

## Fishermans Bend Business Forum (FBBF) Transport Issues Paper

### 1. Background

Fishermans Bend was rezoned for substantial residential growth in 2012. In 2018 the Government launched the *Fishermans Bend Framework* – an 84-page master plan to guide sustainable development in the area under the guidance of an appointed board of experts.

Under this plan, Fishermans Bend would feature plenty of green space, apartment buildings, affordable housing, new schools a reliable transport network including improvements in public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, and thousands of high-tech and advanced manufacturing jobs within the industrial area. The plan also called for 2 tram lines into the area with a medium-term delivery timeframe from 2020 to 2025 and consideration of 2 new train stations.

Considerable building activity has already occurred in Fishermans Bend, with at least seven residential towers completed and occupied which has added several thousand new residents and cars to the area, yet the only announcement on transport has been to add additional bus services to existing lines.

### 2. Current Situation - Transport

An article in the Age in July 2023 summed up the current situation very well as follows:

- *A mooted tramline and bridge that would connect the CBD to Fishermans Bend by 2025 – outlined in a state government plan from 2018 – is nowhere to be seen.*
- *It was meant to be delivered sometime between 2020 and 2025, leaving the government two years to meet its own deadline. None of the stakeholders expect that to happen.*
- *With more than 15,000 new apartments already approved or on the way, developers, businesses, and local councils warn the state government’s proposed tram lines to unlock the dwellings are nowhere to be seen.*

The Chair of the FBBF Bernadene Voss was also quoted in the article stating that:

- *“By far and away the biggest catalyst for any movement in Fishermans Bend is public transport,” says former mayor of the City of Port Phillip and Fishermans Bend Business Forum president Bernadene Voss. “And I don’t know of any movement whatsoever ever [on trams].”(The Age July 2023).*

*The lack of progress on the tramline and bridge, initially scheduled for completion between 2020 and 2025, has led stakeholders to doubt the government’s ability to meet its own deadlines.”*

## Bus Services – Routes 235 & 237

### July 2022

- In July 2022, the State Government announced an increase in bus services to Fishermans Bend. This commenced on 31 October 2022 with more than 900 services a week added to the above two routes between FB and the CBD.
- While this increased the frequency of existing services on two existing lines there were no new services announced (PTV).
- The result is more buses on existing roads, rather than a new transport service that reduces pressure on roads.
- The FBBF strongly encourages planning for alternative services, such as tram and train, to reduce congestion on busy roads before further significant residential growth occurs.

### Oct 2023

- From Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a further 460 services will be added to the Precinct's two main bus services.
- The City to Fishermans Bend - routes 235 (via Williamstown Road) and 237 (via Lorimer Street) will run to an eight-minute frequency in the morning and afternoon peaks, with services running until midnight on weekdays.
- On weekdays, late night services will be introduced on both routes operating every 20 minutes after 9pm until end of service.
- Weekend frequency on Route 235 will increase to every 20 minutes throughout the day, with services running from 6.00am to midnight on Saturdays, and 7am to midnight on Sundays. Route 235 will start earlier at 5.40am on weekdays following the addition of extra early morning services.
- Both routes will terminate at Southern Cross instead of Queen Victoria Market.
- Routes 235 and 237 services will operate a one-way loop, entering the CBD from Charles Grimes Bridge and travelling via Flinders Street, Spencer Street, Collins Street and Batman Hill Drive before heading back to Fishermans Bend
- Find out more, click the link. <https://lnkd.in/gmDp33Kj>
- Janet Bolitho (Task Force) provides a good explanation of the proposed increased bus service transport plan in her recent blog - [Fishermans Bend update, August 2022 - Port Places](#).

### Current Issues

- There is anecdotal evidence that buses already run at 10-minute intervals during peak hours but can be unreliable with low patronage. Adding more buses to the route off peak will not be beneficial if no one uses them.
- The current bus fleet which run on diesel add to pollution and do not fit within a green city objective. Electric buses would be far more sustainable in the long term.

- Including a 'turn up and go service' which means the bus only stops if requested by a passenger allowing it to skip stops would provide for a speedier service.
- Alternatively, a fleet of minibuses could run between core hours and offer a door to door or alternative route service which might be more effective.

### Tram Services

- The proposed tram route for the Fishermans Bend service was an extension of the Collins St/Docklands route 11 service to Fishermans Bend. See map on page 6 below.
- The **Melbourne Tram Plan** released in Sept 2023 outlines three horizons (phases) for the implementation of changes to the tram network. Horizons 1 & 2 focus on improvements to the existing network with emphasis on the CBD while Horizon 3 focuses on extending the existing network (post 2032) to *National Employment & Innovation Clusters (NEICs)* including Fishermans Bend (page 11). This timeframe does not line up with the 2025 timeframe in the Fisherman's Bend Framework.

### Bicycle Paths

- There have been some upgrades to bicycle routes to FB from the city, however a lot more needs to be done as the cycle routes could be significantly extended throughout FB plus include safe routes from port and south Melbourne into FB.
- Bicycle Network has published a good summary a useful map <https://bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2017/10/26/bike-vision-confirmed-for-fishermans-bend/>

### 3. Auditor General Investigation

- Victoria's Auditor General's office (VAGO) is investigating Fishermans Bend to evaluate if stage agencies (DPC, DTP, City of Melbourne, City of Port Phillip and Development Victoria) are aligning with the 2018 masterplan, which envisions a population of 80,000 and 80,000 jobs in Fishermans Bend by 2050. The timeframe for the report is 2023-2024. (VAGO)
- Major stakeholders in Fishermans Bend are not expecting a glowing report card when the auditor general's office returns its report in the coming year – largely for the failure to start constructing a light rail to and from an area that is more than twice the size of the CBD.

### 4. Housing Crisis in Victoria

- With Melbourne facing a housing affordability crisis, the Victorian Government released **Victoria's Housing Statement - The Decade Ahead 2024-2023 (Sept 2023)** to build 800,000 homes in Victoria over the next decade. <https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement>
- The development potential of Fishermans Bend including thousands of dwellings, affordable housing, and new jobs also has the potential to be part of the solution and assist the Government in meeting its ambitious housing target over the next decade.

However, the absence of adequate public transport infrastructure will hinder the potential of FB to relieve the pressure on housing.

- This is a related issue that can assist the FBBF is advocating for immediate investment in public transport for FB.

## 5. FBBF Advocacy Plan and Campaign

A Ministerial Advisory Committee Review of Fishermans Bend in October 2015 made the following points and recommendations:

- The planning and implementation arrangements were flawed and would result in poor outcomes.
- The 2012 decision to rezone 250 hectares of industrial land to Capital City Zone in advance of due diligence and planning work was misguided, lacking clear financial, governance and implementation arrangements.
- The 2014 issue of multiple permits for high rise residential towers without reliable implementation arrangements to address needed transport infrastructure was alarming.
- The vision for FB must be revisited to address the above deficiencies.
- Key decisions about transport are essential along with the staging of developments and construction of roads, public transport, and active transport.
- Detailed planning of the Lorimer, Wirraway, Sandridge, and Employment precincts should not proceed without clear governance and transport plans.

Considering the above issues raised in the 2015 Ministerial Committee Report on Fishermans Bend, the Fishermans Bend Framework 2018, and the recommendations regarding transport planning and projects to provide proper access for residents, and freight traffic, the FBBF wants to ramp up its advocacy for increased investment in public transport to unlock the potential of Fishermans Bend, an area with over 15,000 approved or upcoming apartments.

## Fishermans Bend Transport Advocacy Plan

### Key Focus of the FBBF Transport Advocacy Campaign

Immediate investment in transport infrastructure for FB including:

- Mass mobility options as per the tram proposals to service the Employment Precinct and service the Wirraway and Sandridge Precincts.
- Train options and Federal and State funding /collaboration opportunities.
- Roll out bicycle (and safe pedestrian) travel options as per the proposed plan.

Investing in transport now will not only assist those already living and working in or planning to live and work in Fisherman's Bend but has the potential to also assist the government with the delivery of its *Housing Statement 2024-2034*

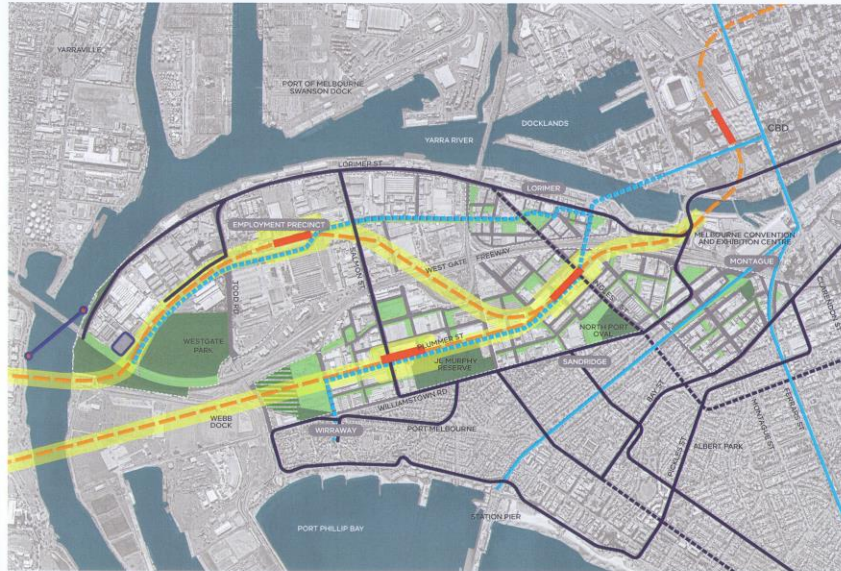
**Key Talking points as follows:**

1. Staging of land release and development of residential towers must be planned along with the provision of transport.
2. Both Government and developer funding should be committed to providing the transport projects needed.
3. The importance of tramlines to accommodate the projected population and employment growth of the Fishermans Bend precinct should not be held back for want of a tramline.
4. Immediate investment in public transport in Fishermans Bend can also help to alleviate the current housing crisis facing Victoria by assisting the Government to deliver on its *Housing Statement 2024-2034* with the opportunity to provide affordable housing just a few kilometres from the CBD.
5. The role of the Port must be protected, and freight traffic access planned with the amenity of the area considered requiring an integrated transport plan.
6. The tram route in protected Right of Way servicing the Employment Precinct should be scheduled for implementation as soon as funding can be secured.
7. In the interim, increased bus services and not just on existing routes are essential to service the area.
8. To fit within a green city objective, there should be a move/plan toward electrifying bus services across the precinct.
9. The proposed cycling and active transport infrastructure should be extended as soon as possible, given the proximity of the city and employment opportunities.
10. The Plummer Street tram route proposal needs review as this is the major Port and Westgate Freeway access road, developed many years ago to protect the amenity of Williamstown Road. If this can be achieved with road widening to provide a protected tram reservation with two lanes in each direction, plus parking given the business activity along the route, then this is optimum. Otherwise, another route should be selected for the tram route.
11. Regarding Metro Rail forward planning should determine if a route is practical. It is noted that there are already several major rail projects either underway or planned, namely, Metro Rail Tunnel, Metro Rail 2, Airport Rail Link, and the Suburban Rail Loop. Therefore, any implementation is long term, stressing the need for the above tram proposals to be strongly considered.



12. The road network proposals in the Framework Plan must be committed as developments proceed, given the significant, residential, business, and commercial proposals for the area. If these are delayed, jobs growth for the area could be curtailed which would impact on the area's viability, especially the business park areas along Plummer and other streets.
13. The Fishermans Bend Business Forum, along with developers, councils, and planners, is urging the government to refocus its attention on Fishermans Bend.

Note: the FBBF would like to acknowledge Brian Negus for his contribution to the development of this position paper.



**Public transport**

Figure 4

- Legend**
- Potential metro station
  - Potential metro alignment
  - Metro rail investigation area
  - Existing tram route
  - Proposed tram route
  - Existing bus route
  - Proposed bus route
  - Existing punt connection
  - Potential tram depot
  - Existing open space
  - Proposed open / urban space
  - Melbourne Grammar Sports Field

Note: Funding of public transport infrastructure will align with government budgetary processes.



## References

### **Housing Crisis – Vic Gov Housing Statement**

<https://www.vic.gov.au/housing-statement>

### **Melbourne’s Tram Plan**

<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/delivering-modern-trams-future>

### **Ministerial Advisory Committee Review**

[https://www.fishermansbend.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/30361/Ministerial Advisory Committee Report 1.pdf](https://www.fishermansbend.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/30361/Ministerial_Advisory_Committee_Report_1.pdf)

**PTV** - <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/footer/about-ptv/improvements-and-projects/bus-and-coach/lets-go-with-more-buses-between-the-city-and-fishermans-bend/#:~:text=From%20Monday%2031%20October%202022,the%20two%20routes%20on%20weekdays.>

**VAGO**- <https://www.audit.vic.gov.au/report/developing-fishermans-bend?section=>