



## Upfield Rail duplication, upgrade, extension and electrification to Wallan

### Merri-bek

#### **Our ask:**

**Duplicate and upgrade the Upfield rail line, extend (through Roxburgh Park) to the Craigieburn rail line and electrify to Wallan.**

The Upfield rail corridor services the growing populations of Merri-bek and southern Hume and is the gateway to Melbourne's booming northern region in Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell Shire. The Northern Growth Corridor is projected to accommodate 30 per cent of Melbourne's future growth over the coming decades. This region will ultimately be home to more than 1.5 million people.

Key rail investments are needed now to resolve critical constraints on train services in the Merri-bek, Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell municipalities to contribute to unlocking the potential of Melbourne's North, including:

- Duplicating and upgrading the Upfield rail line between Gowrie and Upfield stations to improve train frequency, accessibility, passenger experience and station amenity.
- Re-configuring the City Loop to separate the Upfield and Craigieburn lines to remove ongoing constraints to improved capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers along both lines.
- Extending the Upfield line through Roxburgh Park to the Craigieburn line and electrifying the Upfield line to Wallan with new stations, including at Beveridge and Cloverton, to support the rapidly occurring residential, commercial and industrial development in the region.

#### **Duplication, upgrade and City Loop reconfiguration**

The Victorian Government has earmarked Merri-bek to be home to an additional 70,000 to 80,000 dwellings by 2051 (subject to Ministerial feedback). With Brunswick and Coburg identified as Train and Tram Zone Activity Centres, these suburbs will welcome the bulk of new housing in Merri-bek and the Upfield rail line will be expected to service the increased population. Despite the importance of this corridor to both the current and future residents of

Merri-bek, the Upfield rail line has one of the least frequent peak-period services in Melbourne's rail network, with train services running every 15-20 minutes during peak periods, and every 20-30 minutes outside peak.

Single track service between Gowrie and Upfield stations and the Upfield and Craigieburn train lines sharing City Loop tracks creates significant bottlenecks and constraints to improved capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers.

Duplicating the track between Gowrie and Upfield stations will remove significant bottlenecks and constraints for the length of the Upfield line, allowing for improved, capacity, frequency and reliability.

The Upfield and Craigieburn train lines continuing to share the same City Loop tracks has been identified by Infrastructure Victoria as an ongoing constraint to improved capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers along both lines. A coordinated and timely reconfiguration of the City Loop could also allow for the line to be extended further north to Wallan.

Melbourne Metro 1 removed Sunbury line trains from the current loop, enabling more pathways at North Melbourne Railway Station. Securing these spots for northern group trains could contribute to improved frequency on the Upfield line.

### **Extension and electrification to Wallan**

In Melbourne's booming northern region, Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell are expanding at rates far beyond forecasts. Mitchell's growth areas alone are expected to reach 80,000 people within 10 years and ultimately will support a population of over 230,000.

The growth communities in Mitchell and Hume including Wallan, Beveridge, Lockerbie, Donnybrook and the future Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre (MAC), are currently serviced by diesel V/line services only as the electric line and metropolitan train services terminate at Craigieburn – this cuts passenger capacity by more than half, as a V/Line train carries about 40 per cent of the passengers of a comparable electric metropolitan train.

V/line services were expected to reach capacity by 2030, but with higher than forecast growth occurring now, coupled with the State Government's fast-tracking of Precinct Structure Planning, reaching capacity is imminent.

Without an electrified Upfield extension to Wallan the communities of Melbourne's rapidly growing North will become increasingly reliant on the Hume Freeway, one of Australia's most important and heavily used routes. Substantially increased residential and commuter use of the Hume Freeway will have significant adverse impacts on freight movements, bringing Melbourne's principal freight route to a standstill.

### **Jobs closer to homes**

Merri-bek is home to more than 53,000 jobs,<sup>1</sup> with the majority of these jobs located either side of the Upfield line and Sydney Road. Connecting the 97,000 residents<sup>2</sup> from Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn to the Upfield corridor, along with residents from the burgeoning suburbs of Lockerbie, Donnybrook, Beveridge and Wallan, could create a vibrant and job-rich Sydney Road corridor, providing direct (and more sustainable) access for residents to jobs and education in northern metropolitan Melbourne, a greater pool of workers for businesses in Brunswick and Coburg, and the potential for a significant uplift in retail and hospitality demand along the strip.

Greater connectivity through Melbourne's northern corridor will also support improved access to other major commercial and industrial precincts including Merrifield, the future Beveridge Intermodal Freight Terminal, and the future Cloverton MAC. The residential development occurring in Mitchell Shire in particular is very unlikely to provide sufficient local jobs for the size of the community and efficient, accessible commuter rail services will be vital to ensure that residents of these communities have equitable access to employment opportunities.