

MEDIA RELEASE

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STONNINGTON URGES GOVERNMENT TO CAPTURE FULL BENEFITS OF METRO RAIL PROJECT

- **Melbourne Metro interchange at South Yarra could benefit 65,000 extra commuters per day**
- **Stonnington pedestrian counts reveal serious discrepancies in State Government projections for South Yarra**
- **Transport experts identify cost-saving engineering solutions**

Stonnington Council is calling on the Federal Government to insist on South Yarra Station's inclusion as an interchange station as part of any funding contribution to the \$10.9 billion Melbourne Metro Rail Project.

The inclusion of South Yarra station in the Melbourne Metro Rail project would potentially benefit an additional 65,000 commuters per day on the Frankston and Sandringham lines by 2031.

Currently commuters on these lines will either have to travel to Caulfield Station or the CBD to access the new Metro Rail network.

Stonnington Mayor, Cr Claude Ullin said pedestrian counts commissioned by the Council shows that the State Government's projections had grossly underestimated current usage of South Yarra Station for commuters.

"Independent pedestrian counts, conducted in December and March, show that daily patronage at South Yarra has trebled since 2011 to 28,000 commuters. Council projects this to increase to 40,000 by 2031. By contrast, the State Government's projections estimates daily patronage figures at South Yarra to reach only 23,000 by 2031 – 5,000 less than the number of commuters using the station today," Cr Ullin said.

South Yarra Station is also the busiest station outside the CBD across the metropolitan network during the morning peak, coming second only to Flinders Street Station. Caulfield Station comes in at 10th busiest, according to PTV figures from 2013/14.

"These serious discrepancies cast significant doubts over the State Government's decision to exclude South Yarra as an interchange station," Cr Ullin said.

The State Government's Business Case, released last month, dismisses the inclusion of South Yarra station as part of its cost/benefit analysis. The State costs its inclusion at up to \$970 million.

But Cr Ullin, said the Council had been advised by independent transport experts that, on reviewing the assumptions in the Business Case, it appears that the costs have been overstated and the benefits grossly understated.

"We believe it is possible to shave up to \$300 million off the cost of making South Yarra an interchange station, simply by thinking a little more broadly," Cr Ullin said.

Following the Prime Minister's recent comments regarding alternative funding for infrastructure projects, Cr Ullin said the State Government's Business Case also ignored the significant value capture that would come from the redevelopment of the ageing South Yarra Station.

Cr Ullin said Stonnington's transport experts had advised that there were a number of alternative options for disentangling the Dandenong and Frankston lines rather than the ones proposed in the State's South Yarra station option.

"One of these options may be to disentangle the lines east of Caulfield Station where the environment is much less congested, significantly reducing the capital cost of such an exercise," Cr Ullin said.

"We don't have all the answers, but this is a once-in-a-generation project and it is vital we reap the maximum benefit."

"All we are saying is that if an additional 65,000 people could directly benefit from the option we are proposing then surely it is worth another look. Once the project is built there is no going back," he said.

Currently the South Yarra precinct provides jobs for up to 20,000 workers, the majority of which are in retail and hospitality.

"This is an opportunity for both the State and Federal Governments to fully capture and optimise the benefits of this project," Cr Ullin said.

The State's current Metro Rail Project proposal is likely to have a significant impact on the South Yarra precinct with no reward.

Key impacts include:

- Complete occupation of the South Yarra Siding for approximately five years of construction
- Noise, vibration, dust and amenity impacts associated with construction
- Extensive local and arterial road traffic and parking impacts associated with construction
- Visual and landscape amenity impacts
- Social and community impacts associated with loss of open space and reduced public amenity during construction.

*For media or photo opportunities, please contact Matt Clear, Manager Communications, City of Stonnington on **8290 1113** or **0403 229 094** or **media@stonnington.vic.gov.au***

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