



Rail Futures Institute Inc



Town and Country
Planning Association Inc

MEDIA RELEASE

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PASSENGER RAIL – A CATALYST FOR BOOSTING VICTORIA’S REGIONAL GROWTH

The Rail Futures Institute Inc. (RFI) and the Town and Country Planning Association Inc. (TCPA) have pleasure in jointly releasing a Discussion Paper, ***Rail as a Catalyst for Regional Growth***, which explores the opportunity post pandemic for Victoria’s regional cities to accommodate a much larger proportion of the State’s future population growth.

This now looms as a critical issue requiring more widespread recognition and government attention. For many decades, Melbourne has been the principal focus of Victoria’s population growth, but its share has kept increasing apace while regional Victoria’s share has been shrinking. Prior to the pandemic, this imbalance in growth (85% to metropolitan Melbourne versus 15% to regional Victoria) should have been alarming, as the problems of high growth in Melbourne and the quite different problems of low growth in the regions (identified in the Discussion Paper) were becoming increasingly evident.

The release of this Discussion Paper is timely. The pandemic has sparked a greater interest in regional living and, as we look to recovery and a brighter and more equitable future, the opportunity for change should not be missed. Boosting regional growth will require a planned and co-ordinated approach across all three layers of Government, and the willing and sustained participation of regional communities and businesses. Improvements in regional infrastructure (such as faster intercity rail, and broadband services) will be essential to achieving good outcomes.

The Discussion Paper aims to:

- Promote broad discussion on the need for longer term visions and plans for regional growth;
- Examine the opportunities for the transport network to act as a catalyst for that growth, and the potential for passenger rail to facilitate and support growth especially in key regional cities and major towns;
- Identify the critical inter-relationships between regional cities and rail decision making – particularly among Federal, State and Local governments and transport operators, and
- Invite feedback and proposals that may be refined and progressed into plans for greater regional population growth and supporting infrastructure required over both the short and longer terms.

A summary of the Discussion Paper is attached in pdf format. The full Discussion Paper, also in pdf format, is available at <https://www.railfutures.org.au/category/major-policy-papers/> and www.tcpa.org.au.

The Discussion Paper aims to provide Victoria’s Urban and Transport Planners with a clearer understanding of the role of the rail network and services in shaping Victoria’s future regional economy; and the role of regional cities in shaping the use and development of railway services and infrastructure. It identifies eight key topics to stimulate further discussion and to feed into a more detailed Regional Rail Strategy to be released later in 2022.

– ENDS –

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