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## MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008

### **East –West Needs Assessment – Planning for a brighter transport future in Melbourne’s West**

The Western Transport Alliance welcomes the release of *the East-West Needs Assessment* and congratulates Sir Rod Eddington and his team on the foresight reflected in the bold recommendations.

Ian Robins, Chair of the Western Transport Alliance said that the recognition of the transport challenges facing Melbourne’s West is critical to the Region’s future.

“*The East-West Needs Assessment* is extremely timely. Unprecedented growth in recent years is exposing capacity limitations on our transport systems. The time has come for a long term solution that addresses the wider transport issues, which are critical in Melbourne’s West,” he said.

“A very positive aspect of the report, is the emphasis on a multi-modal approach to the recommendations. As well as providing recommendations on road and rail networks, the report considers bicycle paths, passenger train lines, buses and freight, which makes for a much more balanced and cohesive solution.”

In the period from 2001 – 2006, the designated growth councils of the West – Melton and Wyndham grew by nearly 57,000 people. This exceeded growth in the south-east growth councils of Casey and Cardinia by nearly 5,000 people.

This growth has continued with the Australian Bureau of Statistics releasing updated data on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 highlighting population growth in Cardina/Casey for 2006/07 at 9,038 people and 11,864 in Wyndham/Melton.

The significant trend is that the growth councils of Melbourne’s West and North are accommodating a greater share of Melbourne’s growth.

The Premier, in his address to the Victoria Division of the Urban Development Institute of Australia on March 4 2008, acknowledged that Melbourne is growing at a much faster rate than was predicted when Melbourne 2030 was developed.

The combination of the significantly increased rate of growth of Melbourne, the unprecedented interest in Melbourne's West, and growth of port and freight activity are strong pointers to future transport needs in the Region.

"The debate is not about whether or not we need substantial change to the Region's transport infrastructure, but rather the content of the change and how it is financed," Mr Robins said.

"The realities of future transport demands show that today's generation has an important responsibility to future generations. It is vital to achieve the key elements of a sustainable transport network able to accommodate population growth."

"The *East-West Needs Assessment* provides the framework for this vision and debate."

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