

The RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC



ANNUAL REPORT

2017 - 2018

The Rail Futures Institute

was registered on 25th August 2013, in compliance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012, Victoria, No A0059839B,

and registered by the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission on the date of 28 August 2013 - ABN 77 808 559 618

Objectives of the Rail Futures Institute

The purposes of the association are—

1. To undertake public interest advocacy for the adoption of cost-effective rail and intermodal solutions to transport problems
2. To research, publish and disseminate information concerning public transport and freight issues.
3. To advocate triple bottom line solutions to transport issues
4. To conduct conferences, seminars and forums on transport issues
5. To co-operate with other organizations which share these aims.

Office holders 2017 – 2018

(elected at the Annual General Meeting 28th October 2017)

President - John Hearsch

Secretary - Bill Russell

Treasurer - Graeme Macmillan

Committee Members -

Michael Buxton

Jackie Fristacky

David Hill

Peter Tesdorpf

Web page: www.railfutures.org.au

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President's 2017/18 Report

Highlights of the Year

- **Pre-election policy announcements** by the State Government, Coalition opposition and other political parties reflecting to varying degrees several of our rail proposals;
- Launching of the RFI **The Melbourne Rail Plan 2019-2050** Summary edition – *Moving people in a City of 8 million* by Virginia Trioli in September 2018;
- Announcement of the rail proposal connecting **Melbourne Airport and Southern Cross station** by the **Air Rail** consortium featuring RFI's recommended route;
- Strong **media coverage** of our ideas; and,
- Successful **member activities** including prominent guest speakers at our general meetings, a traditional December Christmas meeting at the RSV and an excursion to the Seymour Railway Heritage Centre.

The Year in Review

Rail Futures, now in our fifth year, is a small group of independent professionals dedicated to researching and promoting the role of rail transport in the public interest. As an entirely self-funded, voluntary research organisation we undertake a wide range of activities designed to inform decision makers and all stakeholders on the urgent need to develop our existing rail assets and provide new assets for the benefit of present and future generations. Our scope covers public passenger transport, commercial freight and their interaction with town and regional planning. We actively promote the economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits of using rail-based transport to move people and goods efficiently. By anticipating future needs, we use targeted, non-partisan advocacy to recommend practical solutions for transport systems with the aim of reducing motor vehicle dependency and improving inter connectiveness of people and places.

This year has seen remarkable progress towards achieving our stated objectives. There has been a growing acceptance by governments of the essential links between providing good public transport and town/regional planning so that people can move freely for work, home and play. The increased awareness of infrastructure pressures on Australian cities, crowded roads, housing densification, regional isolation, environmental concerns and the importance of access to employment has prompted all political parties to feature public transport policies heavily in their pre-election promises. This represents a major shift in public policy focus since previous elections. We are especially pleased that several of the ideas promoted constantly by RFI over the last five years are now being reflected in these policy announcements.

Our policy strategy

Rail Futures seeks to influence public policy through publishing technical papers and brochures advocating practical rail-based transport applications linked with land use planning and population changes. This provides a broad context for our proposals which at this stage has involved rail

transport in the State of Victoria. Over the five years since commencing, we have published a number of papers that address the major transport issues in Victoria. These include –

Melbourne’s Trams (2015) – Proposals for improving Melbourne’s valuable tram network

Rail freight – (2016) – *Getting freight back on track*. Victoria makes only limited use of this important asset.

The Melbourne Airport – City Rail connection – The RFI *AirTrain* proposal (2016) – outlining a planned route and approach for a long-promoted airport link.

Regional rail passenger rail connections – the *InterCity* paper (2016). Proposing staged and sequential improvements to regional rail connections to encourage a shift in population growth to our regional cities

The Melbourne Rail Plan 2019 – 2040 (Summary) – a preliminary 16-page summary of the forthcoming major paper with a 30-year plan to move people efficiently around a Melbourne of 8 million by 2050. This major paper, which has been in development for the past 2 years, provides recommendations for fixing Melbourne’s transport inter connections through a staged, costed program over the next 30 years.

As well, explanatory 4-page brochures summarising the key points of papers have been published to make the ideas accessible to a wider audience.

These publications have been made available to governments, all political parties, government authorities charged with assessing infrastructure projects, media and newspaper organisations, private consulting firms, academia and the public. They have been supported by an active advocacy program involving our Committee Members who have been freely available for media comment, presentations to groups and conferences and personal advice.

Our 2017-18 Advocacy Program

Throughout 2017 and 2018 we have continued to meet and make submissions to Ministers and Shadow Ministers, Parliamentarians, departmental officers, infrastructure assessment authorities, regional groups, local governments, professional associations and other interest groups to explain proposals contained in our *InterCity* paper promoting fast rail connections between regional cities and Melbourne and our *AirTrain* proposals. From early 2018, we have also arranged numerous meetings with these bodies to discuss our draft *Melbourne Rail Plan* ideas for a comprehensive public transport plan for greater Melbourne. Together, these consultations have involved around 50 separate meetings throughout Melbourne and regional areas.

As well our members have attended several transport conferences as guest speakers and participants. We also have a growing number of members including some located interstate and internationally who have been promoting our ideas through word of mouth. I commend and thank

the members of our team for undertaking these tasks which required a great deal of commitment and personal cost in time and travel.

In October 2017 Peter Tesdorpf and I addressed the Regional Cities Victoria conference where we outlined the need for a more comprehensive faster and more integrated regional rail network in response to three main drivers – achieving a more balanced population growth; better connectivity and reduced journey times across the State and meeting widespread demands for improved rail services throughout regional Victoria. It is pleasing that the government, the Coalition opposition, the Greens Party and other political parties have since released proposals promoting improved rail connectivity for the regions as a core part of their policies.

Influenced to a fair extent from our work over the previous 2-3 years, it is very pleasing to see commitments totalling over \$950 million made this year for investments to upgrade the Ballarat/Geelong/Warrnambool, Shepparton and Gippsland corridors. Very recently, the government released its Western Rail Plan, which commits to electrify the Wyndham Vale and Melton corridors and to provide separate metropolitan and regional tracks on these corridors. These announcements precisely reflect the projects which RFI has been strongly arguing for over the past two years.

Membership and media communications

Our membership is now over 70. Attendance at general meetings held bi-monthly has grown steadily. Prominent guest speakers at these meetings have included senior executives from the organisations responsible for major rail projects providing unique insights into the engineering and organisational challenges of undertaking major rail projects and running our rail networks.

Communications have improved through more social media involvement undertaken by Max Berry, our media manager, and an enhanced web site through David Stevenson of 100 Men on Mars. We are planning to continue with these improvements as resources allow.

Members requiring special mention are the sub committee appointed to prepare the *Melbourne Rail Plan* paper. Headed originally by Eric Keys, Peter Don took over the leadership role and, together with Peter Tesdorpf, David Hardy, David Stosser, Michael Buxton and others have been working tirelessly over nearly 2 years to draw together a complex plan for Melbourne's transport future into a comprehensive document. They succeeded in preparing a summary plan which was launched successfully on 7th September 2018 at the Royal Society of Victoria by Virginia Trioli, prominent ABC presenter and journalist. The detailed plan, covering Melbourne's rail, trams (the Hidden Jewel) and Medium Capacity Transit possibilities, will be published shortly.

Member Max Michell has now edited and published 8 bi-monthly *RFI News Posts* containing valuable commentary and background information on rail policy and much else. A popular feature is the challenging rail quizzes that test member's knowledge.

An important part of member's activities has been an annual day excursion organised by Secretary Bill Russell. This year we travelled from Sunshine station along the proposed AirTrain route to Melbourne Airport, then onto to the Seymour Railway Heritage Centre by bus returning to Southern Cross by V/Line trains. Highlight of the visit was inspecting the State rail cars reserved for royal visits to Australia. These events provide an opportunity for members to meet and share their experiences.

As always, particular thanks are due to our very hard-working Secretary Bill Russell who doubles as the desktop publisher, excursion director and press commentator, our highly efficient Treasurer Graeme Macmillan, venue hosts, especially RMIT, and committee members Michael Buxton, Jackie Fristacky, David Hill and Peter Tesdorpf, all authors and contributors to papers and participants in discussions.

Special mentions of Councillor Jackie Fristacky who was deservedly awarded the Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her dedicated services to local government and to Professor Michael Buxton who officially retired from RMIT's School of Global, Urban and Social Studies during the year to great acclaim for his achievements (but continues to work just as hard on all his projects).

The Program for the next year

Our work program for the future continues unabated. We are planning to publish the full *Melbourne Rail Plan* very shortly, followed by a revision of our *InterCity* paper due to the constantly changing regional rail requirements. Important policy issues for further attention are the consolidation of rail gauges across Victoria, the increased importance of rail freight requirements including the Melbourne Port Rail shuttle, advocating for the implementation of MM2 as a key part of Melbourne's future metropolitan rail network, and much, much more.

The technology of rail and road transport is changing rapidly. From a recent trip to international transport exhibitions, I have seen exciting developments in trains, buses and motor vehicles that will have major impact on our future public transport, especially in the realm of Medium Capacity Transit and Light Rail vehicles identified in our plans for improving the network connectiveness of Melbourne and the regional cities. More of this will be revealed to members at our forthcoming general meetings.

I invite any interested person who is not already a member to join our team to make a difference through influencing public policy development. Applications can be made at our web page www.railfutures.org.au.

John Hearsch
President

22 October 2018

RAIL FUTURES INC
Statement of Income and Expenditure
For the Year ended 30th June 2018

Opening NAB balance 1st July 2017		<u>4,914</u>
INCOME		
Subscriptions	3,510	
Donations	2,942	
Sale of papers	18	
Excursions	441	
		<u>6,911</u>
LESS, EXPENDITURE		
Advertising	719	
Bank fees	26	
Catering	1,129	
Excursions	161	
Postage and couriers	44	
Printing	2,851	
Registrations	68	
Stationery	55	
Web Page	1,140	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		<u>6,192</u>
Balance at 30 June 2018		<u>\$5,633</u>

<u>No of Financial Members</u>	<u>2017 18</u>	<u>2016 17</u>
Ordinary	55	33
Associate	18	10
TOTAL	<u>73</u>	<u>43</u>

Accounting policy – the Rail Futures Institute adopts the Cash Basis of accounting due to the small number and value of transactions involved. There are no assets or liabilities of the Institute other than the bank balance disclosed representing total accumulated Member funds (net assets). Under the cash basis, revenue is recognised when funds are received and expenditure when payments made. The basis of accounting will be reviewed annually for continuing relevance to the reporting of the Institute’s operations. This financial statement is a fair presentation of the Institute’s financial operations for the year ended 30th June 2018, and the financial position as at 30 June 2018. **Graeme Macmillan, FCA – Honorary Treasurer**

Publications of the Rail Futures Institute Inc

The following materials were published by the RFI through the voluntary efforts of members. The purpose of the publications is to advance knowledge of the importance of investment in rail transport in the public interest. Most of these items can be accessed on the Institute's website at www.railfutures.org.au. Hard copies are also available from the Secretary

Victorian State Budget submission (November 2013)

The Case for Melbourne Metro (December 2013)

Transforming Melbourne's Tram System – draft internal circulation (June 2014)

Melbourne Metro and Melbourne Rail Link – *an objective comparison* (June 2014)

Rail - *the safe, green alternative* (April 2014)

Environmental Case for Rail (May 2014 and revised July 2014)

Melbourne Metro vs Melbourne Rail Link (August 2014)

Trams and Light Rail in Melbourne's Future (July 2015)

Victorian State Budget 2015 2016 submission (April 2015)

Future Proofing Melbourne: *Advocating a Plan for Melbourne that integrates metropolitan land use and transport strategy and ensures a sustainable, resilient, less car dependent city.* (June 2015)

“Victorian Regional Passenger Rail 2050 - Its role in Regional Sustainability and Growth”, paper delivered at the Australian Regional Development Conference in Albury on 26 August 2015.

Submission to Infrastructure Australia Audit (August 2015)

Victorian State Budget 2016 17 submission (January 2016)

Getting freight back on track in Victoria (April 2016)

Melbourne – Ballarat (and beyond) rail corridor – an indicative three stage development – Presentation to Ballarat Line Action Committee (BRAC) (2 May 2016)

Submission to Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, 'Fisherman's Bend Vision Recast' (June 2016)

Introducing *INTERCITY*: How regional rail can re-balance population growth and create a ‘State of Cities’ in Victoria (September 2016) – *Formal launch by former Deputy Prime Minister the Hon Tim Fischer at RMIT University 5th September 2016*

2017-2018 Victorian State Budget Submission (December 2016)

Submission to inquiry into National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities (July 2017)

“InterCity” and “AirTrain” – The Rail Futures blueprint for faster and better regional trains in Victoria and re-balancing population growth – Presentation to Regional Cities Victoria – October 2017

How Rail can help shape Melbourne for 8 million people – Presentation to the Metropolitan Transport Forum – April 2018

Brochures (providing 4-page key point summaries of RFI publications)

AIRTRAIN – The Airport Train Melbourne Needs! (March 2017)

Cut the Crush on Geelong Trains! (August 2017)

InterCity: How regional Rail can re-balance population growth and create a “State of Cities” in Victoria – July 2018

Newsletters

Future Rail News Post No 1 – 8

If you would like to join us in promoting good public policy through investing in rail for the future, apply for membership through our website at www.railfutures.org.au

