



M E D I A R E L E A S E

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Renewed calls for roads and rail upgrades as federal election draws closer

Melton City Council is calling for urgent upgrades to the Western Highway and electrification of the Melton rail line in the lead up to the Federal election.

As residents prepare for an election announcement, Council wants to make sure the needs of the rapidly growing community are heard.

Melton City Council Mayor, Cr Steve Abboushi, said Council's transport priorities were similar to the last Federal election three years ago.

"We are asking for the same investment in transport infrastructure as we did back then. In the meantime, the City of Melton continues to grow at a rapid rate, with our population projected to more than double to almost 480,000 people within 30 years, making it four times bigger than Ballarat," Cr Abboushi said.

Council is calling for a commitment from the major parties contesting the election to invest in key roads including much-needed upgrades to the Western Highway between Caroline Springs and Melton.

"Years of underinvestment has led to aged, rural standard, congested, and unsafe roads.

"The Western Highway is the second-busiest freight corridor in Australia, with over five million tonnes freight movement annually. It provides a critical link between the eastern seaboard and South Australia and Western Australia. When we compare it to other major arterials across the state it falls well behind in terms of its condition and safety," Cr Abboushi said.

Council is also calling for upgrades to Hopkins Road, Melton Highway, and the Palmers Road Corridor, north of the Western Highway (including Robinsons Road, Westwood Drive and Calder Park Drive).

While there has been investment by the Victorian and Federal governments for rail improvements, including upgrades to the Melton train station, modelling undertaken by Council has shown that this will not be enough to support the expected demand as the population continues to grow over the coming years.

"What we are hearing from residents is that during peak times, they are finding it difficult to get on a train now as they are already at capacity. Soon they won't be able to at all," Mayor Abboushi said.

Council also wants a commitment to implement the Western Rail Plan, with electrification and duplication of the Melton Line and two new stations at Thornhill Park and Mt Atkinson.



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“What we are asking for is not unreasonable given where we are at in terms of our population growth,” Mayor Abboushi said.

“The City of Melton is a great place to live. There is a strong sense of community and housing is still relatively affordable, which is why we are seeing a lot of people, particularly young families, moving to the area.”

“We need commitments at both the Federal and State level to ensure our residents can get to and from where they need to go safely and spend more time with family.”

ENDS

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