



Media release

From the Minister for Roads and Ports

Tuesday 3 July, 2007

VICTORIA PRESENTS \$11.5 BILLION TRANSPORT VISION TO CANBERRA

A major upgrade of the Western Ring Road leads the Bracks Government's \$11.5 billion vision for Victoria's road and rail infrastructure under AusLink 2, the Minister for Roads and Ports, Tim Pallas announced today.

Mr Pallas said the upgrade to the Western Ring Road would cost an estimated \$2.2 billion and would involve the construction of an extra lane in each direction on the freeway plus the installation of traffic management systems, such as ramp metering.

"The Western Ring Road has been an outstanding success since it was built in the 1990s," Mr Pallas said.

"Today it carries up to 130,000 vehicles each day and plays a major role in moving freight to and from the Ports of Melbourne and Geelong and connecting regional and interstate corridors.

"However, the Ring Road is now experiencing high levels of congestion, particularly in peak periods, and it is time for its capacity to be significantly enhanced."

Mr Pallas said the Western Ring Road upgrade was one of 30 projects proposed in *National Transport Links - Growing Victoria's Economy*, Victoria's roads funding request to the Commonwealth Government's five-year AusLink 2 program.

"This is a strategic transport funding vision of 30 priority projects, that we want to be considered as part of the national \$22.3 billion AusLink 2 program," Mr Pallas said.

"The Federal Government and the States have a shared responsibility for Australia's national transport system, and we look forward to working with the Federal Government to ensure that Victoria receives our fair share as outlined in our proposal.

"In an unprecedented move the Bracks Government is making a commitment now to invest 25 percent in this major infrastructure package (estimated to be up to \$11.5 billion) if the Federal Government will give Victoria a share of road and rail funding that reflects Victoria's economic importance.

"Victoria generates 25 per cent of Australia's Gross Domestic Product, is home to 25 per cent of Australia's population, and contributes 25 per cent of fuel excise collected by the Federal Government – yet recently we have received only 16.5 per cent of Commonwealth transport funding.

"We look forward to working with the Commonwealth to see which of these projects get the green light with Victoria's fair share of AusLink 2 funding."

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The *National Transport Links - Growing Victoria's Economy* vision reflects the Victorian Government's long term vision for the state's road network and calls for much needed transport projects across regional and metropolitan Victoria.

"The Victorian transport network is in relatively good condition, thanks to investment and management by the State, but more needs to be done," Mr Pallas said.

The Victorian vision calls on the Federal Government to support 30 much needed projects across regional Victoria and the Melbourne area, including:

- Melbourne – Sydney rail line upgrade;
- The Goulburn Valley Highway bypasses at Nagambie and Shepparton;
- Stage 4 of the Geelong Bypass;
- Dynon – Port – Rail Program;
- Duplication of Princes Highway East between Traralgon and Sale;
- Princes Hwy West duplication between Geelong and Colac;
- Dooen (near Horsham) intermodal terminal development;
- Duplication of the Western Hwy between Ballarat and Ararat; and
- Western Hwy re-alignment at Anthony's Cutting.

"It is important that we reinforce the integrity of AusLink, which was initially set up to direct investment into those parts of the transport network that need it, not to pork barrel in the lead up to an election," Mr Pallas said.

"This package is about saving lives and improving the Victorian and National economy which means jobs and a better quality of life for Victorian families."

Mr Pallas said the Victorian agricultural and manufacturing sectors were strongly export-focused and of national-importance. Victoria accounts for 87 per cent of Australia's dairy exports, 39 per cent of horticultural exports, 37 per cent of wool and fibre products exports and 25 per cent of food exports.

"Over the next decade, strong growth is set to occur in sectors that rely on efficient transport networks for freight exports and to serve domestic markets, including timber plantations in south western Victoria, mineral sands, dairy, horticulture and processed food," Mr Pallas said.

A full list of all 30 transport projects as part of *National Transport Links - Growing Victoria's Economy* can be found at: <http://www.doi.vic.gov.au>.