

SUPPORTING GROWTH

a whole of Government approach
to the City of Melton's
population boom



2019—2020 Federal Government Budget Submission

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Melton is one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities. This growth represents exciting opportunities, but also significant immediate and emerging challenges.

Melton City Council calls on all levels of government to partner in delivering essential infrastructure and services to support a vibrant, diverse and growing community.

KEY PRIORITIES

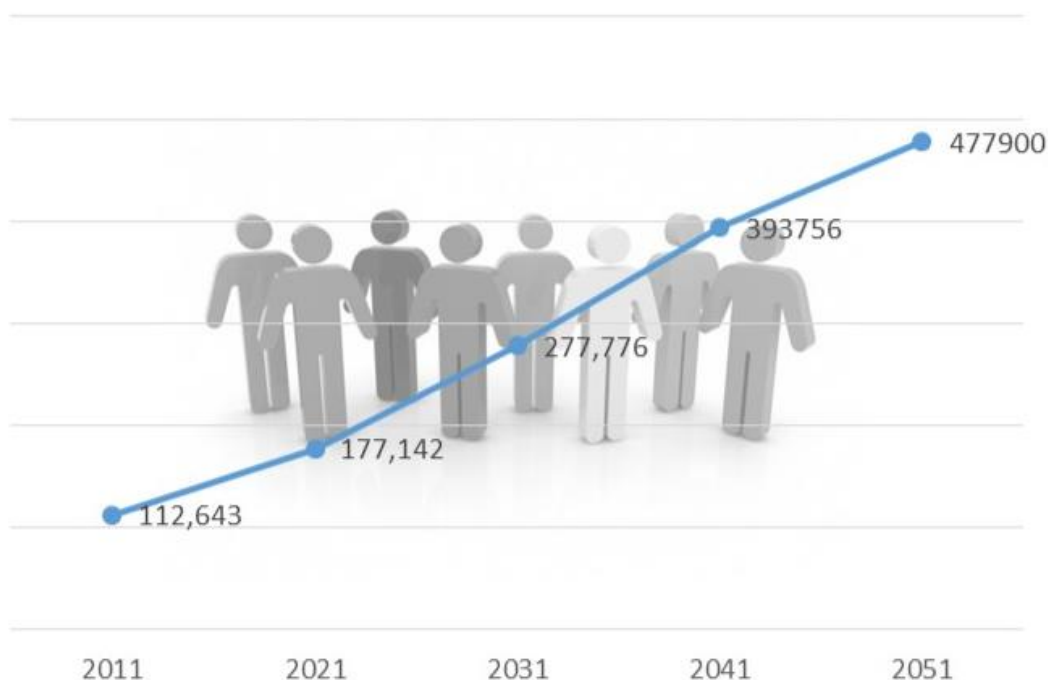
This document is seeking a commitment for the following key priorities to be included in the Federal Government's 2019/2020 Budget:

- Extend the **BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUND** to include outer interface council areas experiencing high growth
- **ROADS:** The upgrade of the Western Highway and the Calder Freeway Interchange
- **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES:** To contribute to a new Melton Hospital or the provision of a specialist service within the hospital
- **EDUCATION:** Fund the additional five hours of kinder currently funded with a commitment for ongoing permanent funding
- **RECREATION:** a new five-court, indoor sports stadium in Cobblebank

ABOUT THE CITY

The City of Melton is one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities offering a unique mix of urban and rural lifestyles.

Located 23 kilometres northwest of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD), and covering an area of 527.3 square kilometres, the City of Melton embraces a number of suburbs and smaller communities. Caroline Springs and Melton township exist at opposite ends of the municipality, and are home to the majority of our current residential population, split roughly halfway between the two locations. However, these outlying suburbs are rapidly being connected by residential growth occurring in designated areas, which ultimately will result in a municipal population of almost 500,000 larger than the current population of Canberra.



The population increase in the City of Melton over the past 15 years matches the total current population of Ballarat.

Most new arrivals to the City of Melton are young couples with, or intending to have, children, making the City's population one of the youngest in Victoria. In the City of Melton, 43 per cent of households were made up of couples with children in 2016, compared with 33 per cent in Greater Melbourne.

These young families are moving into the City of Melton for a number of reasons, including housing affordability, with house and land packages selling across a number of sites within the City for around \$400,000; around \$515,000 less when compared to the Melbourne average house price of \$915,000 (Domain. March 2018).

ABOUT THE CITY continued...

While housing affordability is a driver of population growth, the reality is that this does not translate to affordable living.

Lack of access to quality public transport, congested roads, lack of schools, and health and human services means residents have to travel long distances to work and access services that residents in inner Melbourne take for granted. This means long commutes, high transport costs, less time spent with family and leisure and recreation activities. This has a negative impact on health and wellbeing outcomes for our community.

Managing rapid growth is an ongoing challenge for all levels of government and policy makers. Facilitating the development and construction of key infrastructure projects is necessary to ensure that access to roads, healthcare, schools, and public transport is planned and funded in-line with growth projections.

The City of Melton is already playing “catch-up” when it comes to infrastructure, given that residential growth rates have far outstripped the delivery of services in the areas of education, health, recreation, transport and employment. Melton City Council is committed to the early delivery of infrastructure, and seeks to ensure that it is planned for, and funded, to coincide with population growth.



OUR LOCATION: CONNECTIVITY

The City of Melton is directly connected to Melbourne's major freeways, airports, industrial hubs and the Port of Melbourne, by both the Western Ring Road and Deer Park bypass.

The Western Highway, an important national freight route, runs through the municipality.



City of Melton has an area of **527.3 km²** compared to the City of Melbourne, which has an area of 36.2km².

MELTON TOWNSHIP

Council's traditional population and activity centre, Melton township—made up of a number of suburbs including Melton, Melton West, Melton South, Kurunjang, Harkness and Brookfield—is situated about 35 kilometres northwest of Melbourne's CBD.

The township continues to grow while still preserving features of its rural heritage.

EASTERN CORRIDOR

The City of Melton's most eastern corridor is centred around the Caroline Springs major activity centre, which is about 23 kilometres northwest of Melbourne's CBD. The eastern corridor includes Burnside, Burnside Heights, Caroline Springs, Hillside, Fraser Rise and Taylors Hill, and has been the site of the vast majority of the municipality's population growth over the past two decades.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In 2017, 11 new suburbs were established across the growth corridor between Melton Township and Caroline Springs in areas including Plumpton, Rockbank and Truganina. Smaller changes took place in long-established localities such as Melton South and Melton West, effectively changing the address of over 5,000 homes and businesses.

The changes were needed to ensure that population growth didn't push suburb densities beyond 20,000 residents, and to ensure that neighbourhoods and geographic characteristics were maintained.

Undertaken in preparation for the unprecedented growth that will occur in the municipality over the next 15 - 20 year, the development of the new suburbs was a two year process that culminated in the implementation of an extensive month-long, multi-pronged community engagement campaign that captured the attention of the community.

Further underpinning the residential and commercial growth being experienced within the City of Melton is a suite of Precinct Structure Plans that are currently being developed with, and have been approved by, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). These include, but not limited to:

- Diggers Rest PSP
- Melton North PSP
- Rockbank and Rockbank North PSPs
- Taylors Hill West PSP
- Toolern and Toolern Park PSPs
- Plumpton PSP, and
- Kororoit PSP.

The PSPs illustrate that our current development and growth focus is concentrated in Diggers Rest, Aintree, Cobblebank, Deanside, Strathtulloh, Eynesbury, Rockbank, Truganina, Weir Views and Thornhill Park, areas that will experience significant increases in housing and industrial infrastructure development over the next 20+ years.

In addition, Plan Melbourne has identified the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre as a higher order employment precinct that will serve the region as the main hub for shopping, services, food and entertainment, similar to Sunshine and Broadmeadows town centres.

Centred around the new suburb of Cobblebank, the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre, is of strategic importance to the City of Melton. A new train station is currently under construction in Cobblebank, which is also the proposed location for a new hospital, tertiary education institution, and a mix of residential and higher order employment precincts.

Key priority

BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUND

Melton City Council recognises the value and importance of the Building Better Regions Fund for creating jobs and driving economic growth to the regional communities and is calling on the Federal Government for its expansion to facilitate greater impact and penetration within the interface areas facing rapid growth. Fast growing outer municipalities like the City of Melton are absorbing considerable population growth as a result of migration and accessibility to affordable housing. High growth outer interface council areas incorporate large rural areas and have limited job opportunities and require investment into roads infrastructure and local jobs to achieve equality in social and economic benefits to those of inner city regions. The continued population growth and housing development is placing considerable pressure on local government to keep up with infrastructure and community services requirements. Melton City Council is seeking a commitment to extend the Building Better Regions Fund to interface councils.






ROADS

➔ ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE: WESTERN HIGHWAY

➔ ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE: CALDER FREEWAY INTERCHANGE

The road network within the City of Melton is quickly reaching capacity. The declared arterial network (managed by VicRoads on behalf of the State of Victoria) provides a critical link between the City of Melton and the greater metropolitan area and adjoining regional areas, and is experiencing significant strain due to sustained residential growth within the City.

Lack of quality public transport access, poor linkages to key employment areas and the need to travel outside the municipality for work results in a high dependency on cars as the mode of transport. More than 63 per cent of households in the City of Melton have access to two or more vehicles, compared to 51 per cent in Greater Melbourne.

City of Melton resident modes of travel	
	93.1 percent travel by car
	3.4 percent travel by public transport
	3.5 percent travel by active transport

Only 15 per cent of residential properties in the City of Melton are located within walking distance of the State Government's Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN).

The Western Highway is a critical arterial road link that functions as an important economic driver at a national, state and metropolitan level. Unfortunately, the section of highway located within the City of Melton suffers from significant levels of congestion during the peak periods, and is labouring under aging infrastructure.

Planning approval for six additional residential estates directly adjacent to the Western Highway will see the construction of 55,100 new dwellings, and an estimated 153,400 residents, all of whom will require access to the highway, resulting in significant increases in congestion over the next two years.

The Western Highway currently accommodates approximately 60,000 vehicles per day, however this is projected to increase to 85,000 vehicles per day by 2021 and 113,000 vehicles per day by 2031. Approximately 10 per cent of vehicles on the Western Highway are trucks that service the Central Highlands and Wimmera South Mallee regions, as well as the Adelaide freight route.

The highway corridor within the City of Melton is also characterised by aged and rural-standard freeway infrastructure, including direct property accesses, at-grade interchanges, and at-grade bus stops. Additional lanes and upgraded interchanges are needed to support the booming growth in population and maintain efficient freight movements in and out of Melbourne. If nothing is done, traffic modelling indicates that the Western Highway will be gridlocked by 2021.

Although the City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia, jobs growth is not keeping up at the same rate.

State-Wide Victorian Integrated Transport Modelling (S-VITM) indicates that the City of Melton currently has the lowest rate of employment per household in the Melbourne metropolitan area, at 0.61 jobs. This is less than half the average of 1.33 jobs per household.

As population growth in the municipality outstrips the growth in employment opportunities, jobs per household are expected to be reduced to 0.59 by 2031, whilst metropolitan Melbourne will increase to 1.39 jobs per household over the same period. As a result, residents of the City of Melton will need to continue to travel considerable distances to access employment compared to other municipalities.

Jobs Per Household			
LGA	2016	2021	2031
Melton	0.61	0.61	0.59
Darebin	0.87	0.91	1.00
Wyndham	1.01	0.96	0.94
Maribyrnong	1.19	1.15	1.11
Port Phillip	1.22	1.34	1.50
Greater Dandenong	1.32	1.80	1.81
Monash	1.63	1.65	1.86
Melbourne CBD	7.11	6.10	5.68
Metropolitan Melbourne	1.33	1.34	1.39

Currently around three-quarters of working residents travel outside the municipality each day, with over 16 per cent of these residents working in the City of Melbourne.

Only 10.1 PER CENT (241,532) of **all** jobs available in metropolitan Melbourne are located within a 60 minute public transport commute of the City of Melton. By 2021 only 6.7 per cent (179,329) of jobs will be located within 60 mins of the municipality.

The **figure below** indicates that a significant proportion of Melton’s road network was already congested in the morning peak and even more so in the afternoon peak period in 2016.

Without significant investment in the arterial road network, by 2031 the length of congested roads in Melton is projected to increase significantly, with just under 30 per cent of all of the arterial roads in our municipality experiencing congestion.



Length of congested roads in Melton (source: GTA Consultants Strategic Transport Modelling // Issue: A-Dr City of Melton, Transport Network Plan 2018)

Key priority

ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE: WESTERN HIGHWAY

Melton City Council is seeking a commitment from both Commonwealth and State governments to fund the upgrade of the Western Highway within the City of Melton to an urban freeway standard.

The upgrade of the Western Highway to an urban freeway standard within the City of Melton is a key safety and productivity priority for our municipality. The Western Highway is the major road between Melbourne and Adelaide, providing for major freight transport both interstate and regionally. It is the second largest freight carrier of any national highway, and is the major transport corridor between Caroline Springs and Melton township. Private, public and commercial vehicles use the road to access education, employment, retail, industrial and leisure activities, yet the Melton section of this major road is dangerously sub-standard. Melton City Council considers the lack of interchanges and overpasses in this section of the Western Freeway present a significant safety risk to all road users.

This section of the highway requires:

- an interchange at Bulmans Road
- an interchange at Harkness Road
- a pedestrian overpass bridge at Arnolds Creek
- an interchange at Mt Cottrell Road
- an overpass at Paynes Road, and
- removal of at-grade access to the highway.



Key priority

ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE: CALDER PARK INTERCHANGE

A business case for the removal of the Calder Park Drive at-grade intersection at the Calder Freeway has been prepared by the State Government, and funding is requested to construct the interchange. An interchange at Calder Park Drive will improve the traffic flow on the Melton Highway as residents currently access the Calder Freeway in Taylors Lakes driving congestion through to the Kings Road interchange. This will also require duplication of Calder Park Drive and removal of the level crossing on the Sunbury Line.

Melton City Council is seeking a commitment from both Commonwealth and State governments to fund the Calder Park Drive Interchange with the duplication of Calder Park Drive and the removal of the level crossing.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

➔ HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The City of Melton ranks lower than inner-city areas across a range of health and wellbeing indicators, and is home to certain suburbs with higher than average levels of disadvantage, according to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas chart.

City of Melton residents are more likely to be obese and physically inactive, with a low fruit and vegetable intake and almost half (46.5 per cent) experiencing at least one chronic disease, like diabetes or heart disease.

Our residents also experience higher levels of stress and social isolation compared with the Victorian and north western Melbourne averages.

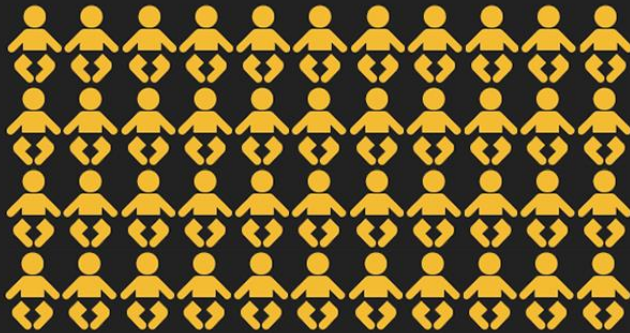


More than 7,000 people move to the municipality every year, increasing pressure on community support and health services.

There are considerable gaps in the regional provision of social services, including the accommodation for support services, mental health services, prevention programs for chronic physical health, maternal and child health nurses, exacerbated by a high demand for treatment for methamphetamines and amphetamines.

POPULATION GROWTH

Every week, on average



44
BABIES

are born to residents of the City of Melton

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics,
Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2016/2017

Many health and human services programs catering to outer-Western Melbourne, including the City of Melton, are actually delivered in Brimbank, a neighbouring municipality.

The City of Melton, however, is four times the size of Brimbank and by 2041 will be home to 70 per cent more people. Our residents continue to experience difficulty accessing vital services, including psychiatric, family violence and full-service emergency treatment, with many Melton residents forced to travel outside the municipality.

The City of Melton has the fourth highest rates of family violence in metropolitan Melbourne, the second highest child protection rates in northwest Melbourne and high rates of child protection substantiations, coupled with a very low attendance for three and a half year old maternal and child health checks. The provision of services to address family violence services are therefore a priority for Melton City Council.

Family violence, together with loss of employment, family and relationship breakdown, physical and mental health issues, and substance dependency are all contributing factors to the need for affordable housing in the municipality.

In the City of Melton, affordable housing continues to be a significant social issue with a correlation between the growth of the region and the increase in demand. There was a shortfall of 1,747 in 2016 in the availability of affordable housing (including social housing). This pressure contributes to homelessness with a cost of homelessness estimated at \$8.53 million annually in terms of crime, health and human capital in City of Melton alone.

Aged services, including health care and housing provision will also need to be planned in the near future as the number of people aged over 70 years old is projected to increase from 6,805 in 2016 to 21,956 in 2031 and 47,856 in 2051.

Key priority

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BUILD MELTON HOSPITAL

The Victorian State Government committed to providing \$2.3m to the business case and planning of a new Melton Hospital. The hospital will deliver services to the Melton region and also regional centres Sunbury, Bacchus Marsh, Macedon, Woodend, Blackwood and Gordon and will be planned to be located at Cobblebank within the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre. It is currently envisioned that specialist health and justice services, tertiary education facilities, accommodation, a new train station and a key employment precinct will be co-located within the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre. This is a holistic approach to an employment precinct delivery with skills and training available to local residents as well as neighbouring suburbs and regions.

Building a public hospital in Melton will improve health outcomes and quality of life for one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities and reduce pressure on hospitals in Sunshine, Footscray, Werribee and Bacchus Marsh. A Melton Hospital will be a trigger for local jobs and investment and be a catalyst for a major health precinct with both public and private hospital services. The ability to attract private health services in addition to public will provide a major employment hub for the outer west and into the Ballarat region.

It is well established that a new public hospital in Melton is critical. Through discussions with the Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority all evidence establishes that additional public hospital services in the outer west need to be operational no later than 2032 when considering population growth and health service demand.

Melton City Council is calling on the Federal Government to contribute to funding the construction of the hospital or allocate funding for the provision of specialist services that may include an emergency department to relieve pressure from Sunshine and Footscray Emergency Services, a specialist Mental Health facility with innovative program services for young adults and adolescents that is only currently available in Parkville or any other service provision and specialist research centre that is identified as a gap in service provision.

EDUCATION

➔ I LOVE KINDER

Australia's federal, state and territory governments have been jointly funding kinder for all Australian four-year-olds since 2013. The Federal Government contributes around one-third of total funding. As a result of this national agreement, enrolments have improved and almost all 4-year-old children are now enrolled in 15 or more hours of kindergarten per week.

Federal funding to date has made early childhood learning more accessible. However, there is no ongoing certainty of this funding support beyond 2019. If this happens families may pay an extra \$2,000 per child per year. This could mean some children will miss out on valuable early childhood education. There needs to be a long term commitment to this funding to guarantee certainty for parents.

Key priority

EDUCATION: I LOVE KINDER

Melton City Council supports the Municipal Association of Victoria "I Love Kinder" campaign and is requesting the Coalition Federal Government continue funding five of the fifteen hours per week kindergarten for four year-olds. This is due to conclude in December 2019 and we are asking for a long term commitment to the continuation of this funding. The Victorian Government has committed to funding the remaining 10 hours.

Additionally, we seek the commitment to continue to fund the Assessment and Rating Program as part of the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for Early Education and Care.



RECREATION

Melton residents are significantly more likely to be obese and experience high levels of childhood obesity. Around 24 per cent of Melton residents are not engaged in any physical activity during the week (defined as inactive), compared to 18.9 per cent for the rest of Victoria, and more than 46 per cent of Melton residents experience at least one chronic disease in their lifetime.

Melton City Council has identified the need for a new indoor sports stadium within Melton township for community use. The current indoor stadium directly servicing this region is the Melton Indoor Recreation Centre (MIRC), located on educational land at the Melton Secondary College. The aging facility is at capacity during peak times and has limited opportunities to meet current demands, or projected participation demands that will occur as the result of sustained residential growth.

Council has standard levels of provision that are used to guide the development of community infrastructure. In regards to basketball participation, currently more than 3100 individuals are registered with Basketball Victoria from across the municipality. Basketball Victoria have confirmed that this participation is now only restricted in growth due to the lack of indoor court provision across the City. If the required courts to satisfy the population needs were provided it would result in a further 1500 registered participants.

A benchmark widely used is the provision for multi-purpose indoor courts is one indoor court per 10,000 residents. However Basketball Victoria's provision ratio, based on participation ratio, is that one court is provided for every 6,250 residents. This ratio indicates that currently the City of Melton require 25 indoor courts estimating a court shortage currently of 5-10 indoor sports courts for basketball alone. Melton's township alone is home to 60,284 residents and is projected to increase to 174,773 by 2021. Based on these court provisions, combined with current population numbers, these courts are already deficient and by 2041 an estimated 77 indoor sport courts will be required across the municipality.

"The netball participation rate for the Western Metropolitan Region is 0.83 per cent compared to the state average of 2.3 per cent. The Sport Facility Provision – Netball Research Report (Sport & Recreation Spatial, 2014) concluded that 'there was a positive correlation between the provision of courts per 1,000 persons and the netball participation rate'. In short, Local Government Areas that have higher rates of participation have more netball facilities per head of population."

—Victorian Netball Association

Key priority

INDOOR SPORTS STADIUM

The stadium will help to address the shortage of indoor court space in City of Melton and will cater for a range of sports including basketball, netball, badminton, table tennis and volleyball.

Melton City Council is seeking a \$10 million financial contribution from the Federal Government for the construction of an indoor sports stadium in Cobblebank. The total cost for the project is \$20 million, and would include the construction of five hardball courts.

A business case including project plans have already been developed and land identified. This project is ready to proceed with funding.

