

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC

ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



**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 2021 / 2022

(As from the Annual General Meeting, Friday 29 October 2021)

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

Secretary - David Hardy (elected at the 2021 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2023 AGM)

Treasurer - Peter Doughty (elected at the 2021 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2023 AGM)

Committee Members -

Peter Don (elected at the 2021 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2023 AGM)

Jackie Fristacky AM (elected at the 2021 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2023 AGM)

Max Michell (elected at the 2021 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2023 AGM)

Marianne Richards (elected at the 2020 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2022 AGM)

Hon Dr Clyde Croft AM SC (elected at the 2020 AGM for a 2-year term till the 2022 AGM)

Peter Tesdorpf (elected at the 2020 AGM for a 1-year term till the 2022 AGM)

Contact Details:

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

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Web site : www.railfutures.org.au

e-mail: secretary@railfutures.org.au

President's Report for 2021 / 2022

Foreword

This report covers the activities of the Rail Futures Institute Inc (RFI) for the reporting period financial year 2021/2022. Our activities have again this year been severely disrupted over the full financial year due to ongoing State Government Covid-19 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 now with high levels of Covid vaccination in the broader community, and a general freeing up of Government imposed Covid restrictions, the situation approaching the end of the financial year allowed a return to some face-to-face meetings at the RHSV in A'Beckett Street.

Highlights of the Year

- Work proceeded apace with our two major publications in the full revision of our 2016 Inter City Passenger Strategy for release early in 2023 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 also in early 2023.
- 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 Victorian 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 parts 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 on the Shepparton line passenger upgrade.
- Involvement in the proposed Sunshine station re-development including ongoing advocacy for a standard gauge platform to allow connectivity from the North - East directly to Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Metro 1 tunnel CBD stations from 2025 and also Melbourne Airport from 2029.
- Pandemic restrictions unfortunately prevented both the annual members excursion and our Christmas 2021 function, however both look likely to occur later in the 2022 calendar year.
- During the year, as an adjunct to developing our Rail Freight Strategy, we have continued working with Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC) at Mount Gambier in progressing a joint business case to Infrastructure Australia for re-activation of the Heywood – Mount Gambier freight railway.
- Growing our membership to 126 and establishing a sound financial position to support our ongoing advocacy efforts, especially with two major RFI Strategy documents to be released early in 2023.
- Advocacy for six critical rail initiatives to commence within the next term of the Victorian State Government, leading up to the November 2022 State election.

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 2021 / 2022

RFI, now in our ninth year, continues to maintain 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 1 rail 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 planned for release early in 2023
- In 2018 the State Government announced it will put the Melbourne Airport trains through the Metro 1 tunnel from 2029. Whilst RFI does not see this as the best overall solution, 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.
- Continued advocacy efforts with multiple parties to achieve a vastly enhanced interchange station at Caulfield in conjunction with the opening of the Metro 1 rail tunnel in 2025.
- Working with Local Governments toward enhanced rail solutions across all five regional corridors
- Detailed State Budget submission to the State Treasurer and relevant Ministers in May 2022.
- 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
- Initial development of medium and longer term strategies to improve the financial performance and patronage of the Melbourne – Adelaide daylight train: “The Overland”
- Re-activation of dormant key rail freight links: Inglewood - Eaglehawk and Toolamba - Echuca
- Continued advocacy for improved V/Line services to both Maryborough and Hamilton
- Retention of on-train catering on all Inter City services to Warrnambool, Swan Hill, Albury and Bairnsdale.
- Leading up to the State Election in November 2022, six (6) key initiatives have been identified and promoted to key stakeholders in seeking priority commitments to commence during the next term of Government: East/West Metro Rail for Melbourne, CBD Tram Enhancement Package, Restoration of Rail Passenger Services between Geelong and Ballarat, Extension of MTM services to Clyde, Bendigo Line Enhancement Package, Extension of Bendigo Metro to Marong, and Rejuvenating the Victorian rail grain handling system.

Our 2022 / 2023 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. Tunnelling work was completed in May 2022 and station fit-outs and track laying should progress to allow testing and trial operations from late 2023.

The Government has doggedly continued to plough ahead with Stage 1 of its proposed Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) from Cheltenham to Box Hill at a projected cost of \$34 billion. We continue to advocate for an equally adequate lower cost, high-quality Light Rail solution as proposed in our Melbourne Rail Plan 2020-2050. We continue to argue along with others that while SRL is a worthy forward-looking concept for cross-metropolitan travel, it needs to be done in a way that is affordable. Under the current trajectory, this single project continues to threaten to absorb the larger part of the public transport capital budget, denying funds for numerous other urgently 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 an elusive revised 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, usually 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 toward achievement of our advocacy objectives to date. Finally, thanks to our valued increasing membership for 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 limit the carrying capacity and utilisation 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 private vehicles in preference to public transport. However past experience shows that our roads have insufficient capacity to keep traffic moving efficiently hence 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 than ever.

Membership and Media Communications

Our membership has grown to 126 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 2022, we plan to invite members to comment and provide input to the draft versions of both our Inter City Passenger Strategy and our first ever Victorian Rail Freight Strategy.

Current indications are that the Covid situation should allow for both our annual excursion and traditional Christmas social function to be held in November and December 2022, respectively.

RFI communications continue to be enhanced through our quarterly Newstopost 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. A Regional Passenger Strategy Discussion Paper was released early in 2022.

RFI Committee

The RFI Committee has again undertaken responsibility for conducting affairs of the association in a professional manner. Organising and promoting RFI meetings, events and administering the group's affairs is a relentless role that has been undertaken by our Secretary, David Hardy and Treasurer, Peter Doughty. Other Committee members have contributed countless hours in organising special events, presenting at key meetings to promote RFI concepts and attending Committee Meetings to co-ordinate our activities. I thank them all for their contributions during 2021/22.

All 11 Committee Meetings were held by Zoom. Of our six General Meetings, four were held by Zoom and two at the RHSV and simulcast by Zoom – all with Guest Speakers making PowerPoint presentations either in person at the RHSV or from remote locations, including interstate.

Guest presenters in 2021/2022 have included: Graeme Vellacott (August 2021), Peter Kartsidimas, Infrastructure Victoria (October 2021), Bill Russell (December 2021), Bernard Shepherd (February 2022), Georgia Nicholls, ARA (April 2022) and Alan de Reuck, Alstom (June 2022).

I also acknowledge and thank founding executive members Bill Russell, Graeme Macmillan and Michel Buxton for their ongoing support and advice, as advisory expert contributors 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 and Peter Tesdorpf.

During the 2021/22 year, the team continued work in conjunction with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) on developing an initial Discussion Paper released early in 2022, as a prelude to updating our RFI Intercity Passenger Strategy, first published in 2016.

The work has since moved on to identify 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, rebalancing a significant portion of the State's population growth away from Melbourne into regional Victoria. The final revised Inter City Passenger Strategy will be released early in 2023.

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 and Robin Walpole.

The Rail Freight Strategy Group has met via Zoom in all cases, generally at fortnightly intervals. Initial work has focussed on identification of the structural and operational issues that underly rail freight activity in Victoria. A significant benefit of virtual meetings has been the ability to draw expertise from our regional and interstate members to the considerable advantage of the project as a whole. During the currency of this work there have been several regressive developments including 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 much harder to achieve. By mid-year 2022, a large range of issues had been identified and work is now progressing toward documentation in a format appropriate to a Rail Freight Strategy paper. Completion is targeted for early 2023.

Heywood – Mt. Gambier Line Re-activation Project

RFI became aware in 2020 of a CSIRO Assessment of re-activating the Heywood – Mount Gambier rail line commissioned by Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast (RDALC) based in Mount Gambier. This former broad-gauge line became isolated in 1995 with standardization of the Melbourne – Adelaide mainline and several Victorian North Western lines. In late 2020, an initial contact with RFI from RDALC led to the setting up a working group led by Max Michell, with members David Hardy, Frank Lander and Robin Walpole. Initially, Covid-19 delayed a face-to-face meeting however RDALC was finally able to host our team for three days of intense meetings with RDALC management and with key Mount Gambier stakeholders in early May 2021. Since then, meetings by Zoom on the Victorian side have been held with the Shire of Glenelg and the Port of Portland. Work has continued throughout 2021/22 with the team visiting Mount Gambier and Portland in December 2021 and again in May 2022. New RFI Member Mark Williams, formerly of the South Australian Department of Transport, joined the project team early in 2022.

In March 2022, a new Labor State Government was elected in South Australia, and in May 2022 a new Labor Federal Government. Work on the re-activation project continues, now with the involvement of all three Governments (Federal, Victoria and South Australia). The aim is to submit an initial Stage 1 proposal to Infrastructure Australia (IA) and to have the proposed re-activation listed as a Project of National Importance.

John Hearsch, President

31 July, 2022



Secretary's Report for 2021 / 2022

GENERAL MEETINGS - PRESENTATIONS TO MEMBERS :

Six general meetings were held four using the Zoom video conferencing facility in August, October and December 2021 and June 2022. General meetings in February and April 2022 were held at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) and also simulcast by Zoom.

August 2021 (ZOOM) Graeme Vellacott - Passenger Rail Developments in Canada

October 2021 (ZOOM) Peter Karsidimas - Infrastructure Victoria (IV)

December 2021 (ZOOM) Bill Russell - Adventures in Advocacy

February 2022 (RHSV & Simulcast ZOOM) Bernard Shepherd - Regional hydrogen trains, Ouyen Inc.

April 2022 (RHSV & Simulcast ZOOM) Georgia Nicholls - Latest Developments in Interstate Freight

June 2022 (ZOOM) Alan de Reuck, Alstom. The Coradia I Lindt green hydrogen train for Regional Victoria

The RFI Annual General Meeting for 2020/2021 was held by Zoom on Friday 29/10/2021.

MEMBERS NEWSLETTERS :

Rail Futures News Post - our Quarterly Newsletter was published over Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter editions. Val Sands took over as Editor in 2021/2022 and Secretary David Hardy has added Publisher to his RFI duties. Crossover - Members News Update - was published on 3 occasions in the 2021/2022 year to update members of RFI activities between the quarterly editions of RFI Newspost.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT at 30/06/2022

At the close of the financial year the RFI membership register recorded total membership of 126 made up of 102 Ordinary Members and 24 Associate members, a net total increase in membership of 2 over that at 30/06/2021.

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 2022



Treasurers Report for 2021 / 2022

During the 2021/22 financial year RFI continued to use 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 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>2021/22</u>	<u>2020/21</u>
Ordinary Voting Members	102	94
Associate Members	<u>24</u>	<u>30</u>
Total Membership at 30 June	126	124

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

Is shown on pages 8 & 9 along with the Summary of Movements in RFI's bank accounts with the National Australia Bank (NAB) on page 10.

Peter V. Doughty **Honorary Treasurer**

31 July 2022



RFI Committee Approval of Treasurer's Financial Statements as at 30 June 2022.

At the RFI Committee Meeting # 76 held on Friday 30/09/2022 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 30/06/2022. A motion was then put to the Committee which was moved by the Treasurer – Peter Doughty and seconded by committee member Peter Tesdorpf . 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 # 76 of 30/09/2022.

David W Hardy **Secretary**

30 September 2022



RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (INC)

A – 00598398 ABN - 77 808 559 618

Statement of Receipts and Payments

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

	(Un-audited)	2021 - 22	2020 - 2021
Receipts		\$	\$
Members Subscriptions		6,679	2,600
<i>Donations</i>		90	3,290
<i>Excursion Income</i>		0	0
Recovery – Shared costs from TCPA		1,539	0
Sales publications and other goods		32	40
Income received in advance		10	120
- Total Receipts		8,350	6,050
Payments			
Bank Fees		(7)	18
Catering		55	0
Excursion Costs		0	0
Freight and Couriers		11	53
Graphic Design, Editing and Printing		4,093	1,045
Internet and e-mail hosting		92	38
Postage		624	15
Room Hire		0	0
Speakers Gifts and Expenses		121	126
Subscription – Xero accounting package		642	283
Subscription – Zoom Communications		277	277
Subscription – Royal Historical Society of Victoria		500	250
Web page			0
- Total Payments		6,981	2,105
Cash Surplus for the year		\$ 1,369	\$ 3,945

Summary of Movements in RFI's Bank Accounts with NAB

For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

(Un-audited)	2021 - 22	2020 - 2021
Opening Balance at 1 July 2021	\$ 15,472	\$ 11,527
Add Cash Surplus for the Year	\$ 1,369	\$ 3,945
Closing Balance at 30 June 2022	\$ 16,841	\$ 15,472

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 2022 and its bank account balances and numbers of members at that date.



Peter V. Doughty, FCA

Honorary Treasurer

30 September 2022

