



Infrastructure Victoria
Level 16, 530 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

15 February 2017

Submission on Transport Network Pricing

On behalf of the Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Transport Network Pricing Discussion Paper.

Background:

The PUGRC comprises the Shires of Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Golden Plains, Macedon Ranges, Moorabool, Murrindindi and Surf Coast and was established in 2007 to work collaboratively on shared issues and challenges for this fast growing region.

The peri urban region is growing rapidly, relative to their existing resident base and at higher rates of growth than the Regional Cities. To 2031, the population across the peri urban region will grow by an average of 45% in comparison to the Regional Cities at an average of 26% growth. The Peri Urban Councils share common characteristics and impediments to managing the rapid population growth.

Due to the region's proximity to Melbourne and the Regional Cities of Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo and Latrobe, the region is very popular for commuters. In 2011, almost half of the working population of the region or 38,000 people were commuting from the peri urban region each day.

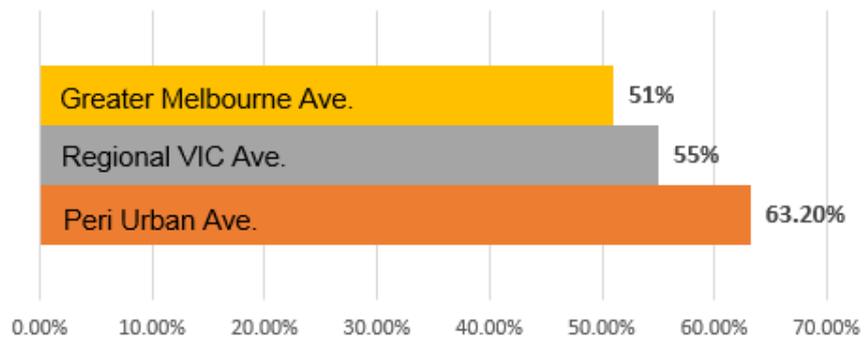
The numbers of commuters is forecast to increase by 65% to 58,000 people by 2031 unless strategic interventions are delivered.

Shire	Total Commuting	% of Workforce Commuting	Total forecast to be Commuting in 2031
Bass Coast	1,930	15.9%	3,105
Baw Baw	5,419	27.4%	9,334
Golden Plains	5,720	63.7%	8,627
Macedon Ranges	9,617	46.6%	12,555
Moorabool	7,091	53.2%	11,126
Murrindindi	2,495	43%	4,206
Surf Coast	5,971	47.8%	9,074
Total	38,246	(42.8% ave)	58,027 - Up 65%



The high levels of car ownership across the region also highlight the region's dependence on private vehicles for work and social opportunities and the lack of public transport.

Car Ownership
Households with 2+ vehicles



Peri Urban households with more than two vehicles is higher than the average for Greater Melbourne and Regional Victoria.

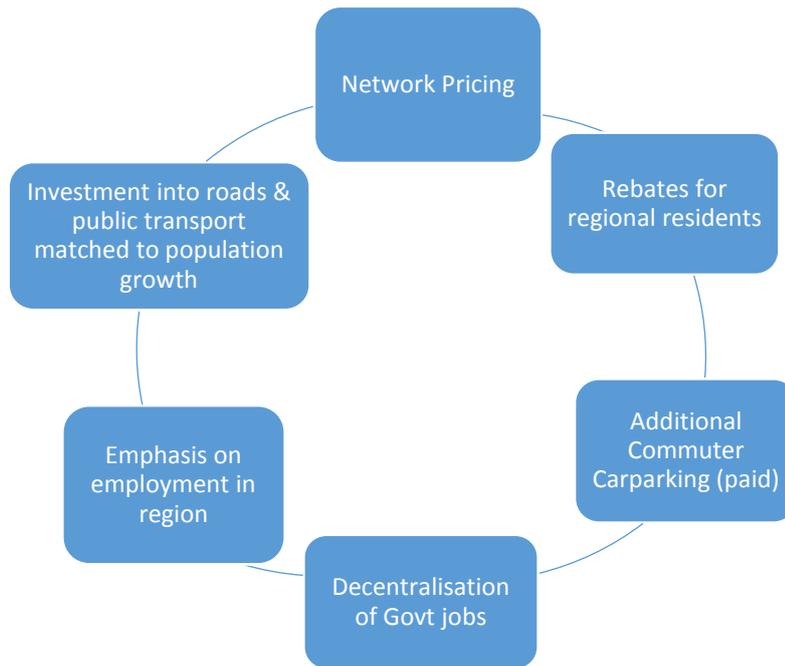
Comments on the Discussion Paper

The Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils is supportive of initiatives that assist residents from the Peri Urban region and regional Victoria to more equitably access Melbourne for employment and education purposes. We support initiatives that improve access to public transport and reduce congestion and travel times.

We believe that a holistic approach to the transport network will achieve the desired reduction in congestion and increase in productivity. We suggest that the Transport Network Pricing model must be expanded to consider a range of other factors as outlines in the chart below.

Network pricing plus investment into infrastructure and public transport must be matched with initiatives to provide employment opportunities that are closer to people's homes and within the regions. It is essential that the focus is shifted from a Melbourne centric approach, to one that also provides employment and education opportunities that match those in Melbourne.

Additionally, far greater emphasis must be placed on "Park & Ride" style facilities at major train stations. This will also shift demand from vehicles to public transport. Currently there are few opportunities to park on the outskirts of Melbourne and catch the train into the city.



Fairness

The residents of the Peri Urban region are already at a significant disadvantage in terms of the costs of commuting including higher vehicle ownership rates, fuel, road tolls and public transport pricing. We are concerned that Transport Network Pricing may further disadvantage the residents of our Shires and those further from Melbourne who are seeking employment and education.

We note that the Discussion Paper recognises the potential for social impacts for those on lower incomes. Due recognition must also be given for those who are disadvantaged by distance and geography.

A form of compensation or rebate must be considered for people living in regional Victoria who work or access education opportunities in Melbourne. The [M5 Cashback scheme](#) in Sydney is one example of a rebate to ensure that pensioners or people using vehicles for private or charitable use are not penalised.

Capacity

The PUGRC agrees with the Paper’s position that investment into capacity alone will not reduce congestion. However, investment into capacity on roads and public transport must keep pace with projected population growth to ensure that the residents of growing regions have equitable access to the employment and education opportunities of Melbourne.

Public transport investment must also be matched with greater investment into commuter car parking facilities to encourage greater levels of “Park & Ride” from Melbourne’s outskirts and outlying areas.

Time based pricing

We note the Paper's consideration of initiatives to shift road users and public transport users away from peak times. This is an unrealistic impost on workers and students from regional areas who have no choice regarding business and university start times and therefore no ability to avoid higher price penalties for travelling at peak times.

The implementation of time based pricing may have the opposite effect and stretch the peak over a longer period so that drivers can avoid the higher pricing.

This again puts the working and studying residents of the Peri Urban region and regional Victoria at a significant disadvantage.

Driverless cars

The impacts of the widespread adoption of driverless cars in the future are yet to be fully understood.

The potential for driverless cars to facilitate increased speeds and safety is being considered by a range of researchers. [A recent article by TTM](#) has forecast that driverless cars may enable six times the traffic per lane per hour and that commuters may choose to travel longer distances due to higher speeds and shorter commute times. Additionally the removal of on-street parking and conversion to drop off zones may also facilitate greater capacity for public transport and vehicle movement in towns and cities.

The adoption of driverless cars may drive greater population growth into the peri urban region, as commuters take advantage of affordability, lifestyle opportunities and high speed commuting into Melbourne.

Conclusion

We congratulate Infrastructure Victoria for their consideration of this issue. However we urge you to:

1. Provide greater recognition of the potential impacts on the residents of the Peri Urban region and regional Victoria; and
2. Identify adequate measures to ensure these geographically disadvantaged residents are not further impacted by the impost of additional costs to travel to major health services, employment and education.

Should you require further information, please contact Paula Lawrence, Executive Officer on 0412 370 651 or via plawrence@moorabool.vic.gov.au

Yours sincerely,

Cr David Edwards (Mayor of Moorabool Shire)

Chair

Peri Urban Group of Rural Councils