

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



RAIL FUTURES  
INSTITUTE INC.



# The Rail Futures Institute

was registered on 25<sup>th</sup> 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

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## 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 2018 – 2019

(elected at the Annual General Meeting 26 October 2018)

President - John Hearsch

Secretary - Bill Russell

Treasurer - Graeme Macmillan

Committee Members -

Michael Buxton

Jackie Fristacky AM

David Hardy

David Hill

Max Michell

Peter Tesdorpf

**Web page: [www.railfutures.org.au](http://www.railfutures.org.au)**

### Contact details:

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# RFI President's 2018/19 Report

## Highlights of the Year

- Release of the final complete **Melbourne Rail Plan 2020 – 2050 report (MRP)** in September 2019, providing a comprehensive blueprint for public transport development for a city growing towards 8 million people in the next 30 years. The MRP complements our **InterCity** report published in 2016 promoting fast rail to “shrink the distance” between Melbourne and regional centres
- **Successful advocacy** for public transport initiatives involving rail, tram and other medium capacity transit opportunities with governments and key stakeholders
- **Continued investment in rail infrastructure** announced by the government acknowledging the importance of rail transport to Melbourne and regional communities
- Promoting **rail freight**, especially for the proposed Melbourne terminal location for the Brisbane – Melbourne Inland Rail project
- Providing continuous **expert technical advice to newspapers, television and social media** plus the regular **RFI News Post** featuring articles supporting RFI objectives and maintaining our web page at **www.railfutures.org.au**.
- Finding a new “home” at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria for conducting meetings and other **RFI member activities**.
- **Growing our membership** to almost **100**

## Our objectives and strategy

RFI is an entirely self-funded voluntary research and advocacy 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 and in an environmentally sustainable manner. 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.

RFI 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.

## **Our advocacy successes**

RFI, now in our sixth year, has already achieved a reputation as an influential and respected organisation providing leading ideas for the resurgence of rail transport in all forms. Notable advocacy achievements have been:

- Support for Melbourne Metro when the previous government sought to substitute the Melbourne Rail Link which was a less effective and cheaper alternative
- Development of *InterCity – How Regional Rail can balance population growth and create a state of cities in Victoria*, a comprehensive plan for regional rail development in Victoria, launched by former Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Tim Fischer AO, in 2016
- Significant input to the current Melbourne Airport Railway proposal (*AirRail*) – the current agreed alignment via Sunshine closely reflects the model proposed by RFI.
- Working with the Gippsland local government network leading to investments in Gippsland rail upgrades
- Advising 8 councils along the Ballarat line in advance of government decisions to fund the Ballarat line upgrade
- Extensive work with Brimbank, Melton, Wyndham and Greater Geelong councils in relation to advocacy in advance of the *Western Rail Plan* announced by the government
- Development of the *Melbourne Rail Plan 2020 – 2050 (MRP)*, a comprehensive plan for rail tram and medium capacity transit in Greater Melbourne to 2050 and beyond.
- Annual detailed budget submissions to the state Treasurer and Minister of Public Transport, all of which are posted on our web page.
- Submissions to Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Victoria and other bodies and processes.
- Regular briefings for Ministers, other political parties, local governments, Committees for various areas and many other political stakeholders on the need for urgent investment in key rail projects

Our advocacy work has been detailed and extensive, involving dozens of meetings and consultations with most local government organisations in Victoria as well as most regional development committees such as G21 (Geelong centred), Committee for Gippsland, Committee for Ballarat, Committee for Melbourne and many others.

## **Our 2018-19 Advocacy Program**

The current year was marked by the publication of the full *Melbourne Rail Plan 2020 2050 (MRP)* report in September 2019. The final release represented the culmination of a 2-year intensive effort by the MRP Team led by Peter Don with assistance from the RMIT University School of Global Urban and Social Studies. The report is fulfillment of the project first launched in concept by Virginia Trioli at the Royal Society of Victoria in September 2018. The MRP provides, for the first time, a comprehensive and complete blueprint of how public transport could be developed over the next 30 years for a Melbourne population that is expected to reach 8 million people by 2050. It combines spatial and town planning considerations with technical detail in sections covering heavy rail, trams

and medium density transit opportunities (light rail, trackless trams, flexible buses and other new technologies) together with active transport measures involving bicycles and walking. The introductory sections of the MRP gives a background to the history of rail development and the challenges of integrating public transport with town planning requirements.

The final MRP paper was published on our web site on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2019 as a downloadable file together with a limited high-quality print run for members and significant decision makers including government ministers. The *Melbourne Age* carried a front-page coverage of the *MRP* on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September accompanied by an opinion article that we contributed outlining the main issues and recommendations entitled “A blueprint for Melbourne’s public transport future”.

In addition, a seminar for all Melbourne local governments auspiced by the Municipal Association of Victoria and the Metropolitan Transport Forum on Thursday, 12 September where local councillors were briefed on the key points of the MRP and its relevance and importance to their constituents. The MRP can be downloaded from our web site at [www.railfutures.com.au](http://www.railfutures.com.au)

While the MRP is a landmark discussion paper providing logical steps for developing Melbourne’s public transport system, it is only the start for influencing governments with their decision making. Critical investment decisions are being made now that will have profound long-term consequences for rail travel by Melbourne and regional communities. Therefore, we intend pursuing our advocacy across all interested stakeholders to promote the key MRP ideas. The decisions being made now regarding the future of Melbourne’s public transport systems will have impact for decades ahead in terms of capacity, reliability, efficiency and environmental sustainability.

The current government is delivering strong investment in rail projects, particularly with the Melbourne Metro 1 Project (MM1) currently under construction with an estimated completion date in 2025. This new line will provide five new stations in the CBD and its periphery and link the Craigieburn and Sunbury lines with the Dandenong line, freeing up valuable capacity on the City Loop as well as allowing increased frequency of trains on this and other lines. Current rail programs also include announcement of the Western Rail Plan to meet the demands of the rapidly growing communities west of Melbourne, commitment to substantial improvements on the Ballarat, Shepparton and Gippsland lines, and a continuing procurement program for new rolling stock.

The government also announced a proposed Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) that would follow roughly the circumference of Melbourne and link some major employment centres. Our alternative proposals in the MRP is to create a grid public transport network, including an orbital MRP route would follow much the same route but instead rely on medium capacity transit (MCT) solutions. We also advocate, at a lower cost than the SRL proposed by government, additional heavy rail stations, extension of electrification, several new light rail routes, tram extensions, smarter use of buses and emerging technologies such as trackless trams. We consider such an MCT network would provide more flexibility and access across Melbourne for medium load travel while costing far less than the expensive tunnelling the SRL would involve. Our advocacy will continue to promote the MCT and other aspects of the Melbourne Rail Plan to government.

A further key feature of the MRP is the separate section devoted entirely to the Melbourne tram system which has long been the forgotten “hidden jewel” of Melbourne’s public transport. Trams carry nearly as many annual person journeys as does the suburban heavy rail system, and we recommend investing in revising routes, making logical extensions and upgrading the tram fleet urgently to achieve immediate productivity gains. Strategic investment in the tram network would deliver immediate benefits to the community by providing for the transport needs of denser populations in the inner and middle suburbs and an expanding CBD.

The task ahead for RFI is to continue our policy development and advocacy to assist decision makers make the best choices for Melbourne’s public transport future. Some key planning decisions awaiting outcomes of business plans are –

- The Southern Cross to Sunshine tunnel that is vital to achieving the *Air Rail link* between Melbourne airport and the City and vital to the provision of faster and more frequent trains to regional centres of Geelong and Ballarat
- The delivery timetable for the Western Rail Plan announced by the government to ease the overcrowding and slow travel times from Geelong and the Werribee area stations
- Duplication and electrification to Melton on the Ballarat line, and various improvements to improve average speed and parking at stations
- Selecting the best location for rail freight terminals, especially for the Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail link under construction
- Selecting the next generation of technologies for future rolling stock – for example, tunnel ready bi-modal trains
- Accelerated action towards compliance with disability access needs across all public transport

Our advocacy activities have included many meetings with ministers, opposition and other political party leaders, local governments, regional councils, community groups and presentations at conferences and seminars. Each presentation has been tailored to the local audience involving preparing a set of power point slides and/or a list of key points for discussion. This is time consuming work but essential in terms of delivering key messages. I thank all those members who have contributed so much time and effort on a voluntary basis to achieving our advocacy objectives to date.

### **Membership and media communications**

Our membership has grown to almost 100 including several interstate and overseas members. General meetings are now attended by over 40 members with relevant and informative guest speakers. Our members have played an important role in promoting RFI’s ideas and spreading the message to the communities they are involved in, while providing valuable input to the development of RFI publications. I especially want to thank those members who contributed so intelligently to the RFI drafts and assisted the MRP team in their work. We will continue to rely on member contributions in the next phase of our advocacy, especially in supporting the MRP and *InterCity* ideas in the media,

and in supporting our regular member activities such as our annual members' excursion and the Christmas event.

RFI communications have been enhanced through our social media involvement led by Max Berry, our media manager, and the web site maintenance by David Stevenson of 100 Men on Mars and Andrew Cover of CAN Design Communication Graphics. Their expertise has contributed to our advocacy success.

### **Production of the MRP**

We are most appreciative of the wonderful effort of the team that achieved the final publication of the MRP report in September this year. Led by Peter Don, and involving Peter Tesdorpf, David Hardy, David Stosser, Jackie Fristacky, Michael Buxton and myself with Ian Woodcock from RMIT and including reviews and inputs from many members, the team achieved their targets and produced a highly professional and complex document. The process took place over more than two years, and involved countless long hours of discussion, research and review and many iterations of the document - all on a dedicated voluntary basis. This is a wonderful achievement. Yet, our task is not finished. The MRP is a discussion paper meant to generate debate and discussion around options for the future – we need to continue our efforts to ensure the ideas in the MRP are given full consideration by the government and the community.

### **RFI Committee**

The RFI Committee has again undertaken responsibility for conducting the affairs of the association in a most professional manner. Organising and promoting RFI meetings, events and administering the group's affairs is an arduous and relentless role that has been undertaken by our Secretary Bill Russell and Treasurer Graeme Macmillan. Other committee members have contributed countless hours in organising special events, presenting at key meetings to promote RFI ideas and attending committee meetings to coordinate our activities. I thank them all for their contributions.

### **The Next Steps for RFI**

The next phase of RFI activities will be most important. We need to actively monitor and input on government plans for the investment in rail assets and provide information where necessary to promote our ideas for a better public transport future. This will need the support and active participation of all members to spread our messages and inform the community of the choices before them.

We will continue to arrange advocacy meetings, particularly through regional and community groups who are critical stakeholders in achieving better rail transport outcomes for their constituents. We will continue to advise State and Federal Ministers on the long-term consequences of their decisions involving rail investments. We will continue to argue strongly for the economic, social and environmental benefits of rail-based transport.

**John Hearsch, President**

**20 October 2019**

# The Rail Futures Institute Inc

## Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019

					<b>2017-18</b>
				<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Opening NAB balance 01 July 2018</b>				<b>5,632</b>	4914
<b>INCOME</b>					
Subscriptions			6,140		3,510
Donations			7,445		2,942
Sale of papers			40		18
Excursion Income			1,260		441
General meeting collection			500		-
				<b>15,385</b>	6,911
<b>LESS, EXPENDITURE</b>					
Advertising					719
Bank fees			33		26
Catering			2,802		1,129
Excursion Expense			771		161
Postage and couriers			20		44
Printing, graphic design & editing			9,460		2,851
Registrations			200		68
Room hire			1,350		
Stationery			75		55
Web Page			160		1,140
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>				<b>14,871</b>	6,192
<b>Balance at 30 June 2019</b>				<b>\$6,146</b>	\$5,633

### No of Financial Members

Ordinary

Associate

**TOTAL**

	<b>2018 19</b>	<b>2017 18</b>
Ordinary	78	55
Associate	20	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>73</b>

**Accounting policy note** – The Rail Futures Institute is not deemed to be a reporting entity under the Australian accounting standards or other regulatory requirements. RFI 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019, and the financial position as at 30 June 2019.

**Graeme Macmillan, FCA – Honorary Treasurer 20 October 2019**



## **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](http://www.railfutures.org.au). Hard copies of some items 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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

**The Melbourne Rail Plan 2020-2050 – Public transport for a City of 8 million people – FINAL EDITION – September 2019**

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 Nos 1 – 12

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](http://www.railfutures.org.au)

