

Rail Futures Institute Inc

Melbourne Airport rail plan – Questions and Answers

1. What is Rail Futures proposing?

- A. Rail Futures is proposing the construction of a dedicated heavy rail line from Southern Cross station to Melbourne Airport, and the subsequent diversion of regional trains from the Bendigo, Shepparton and Albury lines to operate via Melbourne Airport to Southern Cross.

2. What is new in the Rail Futures proposal?

- A. (i) ***There will be a train every 10 minutes dedicated to airport travelers, not shared with suburban commuters*** using a dedicated pair of tracks, partly in tunnel and partly on the surface that will provide a dedicated airport train every 10 minutes, day and night, for a 15-minute journey from Southern Cross to the Airport with a single stop at Sunshine.

(ii) Bendigo Seymour, Shepparton and Albury trains will also pass through the airport under this proposal. Thereby, many **regional cities will be connected directly to the airport**, while the airport route will also **greatly accelerate regional train journey times** through the suburbs of Melbourne, unobstructed by suburban trains.

(iii) Unlike all other plans so far, this plan provides **full network connectivity** with Melbourne Metro and all other metropolitan and regional lines, either at Sunshine or Southern Cross, requiring only one change for passengers from and to any metropolitan or regional destination in the state.

3. What are the main benefits to Melbourne?

- A. (i) A rapid and reliable connection between the CBD and Melbourne Airport that can comfortably handle expected air traffic growth.
- (ii) Reduced traffic congestion on the Tullamarine Freeway, and the ability to distribute burgeoning numbers of air travelers throughout the city and state without an equivalent surge in traffic congestion
- (iii) More efficient use of the airport, road links around the airport, and the rail network generally.

4. What are the benefits to individual travelers?

- A. (i) Quicker and more reliable airport journeys to and from the CBD, suburbs and regional cities
- (ii) Avoidance of traffic congestion on the Tullamarine Freeway and its connections
- (iii) A purpose designed airport train with room for luggage and free of suburban commuters

5. What are the benefits to the Airport?

- A. (i) Capacity to move on the landside the expected number of travelers on the air side - expected to grow from 33 million today to 60 million by 2030. Without the railway, and with expected population growth, another ten-lane freeway to the airport would be needed within 12 years. A railway can handle that traffic and more with ease and be ready sooner
- (ii) The airport becomes a true transport hub by its rail connections to regional cities and all suburban lines. Leading cities overseas have such connections - this plan will provide them for Melbourne Airport
- (iii) Even if air traffic triples, a modern railway with its ultimate capacity to move 45,000 people per hour in each direction will easily handle the volume. The airport is future proofed and a lasting answer is provided to Tullamarine Freeway congestion and the many projects to enhance its capacity.

6. Why has Rail Futures proposed this plan instead of the Government's original plan for a line from Albion to the Airport linked to the Melbourne Metro project?

- A. The previous Government/PTV plan involved cramming airport passengers into already crowded suburban trains which would come from Dandenong and beyond, stopping at all stations to Albion and taking about 30 minutes for the journey from the CBD. It would provide a second-rate service when Melbourne deserves much better. In any event, the full capacity of the Melbourne Metro project will be needed to serve Melbourne's burgeoning northern and western growth suburbs.

7. What route will the train proposed by Rail Futures take?

- A. The project involves construction of a new tunnel from Southern Cross station to West Footscray, passing under Footscray, then using the existing rail reserve on the surface to Sunshine. At Sunshine, the line would again go underground with new sub-surface platforms and continue in tunnel under North Sunshine. From there, it would use the already reserved airport line corridor through parts of East Keilor and Airport West before entering a tunnel on the approach to the airport. The airport station would be underneath the existing main terminal building. This route involves very little land acquisition as most is on railway land or land already reserved for the airport railway.

8. How would the Airport line connect to the Bendigo and Seymour lines?

- A. From the Airport, the line would continue on a new alignment more or less directly to Clarkefield, where it would re-join the existing Bendigo line. The line to Seymour and beyond would diverge from the Bendigo line north of Oaklands Junction and use the already reserved Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR) road and rail corridor to Beveridge, just south of Wallan, where it would re-join the existing Seymour line.

9. Will this be Australia's first High Speed Train (HST)?

- A. No, these will simply be fast trains with the same top speed as V/Line's VLOCITY trains. Overseas, HST's nowadays run at 300km/h or more. The airport trains will have a maximum speed of 160km/h but only need to average 106km/h to reach the airport in 15 minutes. However, the corridor infrastructure will be engineered to support future HST services, if and when they are needed.

10. Isn't this just a wishful idea, as the proposal is un-costed?

- A. There has been a wide community and business consensus for years on the need for an airport railway and the pressure is intensifying. Despite its current widening, the Tullamarine Freeway is expected to once again reach capacity within a relatively few years. There will only be one opportunity to build this project and to get it right. It must be done in ways which will be attractive to users and competitive with private car or taxi travel, and not only link to the CBD. It will be expensive to build, but the infrastructure will have a useful life of 100 years or more. It will bring Melbourne's Airport's transport links to the standard seen at many of the world's best airports including Hong Kong, Tokyo, Toronto, London, Paris, Zurich, Frankfurt, Oslo and Stockholm.

11. How do you envisage this project will be funded?

- A. It will need to involve collaboration between the State and Commonwealth Governments and the private sector, including the potential for value capture from commercial and residential development in the CBD and at Sunshine. The Commonwealth Government has discussed funding a new railway to Badgerys Creek airport in Sydney – an airport that as yet, doesn't even exist!

12. When could we expect to see trains running to the Airport?

- A. This project needs to be hard on the heels of Melbourne Metro. Detailed planning needs to start now. Projects of this magnitude typically involve around 4 years for detailed investigation, approvals, design, financing and procurement. Another 4 years would be needed for construction and commissioning. A Victorian Government commitment to the project in next year's State Budget could have it up and running by around 2027. Melbourne and Victoria needs this project very soon. The time for decision and action is now!