**Whittlesea 2040: A Place For All**

Our community’s vision for the City of Whittlesea in 2040 is simple: *A Place For All.* To realise this, four priority areas have become our shared goals: connected communities; liveable neighbourhoods, strong local economy and sustainable environment.

Through the Federal and State Governments and the City of Whittlesea working and investing together, we can achieve our community’s simple vision.

More information about our community vision is available by reading [Whittlesea 2040: A Place For All.](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/3753/whittlesea-2040-a-place-for-all.pdf)

**REQUEST ONE: Construction of the E6 Freeway**

Construction of the E6 Freeway from the Hume Freeway to the M80 Ring Road will provide a north-south corridor through the heart of the municipality and connect future growth areas throughout the Northern Growth Corridor, which is forecast to accommodate more than 260,000 people and 83,000 jobs by 2041.

The Northern Growth Corridor will have a key role as an international and interstate gateway due to its connection with Melbourne Airport and the future Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane rail line and Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal. The economic prosperity of this corridor will be boosted by the E6 Freeway and its link to the Outer Metropolitan Ring.

The E6 Transport Corridor has been designed as a six lane freeway since 2009, extending 23 kilometres from Beveridge/ Kalkallo in the north to Bundoora in the south. Our community has shown overwhelming support for the development of the E6 Transport Corridor as a freeway rather than an arterial road.

The E6 Freeway will provide a continuous north-south route capable of carrying more than 80,000 cars per day. It’s connection with the proposed Outer Metropolitan Road will provide linkages to western port area of Melbourne, Geelong and Avalon Airport. It also has the potential to significantly enhance the accessibility of the northern part of the Hume Corridor to major transport hubs like the future Beveridge Interstate Freight Terminal.

The E6 will also accommodate employment growth within the Cooper Street Employment Precinct, the Melbourne Wholesale Market, Northern Hospital and Epping Central Metropolitan Activity Centre. This precinct accommodates around 11,740 jobs (ABS Census 2016).[[1]](#endnote-2)

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A ***Federal Government*** commitment to construct the E6 Freeway ahead of the current nominated 15 to 30 year timeframe currently proposed. Land along this route is already reserved and there are no known impediments to building this road.

Refer to our [evidence based fact sheet](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4901/liveable-neighbourhoods-e6-freeway-2019.pdf) for more information.

**REQUEST TWO: Wollert Transport Corridor**

The Epping North community is burdened with significant traffic congestion and poor access to public transport, with many residents facing a two hour one-way commute to work.

Construction of a transport corridor to Wollert will remove 2000 cars off the heavily congested local roads every hour and improve the liveability for one of Australia fastest growing areas.

This project is to connect the Epping North and Wollert growth corridor- forecast to triple by 2041- to jobs and opportunities in the Melbourne CBD and local precincts including the Cooper Street employment area, Northern Hospital and Pacific Epping. This project will reduce congestion, long commutes and overcrowding on the South Morang/Mernda rail service.

Public transport is essential within the next ten years as the population begins is rapid growth from 34,889 in 2019 to 95,000 people living in these areas by 2041.

Interim options for consideration would include the construction of heavy rail, rapid bus transit, light rail or trackless tram for the 8.7 kilometres between the current Lalor train station and Wollert Town Centre with the provision of new stations or interchanges at Epping Plaza/Northern Hospital, Aurora South Town Centre, Aurora North Town Centre and Wollert Town Centre.

Infrastructure Victoria’s 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy recommended that a feasibility study on ‘*Wollert public transport links’* commence by 2022. The State Government adopted this recommendation and timeframe in their Victorian Infrastructure Plan (2017). It is critically important that the feasibility study be developed as soon as possible to provide analysis on:

* The ability of the rail network, from Clifton Hill Junction to Flinders Street Station, to accommodate additional services
* The provision of Metro 2 tunnel
* How the newly proposed outer suburban rail loop can support the construction of a rail service to Wollert
* Other innovative transport opportunities that could operate along the Wollert Rail Corridor.

Given our rapid population growth, the timeframes are already failing to meet the needs of our community. We have about 90 per cent of the transport corridor secured and we are very close to being ready to see innovative transport models as interim measures prior to the delivery of new rail to free our residents from traffic congestion.

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** investment to undertake a feasibility study into how the existing rail network and any future rail projects could support a new rail line to Wollert.

A **Federal Government** contribution towards acquisition of the final 14 per cent of land required for the designated Wollert Transport Corridor.

Refer to our [evidence based fact sheet](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4898/liveable-neighbourhoods-wollert-train-line-2019.pdf) for more information.

**REQUEST THREE: Mernda Sports Hub**

The City of Whittlesea is seeking $250,000 to develop a business case for an aquatic and indoor sports centre to be located in Mernda. A substantial contribution for Stage 2 (construction) will be sought in the future.

The centre will include indoor aquatic facilities, health and fitness areas and indoor and outdoor sports courts. The Centre will be a community hub, offering a socially inclusive environment in which people of all ages and backgrounds can come together to participate in a diverse range of physical activity for the betterment of their health and wellbeing. It is estimated that the centre will attract 500,000 – 550,000 visits per year[[2]](#endnote-3) plus an additional 250,000 visits per year for the indoor and outdoor netball and basketball courts.

The rapidly growing communities of Doreen and Mernda urgently need an aquatic and indoor sports centre like those enjoyed by other communities. Our residents experience higher than average health issues yet have limited access to exercise facilities known to encourage healthier lifestyles.

Regular physical activity is a contributor to overall good health. In Australia, 2.6 per cent of the total disease burden is due to physical inactivity.[[3]](#endnote-4) Below is a snapshot of the types of health issues experienced by City of Whittlesea residents:[[4]](#endnote-5)

* 58 per cent of our adult residents are overweight. This is significantly higher than for Victoria and is the highest rate for the North Eastern Melbourne Area.
* 44 per cent of our adult residents do insufficient physical activity, the second highest rate in the North Eastern Melbourne Area.
* 25 per cent of our adult residents have arthritis and 20 per cent have osteoporosis, rates that are significantly higher than for Victoria.
* Seven per cent of our adult residents have Heart Disease which is the sixth highest rate in Victoria and the highest in the North Eastern Melbourne Area.
* Six per cent of our adult residents have Type 2 Diabetes which is the third highest rate in Victoria and the highest rate in the North Eastern Melbourne Area (along with Darebin).

The population of Mernda/Doreen is expected to reach 58,000 people by 2041.[[5]](#endnote-6) The closest aquatic and leisure facility is located more than 10 kilometres away and takes longer than 20 minutes to access on heavily congested roads. A sample survey of residents identified that more than three quarters do not frequent an aquatic facility because of this travel distance and time. [[6]](#endnote-7)

Land for the Mernda Sports Hub has been purchased by Council. Joint funding from all levels of government is sought. The long-term vision for the site is for a sporting hub with an aquatic and sports centre at the heart surrounded by sporting fields and outdoor recreational opportunities.

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** investment of $250,000 to develop a masterplan for the Mernda Sports Hub.

Refer to our [evidence based fact sheet](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4869/connected-community-aquatic-and-indoor-sports-centre-for-mernda-2019.pdf) for more information.

**REQUEST FOUR: Planning for the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal**

The Victorian Government has identified Beveridge as the preferred location for an interstate freight hub to maximise productivity in Australia’s freight network.

Over 1000 hectares of land has been identified for the proposed Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal and associated freight and logistics based industrial area. Once operational, the terminal will enable freight to be transferred from Victoria’s two largest ports of Melbourne and Geelong to the rest of Australia.

The proposed site is positioned east of the Melbourne-Sydney rail line and north of the E6 Freeway reservation and is strategically located to maximise links to the Melbourne- Sydney-Brisbane rail line, Hume Freeway and proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring Road.

The confirmation and delivery of this project will have the following benefits:

* An increase in local/regional employment opportunities and additional local expenditure in an area of rapid growth.
* The upgrade of road and transport networks will increase accessibility and assist multiple users, including freight, to navigate and travel with greater cohesiveness. This will provide a strategic advantage and includes the Outer Metropolitan Ring and E6 Transport Corridor.
* The delivery of infrastructure will encourage additional investment within the northern growth corridor, which will be vital for an area which is projected to have a population of over 150,000 in the next 30 years.
* It will support the State freight network by relieving current pressure on the freight terminal at West Melbourne (Dynon Road).

Beveridge has been identified as a key employment precinct. The development of the intermodal freight terminal and supporting industries is expected to contribute 10,000 jobs to the region. Efficient intermodal terminals in Melbourne and Brisbane are critical to realising the benefits of Inland Rail and will provide broader economic benefits including improving the competitiveness of Australia’s freight supply chain.

**In the 20/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

For the ***Federal Government,*** in partnership with the Victorian State Government, to undertake planning for the Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, specifically to:

* Acquire the land needed for Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal.
* Invest $250,000 to develop a business case for the freight terminal in Beveridge.

Refer to our [evidence based fact sheet](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4909/strong-economy-beveridge-intermodel-fact-sheet-2019.pdf) for more information.

**REQUEST FIVE: Bring mental health services within reach**

The City of Whittlesea faces inequitable and poor access to health and human services, particularly mental health services according to our 2017 Human Services Needs Analysis. Investment is required for ongoing service provision which is equitable and proportionate to the level of need and vulnerability of specific demographic groups within the community.

**Youth Mental Health**

Last year’s Federal Budget allocated funding through the Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (EMPHN) for a satellite headspace service in the City of Whittlesea. At the time, the EMPHN recommended there was a need for a fully operational permanent service in the city.

The EMPHN Needs Assessment 2016 identifies Whittlesea as having the highest rate of people aged over 18 years with high or very high psychological distress. [[7]](#endnote-8) Our psychological distress rating for this group is above the Victorian average and we have the highest rate of emergency department presentations with anxiety in the EMPHN catchment. [[8]](#endnote-9)

**Access to Mental Health for the wider community**

The EMPHN Integrated Mental Health and AOD Service Atlas [[9]](#endnote-10) has identified:

* Significant gaps in services in the City of Whittlesea relative to other areas in the EMPHN catchment, and
* Uneven distribution of services across the EMPHN catchment, with clustering of services in inner suburban locations and significant service gaps in the outer northern LGAs
* A higher proportion of vulnerable groups/at risk demographics in the City of Whittlesea compared to other LGAs which fall within the EMPHN catchment.

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** commitment to provide ongoing funding to establish a permanent location to house headspace in the City of Whittlesea.

A **Federal Government** investment allocation which takes into consideration population growth and the proportion of vulnerable groups at higher risk of poorer mental health outcomes.

Refer to our [evidence based fact sheet](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4911/connected-community-mental-health-services-2019.pdff) for more information.

**REQUEST SIX: Jobs and business growth for Melbourne’s North**

Our Economic Development Strategy outlines our vision to attract 10,000 new jobs to the City of Whittlesea over the next five years. Council is committed to supporting businesses to grow and prosper, giving the community access to a range of local jobs in a strong local economy. Enabling Melbourne’s North to reach its economic potential is critical to business growth and jobs creation.

*Melbourne’s North Regional Investment Strategy* identifies that Melbourne’s North is growing rapidly with enormous investment potential but requires increased infrastructure spending by State and Federal Governments.

The report, commissioned by NORTH Link highlights that Melbourne’s North has been historically underinvested in public and private infrastructure compared to the rest of Melbourne. Faster-than-expected population and industry growth requires infrastructure planning and building to be brought forward.

In response, the report recommends a commitment by State and Federal Governments to the following infrastructure projects:

* [Investment of Food and Beverage Precinct](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4910/strong-economy-melbourne-markets-2019.pdf) on 51 hectares of land adjacent to Melbourne Wholesale Market
* Fast-tracking development of the [Beveridge Intermodal Freight Hub](https://www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au/media/4909/strong-economy-beveridge-intermodel-fact-sheet-2019.pdf) to best connect future industry hubs and Melbourne Airport and the Food and Beverage Hub
* Fast-tracking further development of Melbourne Airport
* Access to High Speed Broadband investment into a Data Analytics Hub
* Nature and Arts Tourism industry development
* Fast Track funding for Broadmeadows, Epping and Greensborough MACs and La Trobe NIEC

The report also recommends that government encourage the following growth areas for Melbourne’s North:

* Food and beverage manufacturing and supply chain
* Agritech and Foodtech
* Freight and Logistics
* Health and Wellbeing
* Advanced Manufacturing
* Visitor Economy

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** investment towards infrastructure programs identified in Melbourne’s North Regional Investment Strategy.

A **Federal Government** commitment to encourage growth in key growth areas identified for Melbourne’s North.

Refer to [Melbourne’s North Regional Investment Strategy](https://northlink.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Regional-Prospectus-Complete-Edition-smaller.pdf)  for more information.

**REQUEST SEVEN: Access to 15 hours of kindergarten**

Under the National Partnership Agreement, the Federal Government provides about one-third of the funding for 15 hours of preschool and the Victorian Government contributes two thirds.

The community and local government provide additional funding through parent fees, fundraising and council support to meet the government shortfall.

The National Partnership Agreement for this funding expires in December 2020. If funding ceases Victorian kindergartens will miss out on annual funding of $100 million, resulting in every kindergarten child losing the equivalent of one day of funded kindergarten per week.

This would be an added financial burden on local families who would need to fund the extra day of kindergarten or subsequent childcare. Fourteen per cent of households in the City of Whittlesea are experiencing mortgage stress[[10]](#endnote-11) and 32 per cent are experiencing rental stress,[[11]](#endnote-12) rates that are significantly higher than for Greater Melbourne (11 per cent and 27 per cent respectively).

Any Federal Government funding cut would further disadvantage the children who need kindergarten education the most. Early childhood education is critical for all children - it transcends disadvantage and gives children a greater chance of success in life.[[12]](#endnote-13)

Continual short-term funding arrangements also makes it difficult for councils and kindergartens to plan and is disruptive for parents.

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** investment for ongoing funding of five hours of four-year-old kindergarten per week for every child.

More information is available from [www.mav.asn.au/news-resources/campaigns/kindergarten](http://www.mav.asn.au/news-resources/campaigns/kindergarten)

**REQUEST EIGHT: Reinstate the National Rental Affordability Scheme**

The availability of new rental housing stock that is affordable to lower income households has rapidly declined across Victoria. In the City of Whittlesea this housing stock declined from 64 per cent of all new listings being affordable in Jun 2006 to just 12.3 per cent in 2017. [[13]](#endnote-14)

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) offers tax incentives to investors to build and lease new affordable rental housing to eligible low to moderate income tenants at 20 per cent below market rates.[[14]](#endnote-15) By the end of 2016, NRAS had delivered over 32,000 dwellings (including 5,774 in Victoria). [[15]](#endnote-16) The scheme was an effective supply stimulus that delivered a significant number of new dwellings in a relatively short time period. 15 The scheme’s discontinuation in 2015/16 was a loss for affordable housing delivery.15

Federal Government commitment is needed to reinstate the NRAS to build on the momentum it generated.[[16]](#endnote-17) Improvements include the development of clear and measurable targets and a demonstrated long-term commitment to the scheme.16 Current investor interest in the ‘build to rent’ industry demonstrates the potential for NRAS to continue delivery of long term affordable housing.[[17]](#endnote-18)

Additionally, around 28,000 Australians will be eligible for special disability accommodation (SDA) funding as part of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)[[18]](#endnote-19). However, there is a huge projected shortfall in this type of housing nationally.[[19]](#endnote-20) The Whittlesea-Wallan area[[20]](#endnote-21) has been identified as having one of the highest projected shortfall rates for SDA in the North Metropolitan Region. Currently, SDA is only available for three of the five people estimated to be eligible for its funding.19

Beyond the NDIS-SDA market, there are significantly more people with accessible housing needs creating a growing demand. This includes around 60 per cent of people currently living in supported accommodation who have lower level support needs or are aged 65 years and over.[[21]](#endnote-22)

**In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:**

A **Federal Government** commitment to provide incentives to stimulate investment in accessible housing.

A **Federal Government** commitment to support the inclusion of a minimum accessible design standard for housing in the National Construction Code.

A **Federal Government** commitment to expand the provision of Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding through the NDIS.

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2016 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. Council Minutes, Tuesday 12 February 2019, Item 6.2 Community Services, p. 145. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. The Australian Government Department of Health, Research and Statistics, citing the Australian Institute for Health and Welfare. https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-activeevidence.htm [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. 2017 Victorian Population Health Survey: Dashboard, selected results; and Quick statistics for local government areas and time series data (2015-2017), LGA Snapshot. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. Atlas id (2017). *City of Whittlesea Mortgage Stress.*  [accessed October 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. Mernda Aquatic Centre Planning Study [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. Victoria State Government, Department of Health and Human Services, *Rental Report time series data, Affordable lettings by local government area - June 2017,* LGA affordable, all bedrooms. <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report>[accessed Oct 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Victoria State Government, Department of Health and Human Services, *Rental Report time series data, Affordable lettings by local government area - June 2017,*  [www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report](http://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report)[accessed Oct 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. [Bell,T., Stretton, A., Mendoza, J & Salvador-Carulla, L (2018) EMPHN Integrated Mental Health and AOD Service Atlas (East & North East) Final report. ConNetica, Sunshine Coast Qld.](https://www.emphn.org.au/images/uploads/files/20180516-Final-Atlas-Report-EMPHN_July-2018-1.pdf) [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. Atlas id (2017). *City of Whittlesea Mortgage Stress.* [accessed October 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. Atlas id (2017). *City of Whittlesea Rental Stress.* [accessed October 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. Early Learning: Everyone Benefits (2017). *State of early learning in Australia 2017.* Canberra, ACT: Early Childhood Australia. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Victoria State Government, Department of Health and Human Services, *Rental Report time series data, Affordable lettings by local government area - June 2017,* LGA affordable, all bedrooms. <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report>[accessed Oct 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. Rowley, S., James, A., Phibbs, P., Nouwelant, R. and Troy, L. (2017) Government led innovations in affordable housing delivery, AHURI Final Report No. 289, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne,

    <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/289>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri-8113101, p 17, citing Rowley, S., James, A., Gilbert, C., Gurran, N., Ong, R., Phibbs, P., Rosen, D. and Whitehead, C. (2016) Subsidised affordable rental housing: lessons from Australia and overseas, AHURI Final Report No. 267, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/finalreports/267> doi:10.18408/ahuri-8104301. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. Katrina Raynor, Melbourne School of Design – Transforming Housing, *Delivering Affordable Housing in Melbourne: Actions, Opportunities and Implementation.* 2017 Housing Summit Background paper, <https://msd.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2603546/Delivering-Affordable-Housing-in-Melbourne_0.pdf> [accessed October 2017]. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. Rowley, S., James, A., Gilbert, C., Gurran, N., Ong, R., Phibbs, P., Rosen, D. and Whitehead, C. (2016) Subsidised affordable rental housing: lessons from Australia and overseas, AHURI Final Report No. 267, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/267> doi:10.18408/ahuri-8104301 [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Carolyn Cummins, *Build to rent emerging as $300b housing Industry,* Sydney Morning Herald, 14 September 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. Productivity Commission (2011), *Disability Care and Support Report Vol2 No. 54* [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. SGS Economics & Planning (2018), *Specialist Disability Accommodation: Market Insights*, The Summer Foundation, Box Hill Melbourne. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. Australian Bureau of Statistics - Statistical Area [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. Araluen, Housing and Support Roadshow, Greensborough 2018, www.araluen.org.au [↑](#endnote-ref-22)