



# Rail Futures Inc.

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## Media release

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### Western Rail Plan should be expedited to offset lost jobs as Werribee Education City plans fall over, Rail Futures Institute says

The announcement this week that the long-planned and visionary Education City planned for Werribee will not go ahead strikes a blow at employment prospects in the city's west, and makes implementation of the Victorian Government's Western Rail Plan an even higher priority to facilitate commuting to jobs and education opportunities elsewhere in Greater Melbourne and Geelong.

The highly skilled and rapidly growing workforce that lives in the City of Wyndham suburbs of Wyndham Vale, Werribee, Point Cook and Williams Landing will have little choice but to travel for years to find work in high-value zones like Docklands, the CBD, Fishermans Bend and Parkville, but they face a commuting nightmare.

The freeways to and from the West will continue to be choked, while the rail alternative urgently needs upgrading by electrification of the Wyndham Vale line to provide the intensive, frequent service these suburbs need. Operation of much higher capacity Metro trains to Wyndham Vale will also overcome the drastic overcrowding of V/Line's Geelong trains that has steadily worsened since the Regional Rail Link line opened in mid-2015.

The State Government has the plans before it. Its Western Rail Plan is publicly announced and adopted policy. It includes several projects that will better connect these suburbs to the city, and also generate many jobs in construction and all the trades and businesses that are required to build modern rail infrastructure. Permanent jobs will also be created in Wyndham for train drivers, station staff and skilled maintenance personnel.

Conversion of the busiest diesel-operated rail lines to use electric traction is economically viable, environmentally sustainable, and the work uses large quantities of structural steel and other materials and components that are manufactured in Australia.

The most immediately needed elements that are included in the Western Rail Plan are:

- construction of overhead electrification on the RRL lines from Southern Cross to Wyndham Vale and associated electrical substations
- construction and electrification of the missing rail link from Wyndham Vale back to Werribee
- construction of three new stations and car parks at planned sites within the City of Wyndham, including an interchange at Black Forest Road to re-establish connections between Werribee and Geelong trains
- construction of some 28 km of duplicated track from Sunshine to Wyndham Vale
- three level crossing removals in Deer Park, and
- construction of a train servicing and stabling depot south of Wyndham Vale.

Added up, there is about \$3 billion of investment in all, and much could be shovel-ready within months. Some additional Metro trains will be required too, providing further employment, potentially at Ballarat. The Reserve Bank and many economists are urging the Commonwealth Government to invest in infrastructure as the economy softens, and these virtually shovel-ready projects fill the bill well.

“The State has shown some reluctance to take on more major projects given the resource and management demands of its current road and rail “big build”, Rail Futures Institute President John Hearsch, said. “But these are sorely and urgently needed projects and an available opportunity. It is up to the Commonwealth Government to start redressing its previous short-changing of Victorian infrastructure by picking up a larger proportion of the bill and pushing the projects forward in a team effort with Victoria.”

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**About Rail Futures Institute**

Rail Futures Institute Inc. is an independent non-partisan group formed to advocate cost effective rail and intermodal solutions for public transport and freight problems based on sound commercial, economic, environmental and social reasoning. Rail Futures members include experienced rail professionals, engineers, urban planners and economists.

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