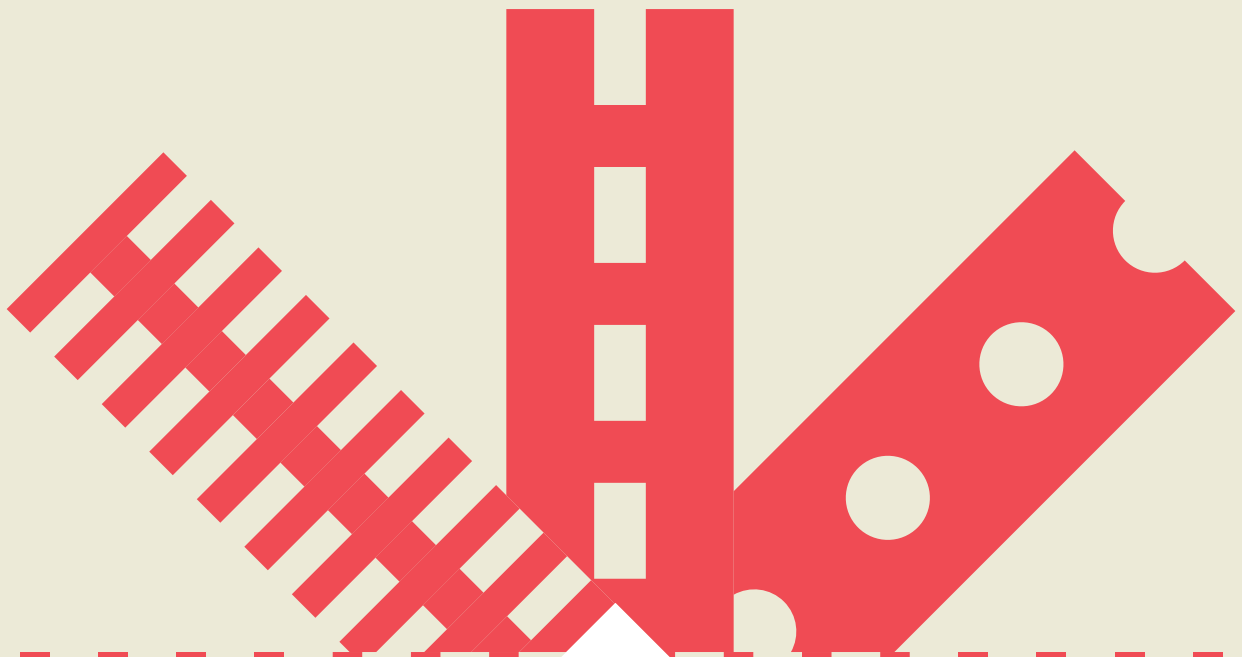


Connect Melbourne's North

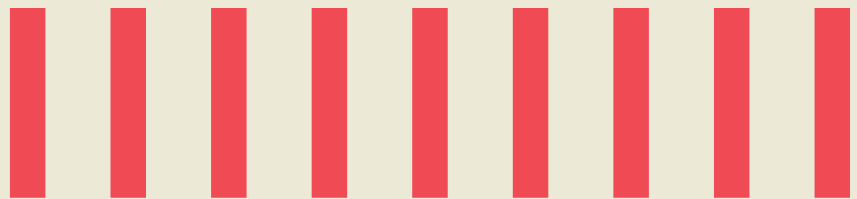


nca
Northern Councils Alliance



It's time to transform our transport

In response to severe traffic congestion, long trips to the nearest hospital, challenges in accessing jobs and education opportunities, and increasing social isolation, the NCA is urgently seeking action to improve our region's transport system.



Inadequate connectivity, congestion and pollution have become everyday realities for residents and businesses in Melbourne's north. Our public transport system is inefficient and irregular.

Public transport shortcomings in Melbourne's north are exacerbated by the fact that this is a fast-growing region. We urgently need more efficient connectivity and greater access so that our community can get to jobs, health and education facilities.

Currently, our community must rely on a public transport service that does not meet their requirements or else drive their own vehicle, which leads to increased congestion. In the north, a journey that is a 35-minute drive by car can be two hours or more by public transport, and weekend services in key areas across the region are almost non-existent.

It's time for transformative solutions that will meet our needs now and into the future. Our seven Councils have commissioned comprehensive research reports on our region's transport needs. The NCA is committed to working collaboratively in advocating for their recommendations.

But we can't do it alone.

We need strong engagement and financial and policy support from state and federal governments to achieve improved connectivity for our residents and businesses.

Better transport options will stimulate economic growth across Melbourne's north and improve quality of life for our residents.

Effective and sustainable transport solutions will bridge the gap between inner urban and outer areas of the region so that everyone has equal access to job, health and education centres. And seamless connectivity between different modes of transport will ensure that commuting becomes smoother and hassle-free.

Sustainable transport options are also key to our future planning.

We need stakeholders across our region to band together to support better planning and investment.

It's time.



About the NCA

The NCA represents and advocates for approximately one million people who live across seven municipalities in Melbourne's north: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Merri-bek, Mitchell, Nillumbik and Whittlesea.

About our region

Our region is home to 20 per cent of the population of Greater Melbourne. It's one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, with a population of 1.5 million forecast by 2036. This is a growth rate of 2.8 per cent compared to 1.6 per cent for Greater Melbourne and is occurring through greenfield development and densification. One in six Victorians lives in Melbourne's north.

But this population growth has not been matched by essential investment in transport. Most residents drive to work, with only 10.9 per cent of households in the region using public transport daily.

Over the years this has caused massive road congestion and delays in connecting between transport options – limiting business growth and access to employment, education and health services. The current transport system is not supporting the current population and there are no plans in place to service future populations.

The lack of transport options restricts social interaction and exacerbates the isolation experienced by our residents who do not have access to cars, such as young people and the elderly.

Our detailed transport research

We have commissioned three comprehensive reports that offer evidence-based recommendations for improving transport options across Melbourne's north. They are the *Northern Region Transport Strategy*, *Bus Networks Study* and *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan*. Our work has also been informed by the *Northern Trails* report.

What we know

- Public transport across our region is unreliable or unavailable.
- Road congestion is a major problem.
- We have poor east-west and inter-municipal connections.
- Public transport and connecting services are particularly inadequate in growth areas.
- There is a lack of cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Safety and security concerns on public transport are an issue for our community.

Transformative projects

- 1 North East Link
- Proposed Beveridge Intermodal Precinct
- Proposed Epping Market redevelopment
- Proposed Outer North Hospital
- 2 Proposed Outer Metropolitan Ring
- 3 Proposed E6
- Proposed Suburban Rail Loop bus route
- Proposed rail stations
- Proposed rail line
- Proposed track duplication
- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) – Inland Rail

Existing key infrastructure

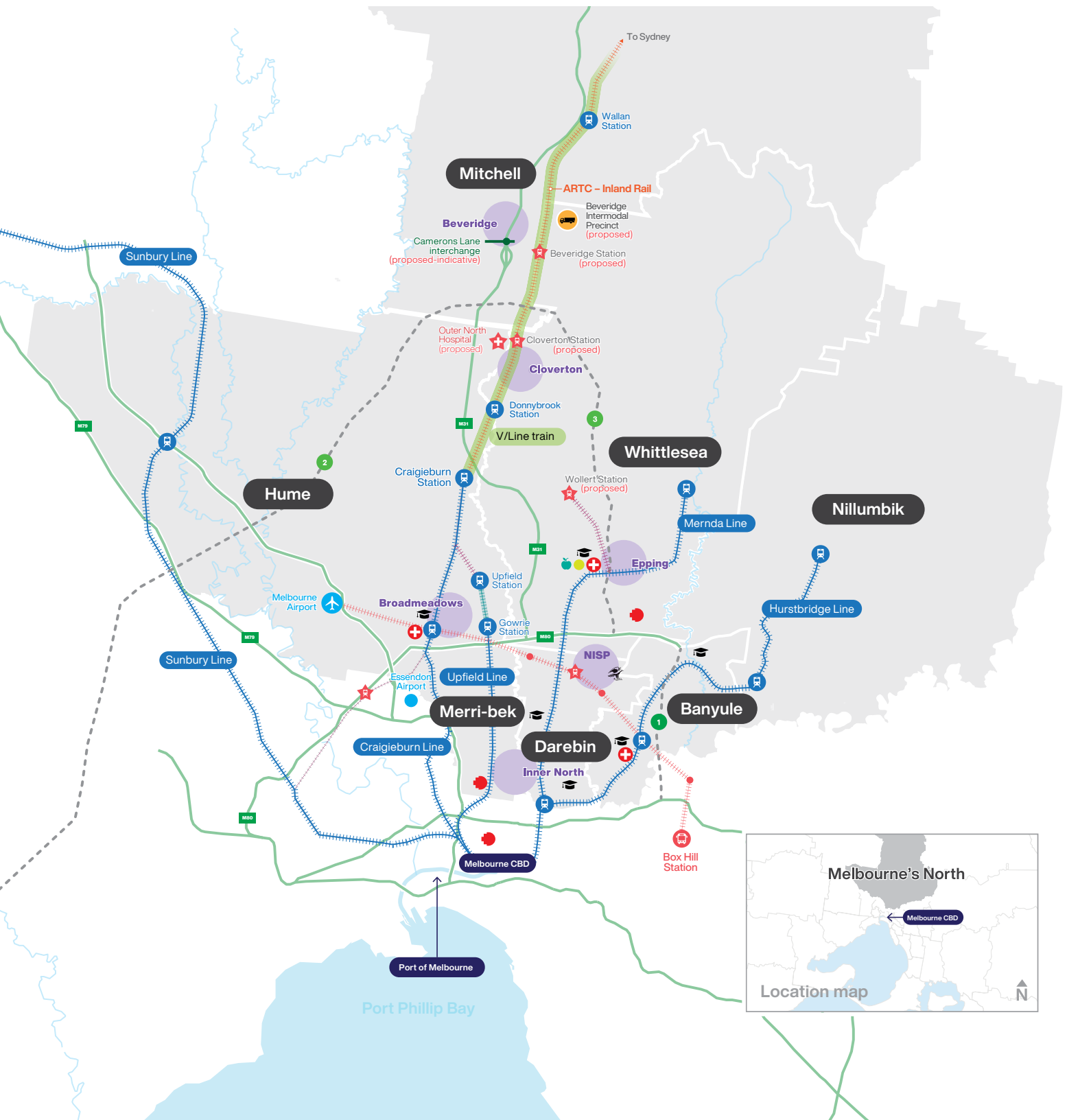
- La Trobe University
- RMIT University campus
- Melbourne Airport
- Melbourne Market
- Rail network
- Train stations
- V/Line train
- State significant road corridor
- Hospitals
- Higher education facilities

Priority precincts

- Beveridge
- Broadmeadows
- Cloverton
- Epping
- Inner North
- NISP - Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct

Local government areas

- Banyule
- Darebin
- Hume
- Merri-bek
- Mitchell
- Nillumbik
- Whittlesea





Specific examples

- La Trobe University is poorly served by public transport compared with universities in other regions.
- Melbourne Airport (and the surrounding business park) is a key employment hub in the north, with over 20,000 employees. Existing public transport services do not meet the needs of shift and other workers.
- Wallan and Beveridge (Mitchell Shire) will house over 200,000 people by 2051. This growth will create a jobs deficit. With inadequate public transport, car use to jobs and services will be the sole option – overwhelming an already congested Hume Highway.
- Additional bus services can be rolled out quickly, are modest in cost and can help meet demand in advance of more permanent measures such as the Suburban Rail Loop. Over the medium term, new routes could potentially also take advantage of enhanced connectivity to the North East Link.
- Implementing a Suburban Rail Loop bus following the route of the SRL would have multiple benefits. As well as expanding Melbourne's bus network and helping people to get to critical employment and education centres, it would also improve cross-corridor connectivity, ease the current strain on the north's transport network and reduce road congestion.
- Rail services cannot keep up with demand. This is most evident with the Upfield line, which terminates at Upfield, far short of where our growing populations live. The Upfield rail line has one of Melbourne's least frequent peak-period services. Trains run every 15–20 minutes during peak periods and every 20–30 minutes outside peak.
- Access to the Northern Hospital is limited to travel by car. The current train on the Mernda line ends 10-15 minutes from the hospital, with bus access unreliable and indirect.
- There is a lack of east-west connectivity by public transport. This limits access to key activity centres where much-needed services exist.
- Planning for the OMR/E6 is needed to support the new Beveridge Intermodal Precinct and ensure the terminal can operate to its full capacity.



What improved transport options will mean

- Investment in transport infrastructure for our region will mean that residents can access jobs, education and health services.
- Adequate transport will promote growth in designated precincts and leverage our region's existing strengths in health, food production, manufacturing and logistics. Social isolation will reduce.
- Work is being undertaken to support and grow our precincts. Strengthening these precincts is a focus for the region more generally and is outlined in the *Melbourne's North Investment Attraction Strategy*. Without adequate planning for enabling infrastructure such as transport, these precincts will fail to deliver the access to jobs and services that our region requires.
- In addition, providing the infrastructure that is needed for bike paths and walking trails across Melbourne's north will increase the use of active transport, improving resident health and wellbeing.



Actions required

from federal and state governments



Realistic and timely planning for our region's future growth

Currently there is no adequate planning for future growth in our region. This includes for large-scale infrastructure, buses, connectivity and active transport options.

There is also no engagement between levels of government to properly understand the issues that our region is facing.

The NCA has developed comprehensive reports that provide evidence-based recommendations to improve transport across Melbourne's north:

- *Northern Region Transport Strategy*
- *Bus Networks Study*
- *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan.*

These reports outline investment priorities and projects that will improve transport connectivity and encourage sustainable transport growth across our region.



Improved bus networks

We urgently need an efficient network of buses that connect our community to jobs, major precincts and health and education facilities, as outlined in our *Bus Networks Study*.

This would include:

- buses replicating the future Suburban Rail Loop route
- improved services to Melbourne Airport and La Trobe University
- improved SmartBus access
- increased services in growth areas.

Lack of adequate transport connectivity is a major issue in our region. An efficient bus network would help people reach critical employment centres and improve services to growth areas.



Upfield rail duplication and extension

Rail investments are needed now to resolve critical constraints on train services in Merri-bek, Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell.

Duplication and extension of the Upfield rail line, including electrification to Wallan, will improve train frequency, removing ongoing constraints and improving capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers.

This will support rapid residential, commercial and industrial development in the region, including the emerging and fast-growing areas of Donnybrook, Kalkallo and Beveridge as well as the future Cloverton precinct.



Large-scale transport infrastructure

We are seeking approval and funding support for large-scale transport infrastructure investments with significant regional benefits.

While our immediate priority is the Upfield rail duplication and extension, further investment is needed to address severe issues with overcrowding and connectivity in one of Australia's fastest-growing urban areas.

Our other key priorities include:

- expand Clifton Hill exchange
- Wollert Rail Extension to provide access to Northern Hospital
- Melbourne Metro 2
- OMR/E6 to support the new Beveridge Intermodal Precinct.



Funding for transition to electric vehicles

We need support to implement recommendations resulting from our evidence-based *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan*.

This includes financially supporting:

- transition of Council fleet vehicles to electric (with a focus on heavy fleet)
- grid connection and grid stability upgrades for Council depots, offices and community facilities.

And to meet community requirements an electric vehicle charging network must be developed across Melbourne's north, with a focus on equality of coverage and availability.



Sustainable active transport

We need funding to complete all stages of the Northern Trails project.

The *Northern Trails 2022* and *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan* documents provide evidence and actions for establishment of a network of integrated walking and cycling trails across the region.

We need your help.

We need a more efficient, sustainable and interconnected transport system across Melbourne's north. And with a fast-growing population – growing at 175 per cent of the national average – the need is more urgent than ever.

The importance of providing equality of access to our community, for business viability, employment, education, health or any other aspect of livelihood or liveability, cannot be overstated.

We need support from governments, businesses and communities to advocate for action. And our advocacy must be collaborative and ongoing if Melbourne's north is to continue to grow and provide opportunities for the future.

Please join us in our efforts to gain better transport options in our region.





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VOLVO



Dysons

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VIC
VICTORIA THE PLAINS ROUTE

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