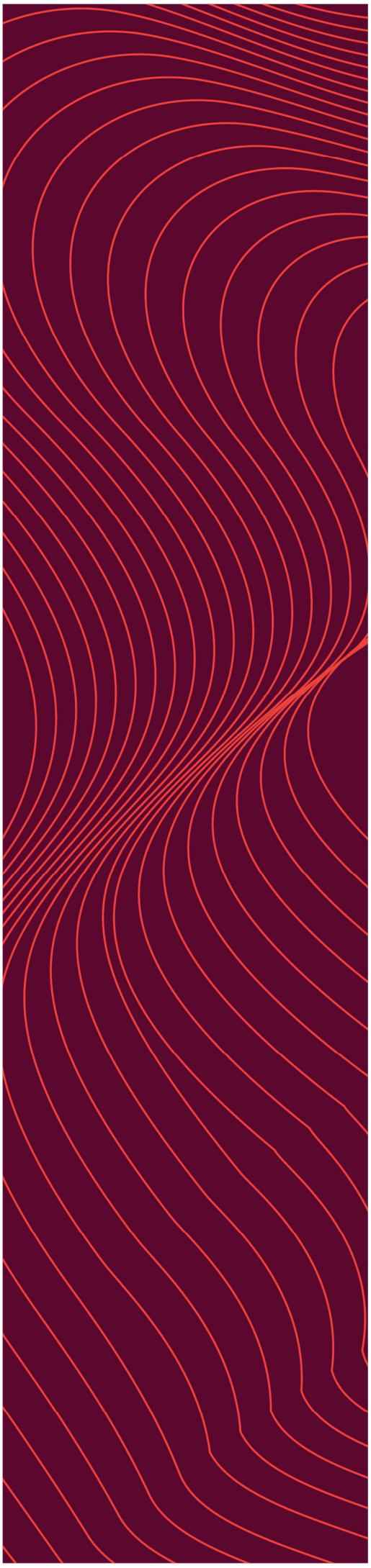
LATROBE CITY COUNCIL

Latrobe City Council Submission to:

Infrastructure Victoria 30 - Year Strategy

May 2025



Introduction

Latrobe City Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to Infrastructure Victoria's 30-Year Strategy and appreciates the consultative approach to inform the state's long-term infrastructure planning.

Located 135 kilometres east of Melbourne, Latrobe City is home to **77,606** residents and plays a pivotal role in the Gippsland region's economy. With an annual economic output of **$13.7 billion** and more than **35,000 jobs**, almost **30 per cent** of all regional employment, Latrobe City is a major economic and employment hub for Gippsland and the Victorian economy more broadly.[1]

The city boasts access to high-quality education providers, including TAFE Gippsland and Federation University, a strong health precinct, and a range of recreational, retail, and cultural amenities, enhancing its reputation as one of Victoria's four key regional cities.

Latrobe City is serviced by the Gippsland rail line, offering established but limited public transport connectivity. Housing affordability is also a notable strength, with median house prices ranging from **$330K to $480K**, significantly more affordable than neighbouring municipalities, where median prices reach **$665K**. This affordability presents a major opportunity for population attraction and economic transformation. [2]

For over 100 years, Latrobe City has underpinned Victoria's electricity generation, but the impending closure of Yallourn Power Station (2028) and Loy Yang A (2035) represents one of the most significant economic and land use transitions in Victoria's history. These closures will have far-reaching social, economic, and environmental impacts on the community and require strategic infrastructure investment and strong intergovernmental coordination and support to ensure the Latrobe City economy continues to thrive.

Given the scale and impact of the region’s energy transition, it is essential that the Strategy explicitly acknowledges the closure of Latrobe City’s coal mines and power stations. These changes will profoundly shape the region’s future, and Infrastructure Victoria has a critical role to play in ensuring this economic transformation supports a prosperous, resilient, and equitable future for the Latrobe City community.

Submission

Council supports in full or in part several recommendations of the draft that are aimed at improving access to housing, jobs, services, and educational opportunities. These include expanding social housing supply, facilitating kindergarten infrastructure investment, improving school planning and delivery, expanding TAFE and skills training, enhancing regional public transport, and rezoning land to unlock housing and employment potential. Notably, we propose the incorporation of **inclusionary zoning** and removal of **redundant coal overlays** to support development in areas such as Area H. These changes will significantly assist in Latrobe’s growth and economic diversification, ensuring future prosperity.

Council also highlights the need for safer local streets for children and calls for planning that includes adequate school drop-off zones and buffers for childcare centres. Additionally, Council fully supports updated flood mapping and recommend the **Traralgon Bypass and retarding basin** be identified as critical infrastructure for climate resilience.

In support of Council’s detailed feedback (attached), Council puts forward two additional key recommendations to strengthen Infrastructure Victoria's 30-Year Strategy and ensure it adequately responds to the unique challenges and opportunities facing Latrobe City.

[1] Latrobe City Economic Snapshot 2023/24

[2] Remplan -Latrobe Demographic and Community Insights

Council Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Recognise the requirement for mine rehabilitation as part of the strategy.

Council strongly advocates for Infrastructure Victoria to formally recognise the rehabilitation of declared mine land in Latrobe City as a priority within the 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy. The scale and complexity of mine rehabilitation demands long-term planning, clear governance, and dedicated investment well beyond short-term remediation measures.

The ongoing uncertainty around post-closure land uses and the extended rehabilitation timelines continue to raise concern within the Latrobe City community. Given the significant and lasting implications for Gippsland's economy, environment, and community wellbeing, mine rehabilitation must be treated as a critical part of future infrastructure development and all visionary planning.

Council recommends that Infrastructure Victoria:

a. Formally recognise mine rehabilitation in Latrobe City as part of the 30-year strategy.
b. Provide ongoing support for Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority to ensure strong regulatory oversight and continuity.
c. Mandate progressive rehabilitation practices to enable timely, staged outcomes that support environmental sustainability and future land use.
d. Preserve opportunities for appropriate, future economic use of remaining brown coal resources when aligned with the public interest.
e. Address land tenure challenges by exploring options such as government ownership or consolidated land titles to support long-term landform stability and public benefit.

This recommendation is essential to ensure that Gippsland's post-mining transition is supported by robust infrastructure planning, delivering sustainable outcomes for generations to come.

Recommendation 2: Shift from a city-centric approach to a balanced strategy with adequate investment for Regional Victoria, including Gippsland.

Council strongly advocates for a shift from the current city-centric focus of the 30-Year Strategy to a more balanced approach that ensures Regional Victoria, particularly Gippsland, receives adequate infrastructure investment. This should include prioritising key road, rail and water projects that enhance connectivity, support economic development, facilitate land activation, and foster population retention in the region.

Council recommends that Infrastructure Victoria:

a. Increase investment in regional transport infrastructure, including upgrades to the Gippsland rail line for both freight and passenger services and road networks including the Traralgon Bypass, to support economic diversification and improve accessibility to regional centres.
b. Ensure that Regional Victoria, including Latrobe City, is adequately considered in infrastructure planning, with specific projects designed to address the economic and social challenges presented by the energy transition.
c. Align investment in regional infrastructure with long-term plans to create sustainable, thriving communities across Regional Victoria, not just in metropolitan areas.
d. Expand on the current circular economy pillar to incorporate regional opportunities including the proposed waste to energy station at Opal. This recommendation is crucial to ensure that regional communities like Latrobe City are not left behind as the state moves forward with its long-term infrastructure planning.

Conclusion

Council acknowledges the importance of Infrastructure Victoria's 30-Year Strategy in shaping long-term infrastructure decisions across the state. However, we are concerned that the current draft does not adequately address the transformational economic and land use impacts resulting from the imminent closures of the Yallourn and Loy Yang A power stations and associated mines, arguably one of the most significant transitions in Victoria's history. These events present both major risks and critical opportunities.

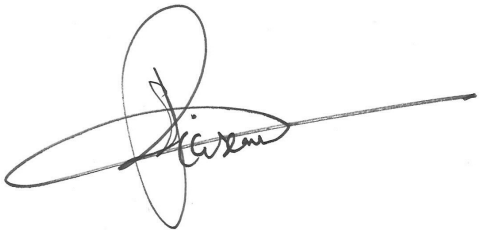
Council urges Infrastructure Victoria to play a leadership role by explicitly recognising **mine rehabilitation** as part of the Strategy. This includes supporting a coordinated and well governed approach that ensures appropriate long-term planning, regulation oversight and sustained investment in mine rehabilitation to secure environmental stability and enable future land use outcomes.

In addition, Council also calls for a shift away from a city-centric focus toward a **balanced approach** that delivers meaningful infrastructure investment across all Regional Victoria, particularly in Gippsland, where this investment is essential to enabling economic diversification and long-term resilience.

Council's recommendations aim to strengthen the Strategy by ensuring it more effectively responds to the unique challenges facing Latrobe City and capitalises on the region's significant potential for growth. We respectfully request that these priorities be formally incorporated into the final version of Strategy.

Thank you for consulting with Council on this matter. Should you require further information about this submission please do not hesitate to get in contact with Shae Hansen our Senior Strategy and Advocacy Advisor on 0459 847 411 or Shae.Hansen@latrobe.vic.gov.au.

Yours Sincerely,



Steven Piasente
Chief Executive Officer

Submission form: Victoria's draft 30-year infrastructure strategy

Your details

Name:	
Organisation (if applicable):	Latrobe City Council
Position (if applicable):	
Email:	Shae.hansen@latrobe.vic.gov.au
Phone:	0459 847 411

About you

Please tell us which best describes you:

☐ Victorian resident

☐ Victorian business owner/operator

☐ Industry professional

☐ Community organisation representative

X Local government representative

☐ State government representative

☐ Researcher

☐ Other (please specify): Click or tap here to enter text.

Your focus areas

Select the topics or regions you are providing feedback on (select all that apply):

Topics	Regions
X Across sectors	X Regional Victoria
X Circular economy	☐ Urban growth areas
X Cities	☐ Melbourne
X Climate change	
X Community infrastructure	
X Education	
X Energy	
X Freight	
X Health	
X Housing	
X Infrastructure for Victoria's First Peoples	
X Transport	
X Water	

Your feedback

Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Build more social housing
Recommendation number:	1
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	In part
2. Tell us why	The Latrobe City area has 2152 social and affordable dwellings. In 2024, Council undertook Planning Scheme Amendment C136 which highlighted a need of over 3,000 new social and affordable dwellings to meet current demand. This figure represents 75% of the Council's projected future dwelling stock. Fulfilling the shortfall in social and affordable dwellings realistically poses challenges due to criteria related to proximity to amenities such as public transport and retail services.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	As below
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Officers would like to see inclusionary zoning incorporated into the Planning Scheme that would establish triggers enabling developers to deliver social housing. For example, the Baldwin Road development in Traralgon North was rezoned in 2023 for residential housing and is in close proximity to services and amenities so would be well placed to benefit from the inclusionary zoning.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Facilitate markets and invest in kindergarten infrastructure
Recommendation number:	2
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
6. Tell us why	As the level of government closest to the community, local Council's play a crucial role in delivering essential services and infrastructure. However, our financial sustainability is increasingly challenged by a range of factors beyond Council's direct control. Capital works including building renewals and maintenance cost of

	Kindergarten Infrastructure is one of the contributing factors that is putting downward pressure on the Council budget.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	A desktop analysis conducted in October of 2024 by Council Officers indicated that at least twenty new kindergarten rooms would be needed to meet the Victorian State Governments reform requirements. Of these twenty rooms/facilities, five had already been developed or were under construction at the time the analysis was run. While the Victorian State Government have previously covered the construction costs, expenses related to furnishing, fit-outs, annual maintenance, and utilities have not been factored in. At time of running the report Council was projected to incur the following costs: o Furnishing and fit outs: $1.8 million (with $600K already funded) o Annual maintenance for additional facilities $150k annually o Increased utility costs $60K annually. It is understood that the Victorian State Government has contributed approximately $9.5 million to date, with an additional $22.5 million required to fund the construction for the entire roll out.
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council encourages Infrastructure Victoria (IV) to expand on this recommendation and encourage the Victorian State Government to work with the private sector and local Government to establish a fair model for kindergartens that includes the construction costs, renewals expenses related to furnishing, fit-outs, annual maintenance, and utilities.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Plan and deliver expanded new schools
Recommendation number:	3
9. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
10. Tell us why	Latrobe City's land is heavily restricted from a planning perspective with flood overlays, industrial zoned land, pipeline easements, regional outfalls, separation distances guidelines, SRO and ESO1 making it challenging to find suitable pockets of land for schools.
11. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Traralgon East being a prime example of these difficulties.
12. Include proposed changes and improvements	The system for selecting land for future school use is inefficient and individual developers are responsible for identifying school sites. Part of the solution being recommended by Council Officers is that the Victorian State Government should acquire land earlier in the process and pay market value to the landowners. Regional Plans should also be developed, and acquisition overlays implemented that are consistent with the Victorian Government's school site selection criteria. Suitable school sites should also include allowances for school pick-up and drop-off areas within the school grounds. Relying on side streets is unacceptable and often unsafe with surrounding streets often becoming double-parked. Additionally, when school sites are selected, plans should be established for active transport so that children can walk or ride bikes to school safely.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Expand TAFE in Melbourne's growth areas and some large regional centers (Including Latrobe)
Recommendation number:	4
13. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
14. Tell us why	Increasing educational attainment and attracting new population is a key priority for Council. Research shows that population growth is one of the most effective ways to support a transitioning economy. Approximately 70% of individuals who study locally tend to remain in the area after completing their education. Additionally, expanded educational opportunities can help significantly improve employment outcomes. Currently the unemployment rate in Latrobe City sits at 5.3% with Youth unemployment is at a concerning 14% which is significantly

	higher than other Regional Cities. [1] Additionally, with the closure of Yallourn and Loy Yang A Power Station and Mine scheduled for 2028 and 2035 investment in skills and training is vital to help retrain the existing workforce and to provide pathways to employment for the remaining population. With the Victorian State Government projecting 59,000 jobs in the Renewable Energy Sector, the clean energy workforce presents a significant opportunity for the local community, boosting employment and driving economic output. Expanded educational opportunities in Latrobe City will equip residents with essential skills for emerging industries, such as offshore wind and hydrogen production, ensuring that Latrobe City remains a key player in Victoria's new energy landscape and providing local jobs both now and in the future.
15. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The Victoria State Government has projected 59,000 jobs in the renewable energy sector strategic investment in the expansion of TAFE Gippsland and delivering the wind and hydrogen worker training centers local could help address some of the unemployment issues. With over 3,000 fossil fuel workers in the Gippsland region and two-thirds based in Latrobe City, the suitability and benefits of the Latrobe City area location is obvious. Establishing these centers in Latrobe City and implementing local job quotas within the renewable energy sector, the government can provide young people with clear pathways to future employment opportunities. This approach would encourage them to study, work, and ultimately build their careers in the region.
16. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council encourages IV to expand on this recommendation and encourage the Victoria State Government to establish the Wind and Hydrogen Worker Training Centers in Latrobe City. Additionally, Council encourages TAFE Gippsland to consider investment at the Tafe site in Yallourn.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Rezone locations near existing infrastructure for more home choices.
Recommendation number:	7
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
2. Tell us why	Council has sufficient zoned land to meet the housing target of 13,000 dwellings set by the Victorian State Government. [2] Achieving this target will support a population increase to 100,000 by

1 Remplan - Latrobe Demographic and Community Insights

2 https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/planforvictoria/housing-for-all-victorians/housing-targets.

	2051 which is consistent with Councils priority to drive population growth to support the economic diversification of the economy. Council, however, has the desire to open more land to support additional housing and employment precincts but require support from the Victorian State Government to rezone land.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	The Latrobe City area currently has 43,000 hectares of land currently constrained by ESO1, SRO, and SUZ1 zones that prohibit development. (Map attached) Area H is a large portion of that constrained land and connects Morwell to Traralgon south of the Highway it is unique as unlike a large part of the land in the Latrobe City area it is not subject to flooding or bushfires making it a prime location for future development. Additionally, its proximity to residential areas and Latrobe Regional Hospital makes it unsuitable for mining. Therefore, removing the coal overlay is the sensible thing to do. As mentioned throughout this submission population attraction and retention is a top priority for Council as evidence suggests it will support the economic diversification of the economy, something that is critically needed with the closure of Yallourn and Loy Yang A mine and power station fast approaching.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council encourages IV to include a special recommendation for the Victorian State Government to remove the redundant Coal overlays located within the Latrobe City Planning Scheme, to open more land for housing and employment and to support the economic diversification of the Latrobe City economy.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Extend metropolitan trains and run more services in Melbourne's west
Recommendation number:	11
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	In part
6. Tell us why	Transport infrastructure is critical to provide a prosperous economy and thriving community.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Current services fail to provide good connectivity between Latrobe City and Melbourne, impacting the municipality's ability to access larger centers, attract and retain new population and workforce and boost the visitor economy.

	A standard train trip from Traralgon to Flinders Street station in Melbourne is approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes double the commute time of other regional cities. Fright opportunities are also constrained.
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council encourages IV to expand the scope of this recommendation to include improved services for the Gippsland Train line.

Topic/area:	Victorians have good access to housing, jobs services and opportunities
Recommendation name:	Run more bus and coach services in Regional Victoria
Recommendation number:	12
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
2. Tell us why	Bus services do not keep pace with growth and lag behind infrastructure development, causing issues with traffic congestion in and around growing communities, including growing areas in Regional Victoria. When development occurs there is no clear timeline for when new bus services will be delivered, often resulting in bus stops being built that are out of service for many years. Additionally, some smaller regional townships are not serviced by buses at all. Running more bus services will improve connectivity and access for the community.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	For example, Tyres, Glengarry, and Toongabbie all growing small towns in Latrobe, are not currently serviced by local buses. Additionally, local services to key infrastructure such as Latrobe Regional Health and retail trade presidents are not always direct or efficient.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council is supportive of IV recommendation to run more bus services in Regional Victoria and encourage them to expand the scope of the recommendation requesting the Victorian State Government establish individual bus plans of all regional communities.

Your feedback

Victorians are healthy and safe.

Topic/area:	Victorians are healthy and safe.
Recommendation name:	Make local streets safer for children and communities
Recommendation number:	14
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	In part
6. Tell us why	Making local streets safer for children and communities is an objective Council supports. While Council understand IV desire to reduce speed limit to 30km on local streets, starting in places that children often visit including around schools, playgrounds, childcare centers and kindergartens, Council emphasis that this is not a strategy that should be implemented in isolation or in lue of other road safety approaches.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	
8. **Include proposed changes and improvements**	Council encourages IV to recommend that the Victorian State Government include suitable school drop off zones and car parking sites inside of School property to improve safety. Council also encourages further consideration of planning regulations regarding the placement of childcare centers to ensure they are situated in areas that have adequate industrial buffers to avoid conflicts with freight requirements. For example, childcare centers should not be located next to heavy mechanics, which typically have high traffic.

Your feedback

Victoria is resilient to Climate Change and other future risk.

Topic/area:	Victoria is resilient to Climate Change and other future risk
Recommendation name:	Use new flood maps to revise planning schemes.
Recommendation number:	28
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
2. Tell us why	Council Officers advise that they are up to date with current flood mapping.

3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	Current emergency management systems that support the flooding events of Traralgon Creek are insufficient. On average the town suffers from a significant flooding event every 7 years. Building the Traralgon Bypass and incorporating a retarding basin, will help future-proof the township from future flood events. The Traralgon Bypass has been formally included in the Latrobe Planning Scheme with Regional Roads Victoria completed preliminary works on the economic, environmental, social and traffic impacts of delivery. Progress on the project was hindered due to the proximity to Loy Yang mine, however with the closure scheduled for 2035 Council encourages progress to be made to support the delivery of this project.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council recommends that IV expand on this current recommendation and include a list of Infrastructure projects that will enable climate resilience including the Traralgon Bypass and the proposed retarding basin. Additionally, Council recommends that a funding stream be made available to support the re-build of Infrastructure projects following natural disasters which would support projects such as Councils Flood Recovery Project to be delivered sooner.

Your feedback

Victoria has high productivity and circular economy.

Topic/area:	Victoria has high productivity and circular economy.
Recommendation name:	Prepare and publish infrastructure sector plans to shape Victoria's cities
Recommendation number:	35
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
2. Tell us why	Council supports IV recommendation to require each department that owns infrastructure to develop an infrastructure sector plan, based on a set of agreed assumptions particularly for services such as Gippsland Water, who often fall short of the funding required to deliver essential infrastructure services to activate land for future development.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council encourages IV to expand on the current recommendations and include the establishment of long-term funding models for services such as Gippsland Water.

	Funding clarity will allow the departments to not only develop the plans but also implement and deliver the infrastructure.

Topic/area:	Victoria has high productivity and a circular economy.
Recommendation name:	Reform infrastructure contributions
Recommendation number:	36
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
6. Tell us why	Infrastructure contributions need to have a fair funding model that can activate development while protecting the financial sustainability of the local government sector.
7. Share any supporting evidence or examples	
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council recommends that IV expand on this recommendation to include a requirement for the local government sector to be a key stakeholder in the development of the reform.

Topic/area:	Victoria has high productivity and circular economy
Recommendation name:	Use modern traffic control technology for efficient and safe journeys
Recommendation number:	40
1. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
2. Tell us why	Currently, there are thirteen sets of traffic lights across Traralgon, and they are not smart technology. This causes lengthy delays and traffic congestion.
3. Share any supporting evidence or examples	A prime example is the intersections at Park Lane and Bank Street. This area would benefit significantly from smart traffic technology that adapts in real-time to actual traffic conditions, helping to clear congestion more effectively rather than relying on static speed reductions like the 30km/h limit. Modern smart traffic lights offer a proactive solution to keep Traralgon moving while we wait for a proper bypass.
4. Include proposed changes and improvements	

Topic/area:	Victoria has high productivity and circular economy
Recommendation name:	Make rail freight competitive, reliable and efficient. .
Recommendation number:	41
5. Do you support this topic or recommendation?	Yes
6. Tell us why	Developing and publishing a 30-year integrated rail freight network plan, alongside a funded 10-year rail freight maintenance program, will stimulate growth in sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and retail by improving access to markets.
8. Include proposed changes and improvements	Council recommends that IV expand this recommendation to consider freight services that can support faster and more efficient passenger operations on the Gippsland train line. In addition, Council requests that any required maintenance or upgrades to the Gippsland train line be prioritized to support the region's economic diversification.

Declaration

X I agree to Infrastructure Victoria's privacy collection statement.

X I give permission for Infrastructure Victoria to publish my submission on its website:

☐ with my name **or**
x anonymously (identifying personal information will be redacted, Council name can be published,

☐ I do not give permission for Infrastructure Victoria to publish my submission.

☐ I would like to receive updates from Infrastructure Victoria about the strategy and our research program (about six emails a year).

Signature:	
Date:	9/05/2025

Need help?

Contact us on 03 7005 9500 or email enquiries@infrastructurevictoria.com.au.