Introduction

Local bus services are a vital link in the public transport network, providing for local travel needs and delivering connections to the emerging cross-town bus network and the rail network.

The Victorian Government is conducting a program of 16 geographically based bus reviews across the metropolitan area.

The bus reviews aim to assess the key restraints of the current network, such as route design, hours of operation, service frequency, connectivity, geographical coverage and functionality. Following this assessment, a revised network will be proposed in an attempt to better meet the community’s needs in an effective and efficient manner.

The project methodology for the bus review was based on:

- A detailed understanding of the current demographic and socio-economic conditions in the bus review area
- A technical appraisal of the bus routes currently provided, and an analysis of their respective strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement
- A high degree of involvement and cooperation with key industry and community stakeholders

Hobsons Bay/Wyndham Bus Service Review

The Hobsons Bay/Wyndham Bus Service Review was undertaken by Parsons Brinckerhoff, a leading planning, environmental, engineering, program and project management firm, which has been working on infrastructure and environmental projects for more than 40 years.

A total of 17 local bus services were included in the review, which cover the suburbs of Wyndham Vale, Werribee, Werribee South, Tarneit, Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing, Truganina, Laverton North, Seabrook, Altona and Altona Meadows.

Consultation process

Stakeholder consultation provided a major input into the Bus Service Review, ensuring that the issues, concerns, comments and recommendations of bus users, Bus Association Victoria, VicRoads, Hobsons Bay City Council, Wyndham City Council, bus operators, representatives from local schools, community representatives and members of the community were canvassed, discussed, collated and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final bus review recommendations.

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken through the following methods:

- Discussions with local bus operators, local councils and VicRoads
- Community workshops
- Written submissions

Two rounds of community workshops, being four workshops in total, were convened and attended by representatives from the local community. At the first round of workshops participants were given an opportunity to raise both high level and specific issues concerning bus services in the area. During the second round of workshops an overview of the proposed improvements was presented. Participants were given an opportunity to comment on the proposals and to provide any additional feedback.

Submissions were received during the consultation phase. These were considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the final bus review recommendations.

Main issues identified

The most commonly raised general issues were:

- The need for expanded geographical coverage of the bus network
- The need for increased frequency of bus services
- Limited span of hours and days of operation

Other frequently raised issues included:

- Traffic management issues
- Connections and coordination between train and bus
- Bus stop infrastructure
Network plan recommendations
The proposed bus network changes resulted from the consultation process as well as a technical assessment of the current bus network and the opportunities for improvement.

Proposed route structure changes have been developed in response to the following principles:

- Provide improved access to the key activity centres of Werribee, Werribee Plaza and Hoppers Crossing
- Provide bus routes that connect local facilities and communities
- Provide access to key transport interchanges
- Provide bus routes within 400m of most households
- Ensure new and developing areas are adequately served by the bus network
- Provide user friendly bus routes, that are direct, logical, intuitive and efficient
- Provide a consistent network with minimal route variations and loops

Some specific issues raised during the consultative process that were addressed included:

- Bus service provision to the areas of Point Cook, Manor Lakes and Truganina which are not currently served by bus
- Direct bus connections from Point Cook to Werribee
- Bus connections from Manor Lakes to Werribee Plaza
- More direct services to the rail stations at Werribee and Hoppers Crossing
- Improved access to Laverton North industrial areas.

Recommendations include:
- Expansion of bus services into the growth areas of Point Cook, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit and Truganina.
- Streamlining routes and improving overall network directness, particularly on major routes
- Most existing routes should be modified to some extent
- Service frequencies and span of hours should be improved on most routes

Timetable recommendations

Recommendations include:

- Service frequencies be improved on most routes
- Span of hours be improved on most routes
- Modal coordination to be improved at key interchange locations.

Traffic and infrastructure recommendations

Traffic issues within the bus review area were raised throughout the consultation process highlighting the importance of local councils and VicRoads to provide suitable road infrastructure which supports bus services. Inappropriate traffic management treatments can have major impacts on the effectiveness and accessibility of public transport services provided by buses.

Recommendations include:

- A range of on-road network improvements to infrastructure and access around Hoppers Crossing and Werribee stations during peak periods. Enhanced priority will improve journey times for buses.
- The construction and completion of a number of roads to allow bus access.
- A number of improvements to footpaths, bus stop infrastructure and facilities.

Implementation strategy

Recommendations have been categorised into short, medium and long term actions. Changes for implementation and funding in the short term are essentially those improvements to span of hours and days of operation that involve minimal or no route structural changes. Medium term changes involve improvements to span of hours, days of operation, increased frequency and/or changes to route structures. Long term improvements may include all of the above and require multi-disciplinary buy-in and coordination with other stakeholders.

Next steps

The implementation strategy for the recommendations will be dependant on a number of issues:

- The input and cooperation of key stakeholder groups
- The resolution of operational issues
- The resolution of any bus operator contractual issues that may arise
- The prioritisation of multiple recommendations arising from concurrent bus reviews occurring throughout the metropolitan area
- The development of a further funding program
- The need to align with other transport plans and strategies
Stage 1: Action Plan for upgrades to local bus services following the review

- New services in Manor Lakes that provide simplified, direct and consistent route structures
- New service to improve coverage to Wyndham Vale west and connect Wyndham Vale with Manor Lakes, Werribee Plaza and Werribee Station
- Improve services in Tarneit extending to the growth areas
- New service to Sayers Road, linking directly with Hoppers Crossing, Werribee Plaza and Werribee Station
- Improve service between Werribee Station and Westleigh Gardens
- Provide a simplified 2 way service to the South Ring Road area
- Improve Werribee South service to Werribee Mansion and Zoo through improved frequency and the introduction of a Sunday service
- New service to areas of Point Cook not currently serviced via Boardwalk Boulevard connecting Hoppers Crossing to Point Cook (south and west)
- New service to areas of the Laverton North Industrial area on a trial basis
- Improve span of hours and increase weekend services within City of Wyndham

Recent upgrades to local bus services in the review area

- **Route 400** (Sunshine – Laverton) – route varied to operate via Windsor Boulevard to provide public transport to a developing area of Brimbank. Commenced 23 June 2008.
- **Route 412** (Laverton Railway Station – Altona Meadows – Altona – Footscray via Mills St) – Operating hours extended to from 6.00 am to 9.00 pm weekdays, 8.00 am to 9.00 pm Saturdays and Public Holidays and 9.00 am to 9.00 pm on Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Commenced 31 March 2008.

- **Route 414** (Laverton – Footscray) – Routes restructured to provide better coverage and consistent operation. Commenced 30 June 2008.
- **Route 415** (Laverton – Williamstown) – Route restructured to provide new service to Port Phillip Retirement Village. Commenced 30 June 2008.
- **Route 436** (Werribee – Hoppers Crossing) – Operating hours extended to from 6.00 am to 9.00 pm weekdays, 8.00 am to 9.00 pm Saturdays and Public Holidays and 9.00 am to 9.00 pm on Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Commenced May 2007.
- **Route 440** (Werribee – Hoppers Crossing via Wyndham Vale) – Operating hours extended to from 6.00 am to 9.00 pm weekdays, 8.00 am to 9.00 pm Saturdays and Public Holidays and 9.00 am to 9.00 pm on Sundays, Christmas Day and Good Friday. Commenced May 2007.

Recent infrastructure upgrades to local bus stops in the review area

- 32 new Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant bus stops installed across the Hobsons Bay/Wyndham review area.
- Installation of 13 new bus shelters at the following locations:
  - Corner of Point Cook Road and Homestead Run, Seabrook
  - Melbourne Road, Williamstown
  - Corner of Osbourne Street and Cole Street, Williamstown
  - Hammer Street, Williamstown
  - Corner of Melbourne Road and Hudsons Road, Spotswood
  - Kororoit Creek Road and Melbourne Road, Altona
  - West of Victoria Street and Esplanade, Williamstown
  - East of McIntosh Road and Mason Street
  - The Broadway near Blackshaw Road, Altona North
  - Grieve Parade near Clelland Road, Altona North
  - Blackshaw Road near Kyle Road, Altona North
  - Old Geelong Road near Cliff Street, Laverton
  - Outside Maher Road Police Station, Laverton

The detailed list of recommendations for improvements to the route bus network is contained in The Report of the Hobsons Bay/Wyndham Bus Service Review. For more information, contact the Department of Transport on (03) 9655 6000 or visit www.transport.vic.gov.au/buses.