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Ms Sarah Connolly
Chair, PAEC
Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
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Dear Ms Connolly

2023–24 FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES HEARINGS—RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON NOTICE - BUS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

I refer to your letter of 19 February 2025 about 2023–24 Financial and Performance Outcomes hearings and a response to a Question on Notice regarding the Bus Reform Implementation Plan.

In June 2021, the Government released Victoria’s Bus Plan (the Bus Plan). The Bus Plan sets the vision of “a modern, productive, environmentally sustainable bus network that increases the number of people choosing to take the bus by delivering simple, safe, reliable and comfortable journeys”.

The Bus Plan has been well received by industry and the community and noted several key actions for implementation under its first planning horizon between 2021-2023 to “leverage the Big Build, address priorities and get ready for further reform”.

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is working to reform Victoria’s bus network in line with Government budget decisions and the policy directions set out in the Bus Plan.

Since its launch, the Bus Plan has delivered significant bus reform with new metropolitan Zero Emission Bus franchises coming into effect from 1 July 2025 and improved bus services in more than half of the State’s 79 local government areas through the introduction of more than 200 new or improved bus routes.

In just over three years, 83 local bus networks have been redesigned and improved, delivering better coverage and service coordination to meet the changing needs of the communities they service. This includes improvements to 25 school bus networks as part of a \$25 million investment in the Victorian Budget 2022/23 to introduce, modify and extend school bus services across the state with an initial focus on growth areas.

Other improvements include adding more than one thousand new services linking Fishermans Bend to the city and more than a thousand extra services to Deakin University's Burwood Campus. In regional Victoria, new networks were rolled out last year in the growth areas of Torquay, Charlemont and Armstrong Creek, Gisborne, and Bacchus Marsh/Maddingley, more than doubling the number of services for those communities. Reforms to the Yarra Valley bus network in 2023 have also resulted bus patronage uplifts of 25 per cent in the area.

In May 2024, the Victorian Government announced a further 10 new or improved bus services in Melbourne's growth areas of Wyndham, Hume, Casey, and Cardinia, backed by \$180 million worth of investments under the Victorian Budget 2024/25 and the Growth Areas Infrastructure Contribution fund.

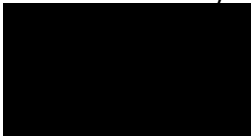
New bus interchanges at Deer Park, Croydon, Pakenham, Merinda Park and Greensborough stations now provide improved safety and amenity. The opening of Bulleen Park and Ride in 2023, provides for a new premium bus station - the first part of the Eastern Express Busway - Melbourne's first dedicated busway from Doncaster towards the City - and features parking for 370 cars, bike storage, pick-up and drop-off bays.

These reforms are delivering more services and enabling more people to choose bus as a sustainable and safe mode of transport. Further, reforms of the bus network are supporting the Victorian Government's other policy priorities such net zero transport emissions, and the Housing Statement targets that will enable more Victorians to choose a home close to high quality transport.

My department provides robust advice to government to advance the implementation of the Bus Plan, which is a progressive task that given its size and complexity, will take place over time. This advice assists the government to determine its future policy and investment decisions. As this advice is for the purposes of informing government decisions it remains subject to Executive Privilege.

Thank you for raising this matter.

Yours sincerely



Jeroen Weimar
Secretary

Date: 12 March 2025