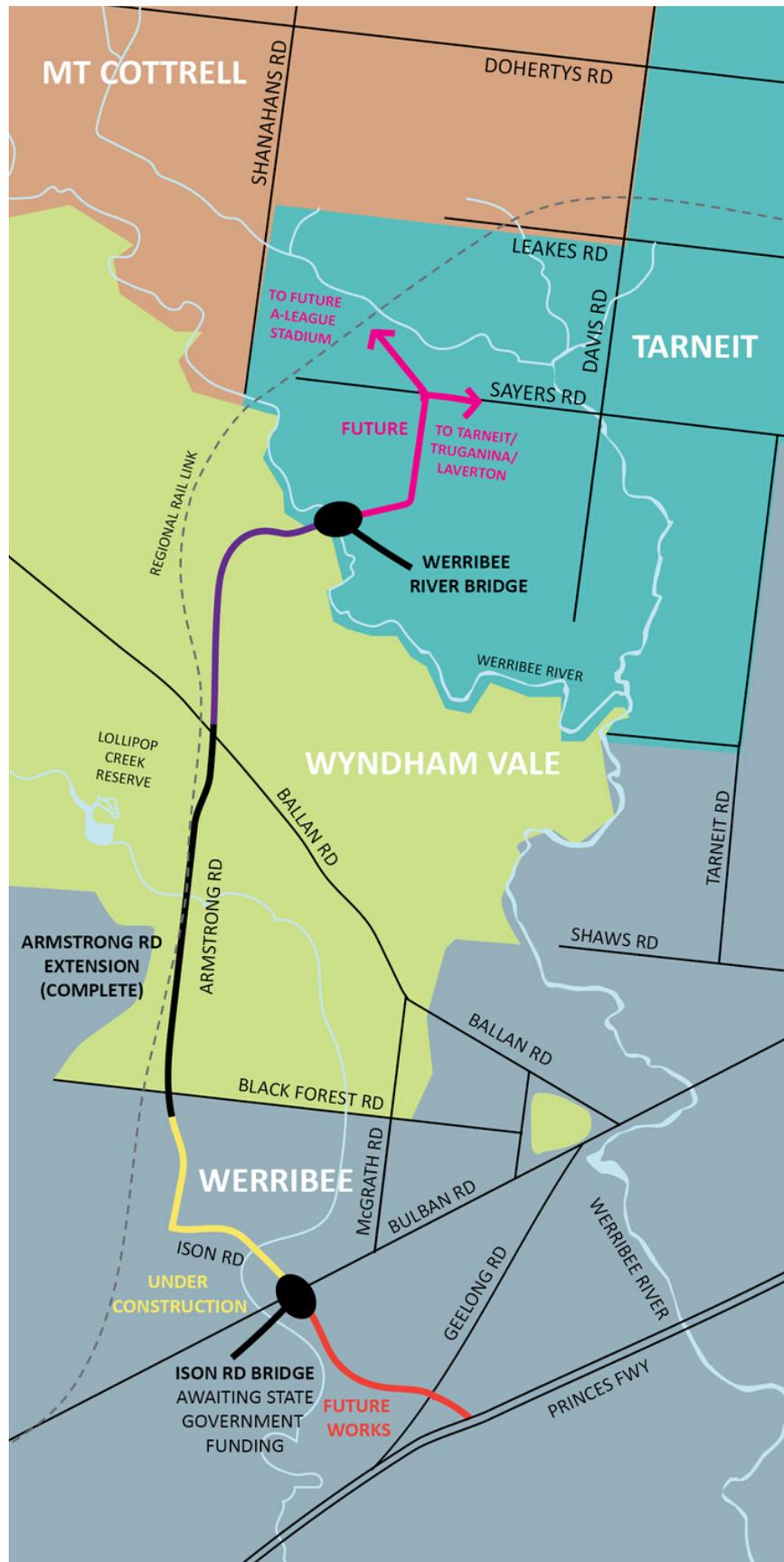
Around 70 per cent of Wyndham's growth is occurring in Wyndham Vale, Tarneit and Truganina. Funding the Westlink – a continuous road link through one of Australia's fastest growing areas, from Tarneit to Wyndham Vale and Manor Lakes, Wyndham Vale and Werribee to the Princes Freeway – will help to support Wyndham's existing and future population growth.

Wyndham City urges the Federal and Victorian Governments to support this important proposal for Wyndham's connectivity and transport movement.

Current unfunded parts of Westlink, which include the Ison Road grade separation, and the Ballan Road, Hobbs Road, and Armstrong Road intersection upgrade, are estimated to cost between \$50-\$100 million with the bridge over the Princes Freeway representing the largest component of these costs.

If the project is completed it will:

- Relieve significant current and future congestion in Wyndham's North and West
- Leverage the faster realisation of land tax, stamp duty and developer contributions, as well as additional Growth Area Infrastructure Charges
- Realise significant value capture opportunities associated with the development of the new A-League Stadium at 1160 Sayers Road and the future Sayers Road Station nearby
- Provide access to future employment hubs within and near the Werribee Junction Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) area, as well as other nearby employment PSPs.



The Wyndham Westlink project will relieve significant and future traffic congestion in Wyndham's North and West.

# ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

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*Wyndham has a delicate natural environment that's home to important waterways, wetlands, coastal areas, and native grasslands.*

*As a community, we embrace renewable energy, resource recovery and water conservation – and we're committed to planning for climate change. We're seeking action from the Federal Government that helps us create solutions for sustainability, adaptation, and conservation.*

## **Recycling, Energy from Waste, and the Circular Economy**

The importance of the Wyndham Refuse Disposal Facility (RDF) as one of Melbourne's major metropolitan landfills, now and into the future, is highlighted by the fact that Melbourne's waste generation will increase from the current 940,000 tonnes a year to 1.55 million in just over 25 years.

Infrastructure Australia's recent audit also noted that with a limited number of new waste facilities and landfill sites having been approved and residential development encroaching on existing sites, without action, waste freight will have to transport their loads further from the waste generation point.

Wyndham City's recently adopted Refuse Disposal Facility Strategic Plan is timely given that 'business as usual' in the waste and recycling industries is not working at the State, Federal or local levels. The new plan explicitly outlines the considerable steps and preparations that would be needed before a future Council would be ready to commence any decision-making process and community consultation on options to recover energy from waste at the RDF.

The Federal Government must look at waste and recycling infrastructure and provide the funding needed to help steer Australia away from its reliance on landfill, as well as promoting a Circular Economy.

The Federal Government should work collaboratively with State and Local Governments on leveraging the considerable capital costs of developing Energy from Waste facilities with the highest environmental standards to dispose of those parts of waste that cannot be reused or recycled.

Wyndham City urges the Federal Government to announce funds in the 2020/21 Budget that will enable the early delivery of waste and recycling infrastructure markets.

## **Werribee Irrigation District**

The Werribee Irrigation District is recognised as an agricultural precinct of state significance. Werribee South is the closest area of intensive food production to Melbourne. Its position, adjacent to the Western Treatment Plant, means that Werribee South farmers have access to recycled water, allowing them to continue growing vegetables during drought. The Melbourne Foodprint Project by Melbourne University showed that the capacity of Melbourne's city fringe food bowl to feed greater Melbourne could fall from around 41 per cent currently to around 18 per cent by 2050. Werribee South is therefore indispensable as an agricultural precinct of state significance.

Wyndham City strongly urges the Federal Government to commit \$11 million to complete the irrigation pipeline modernisation for the Werribee Irrigation District, to maintain and improve Werribee South's access to critical water supplies.



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