



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **VTA welcomes priority North East Link in infrastructure plan**

Victoria's peak representative group for the freight and logistics industry has endorsed Infrastructure Victoria's prioritisation of the missing North East Link in a final 30-year infrastructure plan tabled in the parliament today.

Victorian Transport Association (VTA) CEO Peter Anderson concurred that planning for the North East Link between the M80 Ring Road at Greensborough and Eastlink should be expedited, and that up to \$35 million of Federal and State funding earmarked for routing and feasibility studies should be urgently accessed as soon as possible.

"Infrastructure Victoria's designation of the North East Link as the state's priority road project is welcome news among transport operators that have been calling for the construction of an efficient and safe connection between Eastlink and the Ring Road for many years," Mr Anderson said.

"With increasing bi-partisan recognition among state and federal parliamentarians that the North East Link is vital for the efficient movement of people and goods between Melbourne's north and south east, we urge the state government to initiate a feasibility study of the project, including possible routing options."

Infrastructure Victoria says the road would generate returns of between \$1.40 and \$2.10 for every \$1 invested, and that it therefore "provides the greatest benefit for the cost."

Mr Anderson also welcomed recommendations in the plan, whose implementation over time would be vital for securing Victoria as the nation's freight and logistics capital, including:

- Delivery of a **port rail shuttle**, with consideration of the rail access strategy prepared by the new port owner, within 0-5 years.
- Identifying existing and future potential **freight precincts** requiring planning protection in respect of air, land and sea freight operations within 0-5 years.
- Identifying trigger points for the construction of the **Western Interstate Freight Terminal** and undertake detailed planning for the terminal within 0-5 years.
- Increase the capacity and optimise the use of **freight terminals** for interstate and international trade
- Establish a transparent and evidence based process for prioritising, at a state level, **regional highway upgrades** that will increase productivity and safety for road users within 0-5 years.
- Roll out a program of upgrades to the road network supporting high mass **High Productivity Freight Vehicles** (HPFV), particularly bridges to accommodate heavier axle loads, over 5-15 years.
- **Standardise rail gauge** in northeast Victoria within 5-10 years and continue planning for the remainder of the broad gauge regional rail network to determine other priority areas for standardisation.

**Ends...**



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