



Attachment 1: Hobsons Bay City Council submission to the Wyndham Bus Review 2014

Integrated Transport is a key issue in Hobson Bay City Council's *Advocacy Strategy 2014-2018*. Buses are key modes of transport, particularly for residents in the western part of the municipality, including Altona Meadows and Seabrook which are not serviced by trains.

Ineffective connections between other transport modes and ineffective bus routes make travelling by bus an unviable option for many, often leaving them car dependant or unable to access key services.

Council's *Integrated Transport Planning in Hobsons Bay Discussion Paper (2014)* identified earlier changes to bus services in Laverton, particularly the 414 and 416 routes as having a negative impact on shops, services and the viability of local business in and around Aviation Road.

The Wyndham Bus Review 2014 (the review) focuses on east-west connections and includes some bus services that operate within Hobsons Bay, including the 496, 497 and 498, and more coordinated timetables with metropolitan and regional train services.

This submission highlights support to improved east-west connections and recommends changes to improve north-south connections and service frequency.

East-west connections

The improvement to east-west connections are a welcomed response as they will provide vital connections for residents of Seabrook, Altona Meadows and destinations south of the Laverton railway line. Specifically, the extension of the 496 bus service to Aircraft Station and the Aviation Road shopping precinct will provide a vital connection to this important activity centre. People using this route will be able to directly and easily access their local doctor, post office, bank and supermarket in one location. However, further detail and confirmation of frequency is important to identify whether this route would be successful. Given the route's proximity to a train station and an activity centre, a 20 minute peak frequency during the hours of 7am to 7pm would be justified.

The introduction of the 498 route (which features some similarity to the prior 416 bus route) will reinstate direct connection between Laverton Station, Point Cook Town Centre and Hoppers Crossing Station. This is a critical east-west route for access to various schools, including Point Cook Senior School, larger shopping precincts, the east Werribee employment precinct and the Werribee Hospital. This route could be even more effective if it was extended to Werribee Plaza. Under the current proposal, passengers on the 498 bus are required to change at Hoppers Crossing Station for a connecting service to Werribee Plaza. It is Council's understanding from discussions at the PTV community information session on 11 September that the 498 bus will become the 167 or 181 bus route that travels to Werribee Plaza. This will mean that passengers will not have to change buses.

The extension of the 496 bus route into the Sanctuary Lakes Estate is also a positive step. It will remove the need to walk up to 20 minutes to get to the bus stop.

There are however, limited links for school children and young people travelling from the west, such as the newer estates of Allura or Rose Grange (Tarneit/Truganina areas) to Laverton P-12 school and other destinations north of the Laverton rail line including the Laverton North/Derrimut industrial employment precinct. The former 446 service was very popular with school children in Laverton, Altona and Altona Meadows who need to cross suburbs to access Al-Taqwa College or Westbourne Grammar schools. These children will need to catch up to two buses and a train to get to school without further connection enhancement from the north side of Laverton Station. Consideration could

be given to extending the 400 to travel further from Laverton Station by heading west down Sayers Road to Marquands Road and Leakes Road.

Removing this service requires these schools to put more resources into their own bus services, which could be utilised more effectively within the schools. Public transport should provide a reliable service to get these children to school rather than requiring their own services.

The purpose of bus route 153 is unclear. This route is a very similar route as the train line. These resources could be used more effectively if directed to other routes not yet addressed or underserved.

North-south connections

As previously mentioned, the review appears to be heavily reliant upon east-west connections instead of north-south connections. North-south connections have been identified as an issue for the municipality and improvements to services north of the rail line in Laverton should be investigated further. Council is aware a review of bus routes within Hobsons Bay is proposed in 2015, and although this area may fall into a future review, it is important to encourage an integrated approach to transport in Laverton. Removing the at-grade Aviation Road rail crossing would significantly improve access and travel times for north-south connections, Council will continue to advocate the Victorian Government to upgrade this infrastructure.

Therefore it would be preferable that the 417 service be extended to Aircraft Station in off peak periods. This would allow Laverton residents direct access to their closest shopping precinct at Aviation Road or to catch trains from Aircraft Station. This is important in the event the lifts are not working at Laverton Station (as often is the case). There are a number of residents who rely on public transport in this area who are elderly or have mobility concerns and are unable to use the stairs at Laverton Station to change buses or use the trains on the north or south side. These people remain somewhat isolated. It is Council's understanding that PTV has received significant feedback from the community on this matter.

Service frequency

The revised timetables allow for more staggering of bus services allowing services as often as 10 minutes apart during peak times on certain routes. However, the proposed 40 minute frequency during peak times and an hour frequency during off peak times (although staggered) for the 496 and 498 routes may not result in an effective service. This area does not have rail options and is totally reliant on bus services. The frequency of these services should be closely monitored and increased with expected demand.

Other matters

In addition to this review, Council is also consulting with Transdev Melbourne regarding a review of the existing 232 Altona/Victoria Market and 903 Altona/Mordialloc smartbus routes in October 2014. It is understood that the PTV Hobsons Bay review in February 2015 will also consider these routes. Having two separate reviews is confusing to community members and is possibly a poor use of resources. It is hoped that in the future, a review of all bus services will be undertaken to reduce confusion in the community and to ensure an integrated approach.

With changes in bus routes, upgrades to bus infrastructure may be required. Council encourages the use of Universal Design principles for all public infrastructure therefore ensuring buses, signage, bus stops, and footpaths are accessible for older people, people with a disability, children, and people with low literacy and or from a non-English speaking background.