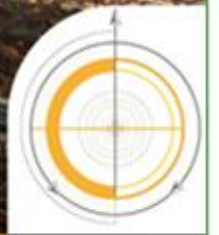


RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC

ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021



**RAIL FUTURES
INSTITUTE INC.**



The Rail Futures Institute Inc & Objectives

The Rail Futures Institute Inc (RFI) was registered on 25th August 2013, in compliance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012, Victoria - # A0059839B, and registered by the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission on 28th August 2013, ABN - 77 808 559 618

The Objectives of the Rail Futures Institute Inc are -

1. Undertake public interest advocacy for adoption of cost-effective rail & intermodal solutions to transport problems
2. Publish and disseminate information concerning public transport and freight issues.
3. Advocate triple bottom line solutions for transport issues
4. Conduct conferences, seminars and forums on transport issues
5. Co-operate with other organizations which also share these aims.

Office Holders 2020 / 2021

(As from the Annual General Meeting, Friday 26 March, 2021)

President - John Hearsch (elected at the 2020 AGM for a 2 year term to the 2022 AGM)

Secretary - David Hardy (elected for a 2 year term till the 2021 AGM)

Treasurer - Peter Doughty (elected for a 2 year term till the 2021 AGM)

Committee Members -

Peter Don (elected for a 2 year term till the 2021 AGM)

Jackie Fristacky AM (elected for a 2 year term till the 2021 AGM)

Max Michell (elected for a 2 year term till the 2021 AGM)

Marianne Richards (elected for a 2 year term till the 2022 AGM)

Hon Dr Clyde Croft AM SC (elected for a 2 year term till the 2022 AGM)

Peter Tesdorpf (elected for a 1 year term till the 2022 AGM)

On Sunday 21/02/2021 George Chomiak resigned as a Committee Member. Given the close proximity to the 2019/2020 Annual General meeting the position was left vacant till the AGM held on Friday 26/03/2021. The transition to 2-year terms for all Office bearer positions was completed with the election of office bearers at the 2019/2020 AGM held on Friday 26/03/2021.

Contact Details:

Enquiries: Secretary David Hardy **Mobile** – 0418 522 590 **e-mail:** secretary@railfutures.org.au

All correspondence to: Secretary, Rail Futures Institute, Post Office Box 1257, Carlton VIC 3053

Web site : www.railfutures.org.au

e-mail: secretary@railfutures.org.au

President's Report for 2020 / 2021

Foreword

This report covers the activities of the Rail Futures Institute Inc (RFI) for the reporting period of the financial year 2020/2021. Our activities have this year again been severely disrupted over the full 2020/2021 financial year due to ongoing State Government restrictions impacting on Committee, Working Group and General Meetings. Despite these inconveniences, I am pleased to report that RFI has had another strong round of advocacy, research and participation. The Committee and members have continued to adapt to the new communication methods and have maintained our operations through on-line conferencing including Committee Meetings and General meetings with guest speakers. Over 40 members have "attended" each virtual General Meeting conducted by Zoom.

Again, I thank our ever-alert Secretary David Hardy for his efforts in making the Zoom meetings work effectively despite the technical limitations involved, including the unreliability of some Internet connections. Hopefully the recent arrival of increased volumes of Covid vaccines coupled with increasing levels of complete vaccination across the States will allow us to return to in-person meetings at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria sometime in the first half of 2022.

Highlights of the Year

- Work proceeded apace with our two major publications in the full revision of the 2016 Inter City Passenger Strategy for release early in 2022 under Team Leader, Peter Don. At the same time our first Rail Freight Strategy document has been progressing under Team Leader Max Michell with a targeted release date also in early 2022.
- Strong advocacy for public transport initiatives involving rail, tram and medium capacity transit opportunities with governments and key stakeholders
- Continued investment in rail infrastructure by the Victorian and Federal governments acknowledging the importance of rail transport to Melbourne and regional communities
- Planning rail freight corridors, especially for the proposed Melbourne terminal locations for the Brisbane – Melbourne Inland Rail project
- Highlighting the poor state of the Victorian regional rail freight network
- Providing technical advice to newspapers, television and social media plus the regular **RFI NewsPost** featuring articles supporting RFI objectives and maintenance of our web page at www.railfutures.org.au
- Continued advocacy for the use of steel sleepers on the freight only lines (gauge convertible on broad gauge lines), and more recently for gauge convertible concrete sleepers to be used on the Shepparton line passenger upgrade.
- Involvement in the proposed Sunshine station redevelopment including advocating for a standard gauge platform to allow connectivity direct to Geelong, Ballarat, the Metro tunnel from 2025 and Melbourne Airport from 2029.
- Pandemic restrictions have unfortunately prevented either the annual members excursion or our Christmas 2020 function and both look most unlikely to occur again in 2021 due to ongoing Covid restrictions.
- During the year as an adjunct to developing our Rail Freight Strategy, we have been working in conjunction with Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC) at Mount Gambier in progressing a joint business case to Infrastructure Australia for reactivation of the Heywood – Mt Gambier freight railway.
- Growing our membership to 124 and establishing a sound financial position to support our ongoing advocacy efforts especially with two major RFI Strategy documents to be released early in 2022.
- Two major donations from outside benefactors in support of our rail advocacy efforts.

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 stakeholders on the 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-connectivity 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. We also plan to expand our brief to include rail passenger connections to the Riverina, and interstate passenger links including future high-speed rail.

Our Advocacy Efforts in 2020/2021

RFI, now in our eighth year, continues to achieve our established reputation as an influential and respected rail industry advocacy resource providing leading ideas for the resurgence of all forms of rail transport. Notable advocacy achievements have been:

- Ongoing support for the Melbourne Metro tunnel project due for completion in 2025
- Continued work by a specialist working group headed by Peter Don to revise *InterCity – How Regional Rail can balance population growth and create a state of cities in Victoria*, a comprehensive plan for regional rail passenger development in Victoria (originally released 2016)
- Continued work by our Freight Strategy Team headed up by Max Michell to prepare a Rail Futures Rail Freight Strategy for Victorian rail freight to be released early in 2022
- During the year the State Government announced it will put the Melbourne Airport trains through the Metro tunnel from 2029. Whilst RFI does not see this as the best solution overall, we have been busy advocating for a much improved passenger interchange at Sunshine station including a second overhead concourse and restoration of the former standard gauge platform for the benefit of V/Line Albury line travellers and Interstate XPT travellers from Sydney and the Southern Riverina.
- Advocacy efforts with multiple parties to achieve a vastly enhanced interchange station at Caulfield in conjunction with the opening of the Metro tunnel in 2025.
- Working with Local Governments in enhanced rail solutions across all five regional corridors
- Ongoing work with Brimbank, Melton, Moorabool and Wyndham councils in advocating for future proofing infrastructure to handle the projected future passenger tasks in the West
- Detailed State Budget submission to the State Treasurer and relevant Ministers in May 2021.
- Submissions to Infrastructure Victoria, Victorian Planning Authority and other bodies
- Briefings for Ministers, other political parties, Local Government, Committees for various areas and other political stakeholders on the need for investment in key rail projects
- Recommendation to a State Parliamentary Committee against extension of the Melbourne CBD Free Tram Zone (FTZ)
- Initial development of a medium and longer term strategy to improve the financial performance and patronage of the Melbourne – Adelaide daylight train – “The Overland”
- Re-activation of dormant key rail freight links between Inglewood - Eaglehawk, and Toolamba - Echuca.

Our 2021/2022 Advocacy Program

The current government is delivering strong investment in rail projects, particularly with the Melbourne Metro 1 Project (MM1) currently under construction with estimated completion in 2025. This will provide new stations in the centre of the City and allow linking of the Sunbury and Dandenong lines, freeing up valuable capacity in the City Loop as well as allowing increased frequency of trains on these and other lines. By mid-2021 the four tunnelling machines had completed their task of boring 9 km of parallel tunnels from South Kensington to Hawksburn.

The government has ploughed ahead determinedly with Stage 1 of its proposed Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) from Cheltenham to Box Hill at a projected cost of \$ 34 bn. We continue to advocate for an equally adequate lower cost and high-quality Light Rail solution as proposed in our Melbourne Rail Plan 2020-2050. We continue to argue along with others that SRL is a worthy forward-looking concept; but that it needs to be done in a way that is affordable. Under the current trajectory, this single project threatens to absorb the larger part of the public transport capital budget, denying funds for numerous needed enhancements to the existing train and tram networks, and failing to make best use of existing rail network assets.

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 business plan outcomes are:

- A detailed delivery timetable for a somewhat truncated Western Rail Plan to ease overcrowding and reduce travel times to Geelong and Ballarat
- Extension of electrified Metro services to Melton and Wyndham Vale on the Ballarat and Geelong lines.
- Confirming the location of an interstate rail freight terminal at Truganina and its rail connection options, especially the Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Railway now under construction, for expected completion in 2028
- Selecting the next generation of technologies for future rolling stock – for example, tunnel ready bi-modal trains, and hydrogen powered regional trains
- Accelerated action towards compliance in meeting disability access needs across all public transport

Our advocacy activities have included meetings with Ministers, Opposition and other political party leaders, Local Government, Regional Councils, community groups and presentations at conferences and seminars. Each presentation has been tailored to the local audience involving a PowerPoint presentation and/or a list of key points for discussion. This is time consuming work but essential in terms of delivering key messages. Thanks to our Committee members who have contributed so much time and effort on a voluntary basis to achieving our advocacy objectives to date. Finally, to our valued increasing membership in terms of their support and input / review of our advocacy efforts.

The Covid-19 Pandemic and its impact on Public Transport

The main story since early 2020 has been the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the community and its likely longer term impacts on public transport utilization, town and spatial planning, population growth and employment patterns. While the immediate effects have shown to be limiting the carrying capacity of public transport because of social distancing requirements, travel restrictions and people working from home, we believe it is important to continue our emphasis on planning for the future. As the pandemic recedes to a more normal situation it is speculated that travellers will initially prefer to use motor vehicles in preference to public transport. However past experience shows that our roads have insufficient capacity to keep traffic moving efficiently and eventually public transport will need to carry an increasing percentage of Melbourne and regional passengers. While population growth estimates may need to be revised for both Melbourne and regional centres, we see this as a matter of timing, rather than a major re-evaluation of growth targets. Australia will remain a popular country for immigrants because of its economic and social stability including the country's most recent success in managing the COVID pandemic. We therefore consider our work to assist in planning public rail transport for a better future is even more relevant.

Membership and Media Communications

Our membership has grown to around 125 including several interstate and overseas members. General meetings are now attended by around 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. Later in 2021 we will be inviting members to comment and input to both our Inter City Passenger Strategy and a Victorian Rail Freight Strategy.

Regrettably the Covid-19 pandemic and the arrival of the Delta variant appear at this stage to rule out our traditional Christmas social function in December 2021 at the Royal Society of Victoria, and our annual excursion.

RFI communications continue to be enhanced through our quarterly Newspost now in a new format with new editor Val Sands, and David Hardy adding publishing to his RFI multi-tasking skills. Our colleagues at CANdesign Communication Graphics continue to provide our high quality printed products. Their expertise has contributed to our advocacy success through the ongoing development of a common Rail Futures identity and branding across all publications and platforms.

RFI Committee

The RFI committee has again undertaken responsibility for conducting the affairs of the association in a 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 second Secretary, David Hardy and second Treasurer, Peter Doughty. Other Committee members have contributed countless hours in organising special events, presenting at key meetings to promote RFI ideas and attending Committee meetings to co-ordinate our activities. I thank them all for their contributions during 2020/2021. Committee Member George Chomiak resigned on Sunday 21/02/2021 and given the closeness of the deferred 2020 Annual General Meeting the position was not filled in the interim period.

At the 2020 AGM held on 26 March 2021, we farewelled Professor Michael Buxton and welcomed two new faces in Marianne Richards and Dr Clyde Croft AM to the Committee, replacing Michael Buxton (retired) and George Chomiak (resigned).

All 11 Committee Meetings were held by Zoom. Likewise, all 6 General Meetings were held by Zoom – with Guest Speakers making PowerPoint presentations from remote locations including Interstate.

Guest presenters included: Rob Mc Guaran Planner (08/20), Michelle Batsas (UITP Australasia) (10/20), Garry Glazebrook - High Speed Rail (12/20), Paul Thomas Rail Projects Victoria (02/21), John Crofts, Rail Freight Observations (04/21), Georgia Nicholls - ARA Interstate Freight (06/21).

During the year, member Max Berry stepped down as our Media Manager owing to time commitments in an outside employment role. We thank Max for his years of advice and media output in support of our advocacy efforts.

I also acknowledge and thank founding executive members Bill Russell and Graeme Macmillan for their ongoing support and advice to the RFI Committee.

RFI Working Groups

Inter City Passenger Strategy – led by Peter Don - Membership - Garry Glazebrook, David Hardy, Syd Herron, Ross Lowrey, Tim Patton, Marianne Richards & Peter Tesdorpf.

During the 2020/21 year the team continued work in conjunction with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) on developing an initial Discussion Paper for release late in 2021 as prelude to updating our RFI Intercity Passenger Strategy first published in 2016.

The work is being done in stages. Firstly, the preparation of the Discussion Paper which describes the disparities in population growth between metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria and the problems this has posed for both. The paper then identifies the key issues and opportunities for rail in enabling it to support regional growth and development, thereby creating the basis for a Network of Cities re-balancing a significant portion of the State's population growth away from Melbourne into regional Victoria. The discussion paper will be completed in the second half of 2021.

Following feedback from the initial Discussion Paper, an all new revised **Inter City Strategy** for the development of regional rail services in Victoria will be produced early in 2022.

Rail Freight Strategy - led by Max Michell - Membership - Clyde Croft, Don Gibson, Ian Gray, David Hardy, Philip Laird, Frank Lander, Reid Mather, Bernard Shepherd, Peter Tesdorpf, Derek Walker & Robin Walpole.

The Rail Freight Strategy Group has met via Zoom in all cases, at fortnightly intervals. Initial discussion and work has focussed on identification of the structural and operational issues that underlying rail freight activity in Victoria. One significant benefit of virtual meetings has been the ability to draw in expertise from our Regional and Inter-state members, to the considerable advantage of the project as a whole. During the currency of this work there has been a number of regressive developments (e.g., non-completion of the Murray Basin gauge conversion project; and further expansion of A-double road truck routes) which have made an effective rail outcome that much harder to achieve. By mid year 2021 a large range of issues had been identified and work was progressing toward documentation in a format appropriate to a strategic Rail Freight Strategy paper. Completion is targeted for the first quarter of 2022.

During currency of our work, we have separately contributed to the RFI submission to Infrastructure Victoria on rail freight, and similarly compiled a commentary on the DoT Freight Plan (2018) that we expect will be updated by the Government in the near future, as well as being involved in the Heywood - Mt Gambier rail restoration project (see below).

Heywood – Mt. Gambier Line Re-activation Project

RFI became aware in 2020 of a CSIRO Assessment of re-activating the Heywood – Mt Gambier rail line commissioned by Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC) based in Mt Gambier. This former broad gauge line became isolated in 1995 with the standardization of the Melbourne – Adelaide mainline and several Victorian North Western lines. This led in late 2020 to initial contact from RDALC with RFI leading to us setting up a working group led by Max Michell, with members David Hardy, Frank Lander and Robin Walpole. Covid 19 delayed face to face meeting with RDALC who finally hosted our team for three days of intense meetings with both RDALC management but also with key stakeholders in Mt Gambier early in May. Since then meetings have also been held with the Shire of Glenelg and the Port of Portland in Victoria by Zoom. At the close of the 2020/21 year work was well progressed as a joint effort with RDALC on defining the contestable rail traffic task, an operational plan which will determine the rail infrastructure and terminal required. Initial work has commenced on a detailed costing.

The Next Steps for RFI

The next phase of RFI activities will be most important. We need to actively monitor and provide input regarding Government plans for investment in rail assets and promote our ideas for a better public transport future. This will need continued ongoing support and active participation of members to help 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. We will continue to argue strongly for the economic, social and environmental benefits of rail-based transport. Key advocacy efforts in 2021/22 will focus on “best value for money” projects and service improvements leading to the November 2022 State Election.

John Hearsch, President

31 July, 2021



Secretary's Report for 2020 / 2021

GENERAL MEETINGS - PRESENTATIONS TO MEMBERS :

Six general meetings were held all using the Zoom video conferencing facility in August, October and December 2020 followed by February, April and June in 2021. Six detailed presentations were made by guest presenters as follows:

August, 2020 (ZOOM) Rob Mc Gauran - Stations / Precinct Opportunities

October, 2020 (ZOOM) Michelle Batsas UITP Australia – An Overview

December, 2020 (ZOOM) Garry Glazebrook - Interstate High Speed Rail Vision

February, 2021 (ZOOM) Paul Thomas - Metro 1 Tunnelling Progress Report

April, 2021 (ZOOM) John Crofts - Victorian Rail Freight – Complex and Over Governed

June 2021 (ZOOM) Georgia Nicholls - Outlook for Interstate Freight

The RFI Annual General Meeting for 2019/2020 was held by Zoom on Friday 26/03/2021.

MEMBERS NEWSLETTERS :

Rail Futures News Post - our Quarterly Newsletter was published over Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter editions. During the year long standing editor Max Michell stepped down with Val Sands taking over as Editor from July 2021. At the same time David Hardy took over as Publisher from Max Berry after many years. The occasional Crossover - Members News Update - appeared once in January 2021

MEMBERSHIP REPORT at 30/06/2021.

At the close of the financial year the RFI membership register recorded total membership of 124 made up of 94 Ordinary Members and 30 Associate members, a net total increase in membership of 6 over that at 30/06/2020.

JOINING RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (INC)

Join Rail Futures Institute Inc in supporting good public policy through on-going investment in rail.

Apply for Rail Futures Institute Inc membership through our website at www.railfutures.org.au

Ordinary membership gives full voting rights. Associate membership does not have voting rights and is

ONLY available to Students, non-waged, and full time retirees.

David W Hardy - Secretary

31 July, 2021



Treasurers Report for 2020 / 2021

During the 2020/21 financial year RFI transitioned to a commercial Xero accounting package that accounts for all our financial transaction both revenue and expenditure, as well as maintaining a detailed membership register for the Secretary as required under the RFI Constitution. This facility enables us to handle our ever increasing membership numbers in an efficient time saving manner at a monthly on-going fee, similar to our subscription to use unlimited Zoom video facilities up to 100 persons at a time.

MEMBERSHIP STATEMENT at end of the Financial Year

	<u>2020/21</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
Ordinary Voting Members	94	85
Associate Members	<u>30</u>	<u>33</u>
Total Membership at 30 June	124	118

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (INC) STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS :

Is shown on pages 10 and 11 along with the Summary of Movements in RFI's bank accounts with the National Australia Bank (NAB).

Peter V. Doughty Honorary Treasurer

30 June, 2021



RFI Committee Approval of Treasurer's Financial Statements as at 30 June, 2021.

AT the RFI Committee Meeting # 65 held on Friday 01/10/2021 by Zoom Video Conferencing facility the Treasurer tabled the financial documents as shown on pages 10 and 11 of this Annual Report, as being an accurate record of the Rail Futures Institute's financial position as at 30/06/2021. A motion was then put to the Committee which was moved by the Treasurer – Peter Doughty, and seconded by committee member Jackie Fristacky. The motion was then put by the Chairman of the meeting and carried unanimously. The above motion was recorded as such in the Minutes of RFI Committee Meeting # 65 of Friday 01/10/2021.

David W Hardy Secretary

01 October, 2021



RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (INC)

A – 00598398 ABN - 77 808 559 618

Statement of Receipts and Payments

For the Year Ended 30 June, 2021

	(Unaudited)	2020 - 21	2019 - 20
Receipts		\$	\$
Members Subscriptions		2,600	7,630
Donations		3,290	5,725
Excursion Income			1,586
General Meeting – collection			700
Sales publications and other goods		40	2,895
Income received in advance		<u>120</u>	<u>(120)</u>
- Total Receipts		6,050	18,416
Payments			
Bank Fees		18	310
Catering			1,002
Excursion Costs			1,140
Freight and Couriers		53	241
Graphic Design. Editing and Printing		1,045	7,678
Internet and e-mail hosting		38	
Postage		15	
Room Hire			1,170
Registrations			70
Speakers Gifts and Expenses		126	
Stationery			279
Subscription – Xero accounting package		283	
Subscription – Zoom Communications		277	
Subscription – Royal Historical Society of Victoria		250	
Web page			<u>1,145</u>
- Total Payments		2,105	13,035
Cash Surplus for the year		\$ 3,945	\$ 5,381

Summary of Movements in RFI's Bank Accounts with NAB

Opening Balance at 1 July	\$ 11,527	\$ 6,146
Add Cash Surplus for the Year	\$ 3,945	\$ 5,381
Closing Balance at 30 June	\$ 15,472	\$ 11,527

This accounting policy note forms part of the Statement of Receipts and Payments above.


Accounting Policy Note

The Rail Futures Institute Inc. ('RFI') is not considered to be a reporting entity under the Australian Accounting Standards or other regulatory requirements. In preparing the attached Statement of Receipts and Payments, RFI used the Cash Basis of accounting due to the small number and value of the transactions involved. Under the Cash Basis, receipts and payments are recognised when the cash flows occur and do not include any amounts receivable or payable. This basis of accounting is reviewed annually for its ongoing relevance in RFI's financial reporting.

The bank balance shown in the above Statement of Receipts and Payments represents RFI's total Members' Funds and net assets. There were no other assets or liabilities at the end of the financial year.

Attestation

The Statement of Receipts and Payments above presents fairly The Rail Futures Institute Inc's receipts and payments for the year ended 30 June 2021 and its bank account balances and numbers of members at that date.



Peter V. Doughty, FCA

Honorary Treasurer