

Media Release

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE Inc. A0059839B

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Fishermans Bend development stalled without high quality Public Transport

Part of the solution to Victoria's housing crisis lies in developing urban renewal areas like Fishermans Bend. With space for 80,000 residents and 80,000 jobs by 2050, it could be a city-shaping precinct – but only if the promised public transport is delivered.

From the outset, planning for Fishermans Bend relied on early tram extensions and, later, Melbourne Metro 2 to connect new communities with the CBD and beyond. Yet government inaction has stalled this vision, undermining investor confidence and delaying desperately needed housing and jobs.

The University of Melbourne's recent suspension of its \$2 billion advanced manufacturing, design and engineering campus sends a clear warning: without public transport, development will not proceed. The university bluntly noted it must "align with the timing of key government and industry investments" – a none-too-subtle call for public transport first.

The evidence is clear here and overseas: high-quality public transport in the right locations attracts private investment worth many times the initial government spend.

The Rail Futures Institute has long advocated for:

- Two tram routes into Fishermans Bend, via a new Yarra River crossing from Collins Street West.
- Melbourne Metro 2, a transformative cross-city rail link connecting the outer west and north with the CBD and Fishermans Bend.

The first stage of Metro 2 would run from a new Docklands station under Bourke Street West, cross under the Yarra to Sandridge Station, then continue to a major Fishermans Bend underground station on the former GMH site – a vital tunnelling hub for the broader project.

"Without trams and a commitment to progress Metro 2, Fishermans Bend will remain a planning exercise, not a community," said John Hearsch OAM, President of the Rail Futures Institute. "Public transport must come first if we're serious about tackling the housing crisis."

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Rail Futures Institute Inc. is an independent non-partisan group formed to advocate cost effective rail and intermodal solutions for public transport and freight problems based on sound commercial, economic, environmental and social reasoning. Rail Futures members include experienced rail professionals, engineers, urban planners and economists.

