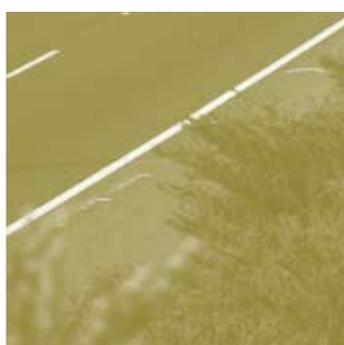
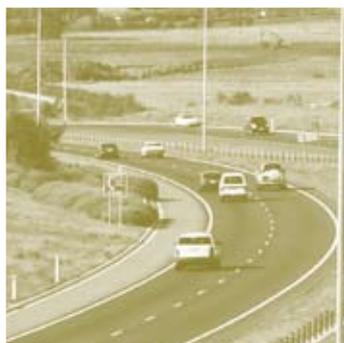


CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

VicRoads has prepared this Planning Assessment Report as part of the planning process to seek to identify and reserve a corridor for the Outer Metropolitan Ring and E6 (OMR/E6) Transport Corridor running from west of Werribee, through Rockbank, to Kalkallo, Epping and Thomastown. The planning process also seeks to identify the route for the Deer Park Bypass / OMR/E6 Transport Corridor connector, between Robinsons Road, and the OMR/E6, Transport Corridor near Troups Road South, Mount Cottrell.

Although not part of the current public consultation process, future planning will consider a high standard connecting road between the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor and Melbourne Airport. The location of this connector to either the east or to the west of Bulla Township requires further investigation.

Submissions are invited on this Planning Assessment Report and will be considered before a recommendation on the proposal is made for consideration by the Government.

Following the consideration of the proposal by the government, it is anticipated that VicRoads will seek a reservation, such as a Public Acquisition Overlay, for the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor in the relevant Council Planning Schemes.

The planning for this corridor is to meet a long term need. There is no funding allocated for the construction of road and rail within this corridor at this point in time.

1.2 PROJECT NEED / PURPOSE OF OUTER METROPOLITAN RING/E6

Planning for the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor seeks to reserve land for a future transport corridor that would serve the needs of future urban and regional growth. *Victoria in Future 2008* projections indicate that over the 30 years from 2006 to 2036, Victoria will grow by 2.3 million people, with 1.8 million additional people in metropolitan Melbourne and about 477,000 in regional Victoria. Planning for this corridor focuses on meeting projected long term future needs rather than present-day travel demands.

The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor is being planned to provide an ultimate high speed transport link for freight and people that would:

- > Enhance connectivity between key international transport hubs such as Melbourne Airport, Avalon Airport and Port of Geelong;
- > Improve access to the proposed Donnybrook/Beveridge Interstate Rail Terminal;

-
- > Serve as an important route to interstate and major regional destinations;
 - > Link residential and employment growth areas in the north and west of Melbourne; and
 - > Improve access in this major employment corridor which includes Avalon Airport, Werribee, Melton, Melbourne Airport and Donnybrook

Travel between Melbourne Airport and Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, and north east Victoria would be facilitated, as would travel between Avalon Airport and Bendigo and north-east Victoria.

The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor would provide high standard road and rail access to the proposed Donnybrook/Beveridge Interstate Rail Freight terminal, and would facilitate freight vehicle access to existing and new employment areas.

It is not expected that funding would be available for the construction of the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor before 2020. However, some sections of the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor could be constructed earlier, depending on the need, particularly in developing residential and/or business/industrial areas.

1.3 POLICY BASIS

This section discusses current Government policies which provide strategic justification and/or background for the proposed OMR/E6 Transport Corridor.

Melbourne 2030 (2002) and Melbourne @ 5 million (2008)

Released in 2002, *Melbourne 2030* provides the Government's long term plan for Melbourne and the surrounding region. *Melbourne @ 5 million* provides an update and refinement of the directions in *Melbourne 2030*. A key element of *Melbourne @ 5 million* is the designation of three major investigation areas to be considered for inclusion as growth areas. The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor traverses the investigation areas in the west and north.

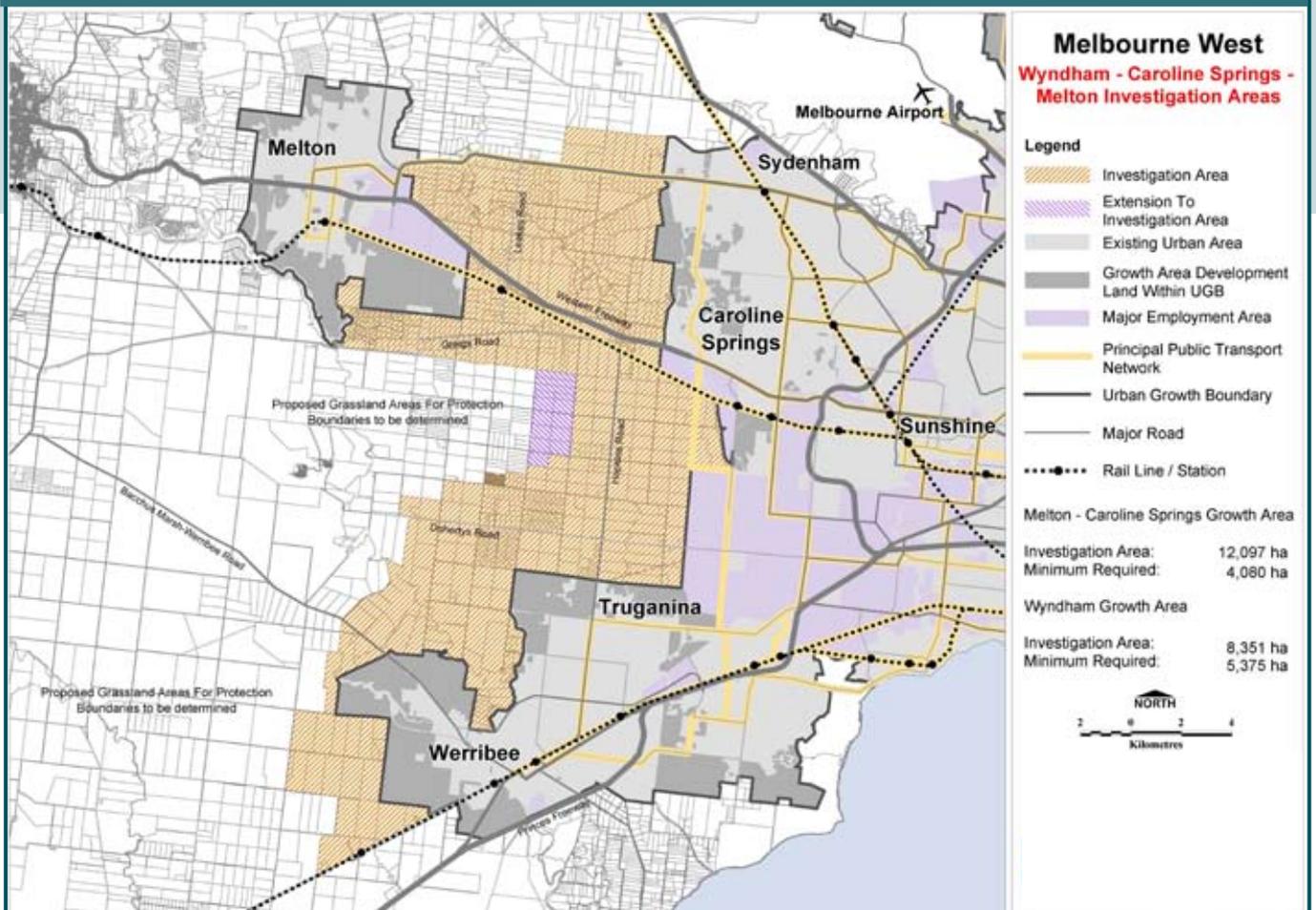
Specific key directions within *Melbourne @ 5 million* which the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor supports are:

"A more compact city

- > *Employment corridors to improve accessibility to jobs and services and reduce congestion on the transport network."*

Melbourne @ 5 million identifies three employment corridors for priority attention including "Avalon Airport to Werribee, Melton, Melbourne Airport and Donnybrook (Hume Mitchell)". The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor will support this employment corridor by linking key areas along the corridor with a high standard road facility.

FIGURE 1-1 URBAN GROWTH INVESTIGATION AREA - WERRIBEE/MELTON



“Better Management of Growth

- > *Investigation areas in the north and west, ..., for potential extensions to the growth areas”*

Figures 1-1 and 1-2 show the Urban Growth Investigation Areas for Melbourne West and Melbourne North identified in *Melbourne @ 5 million*.

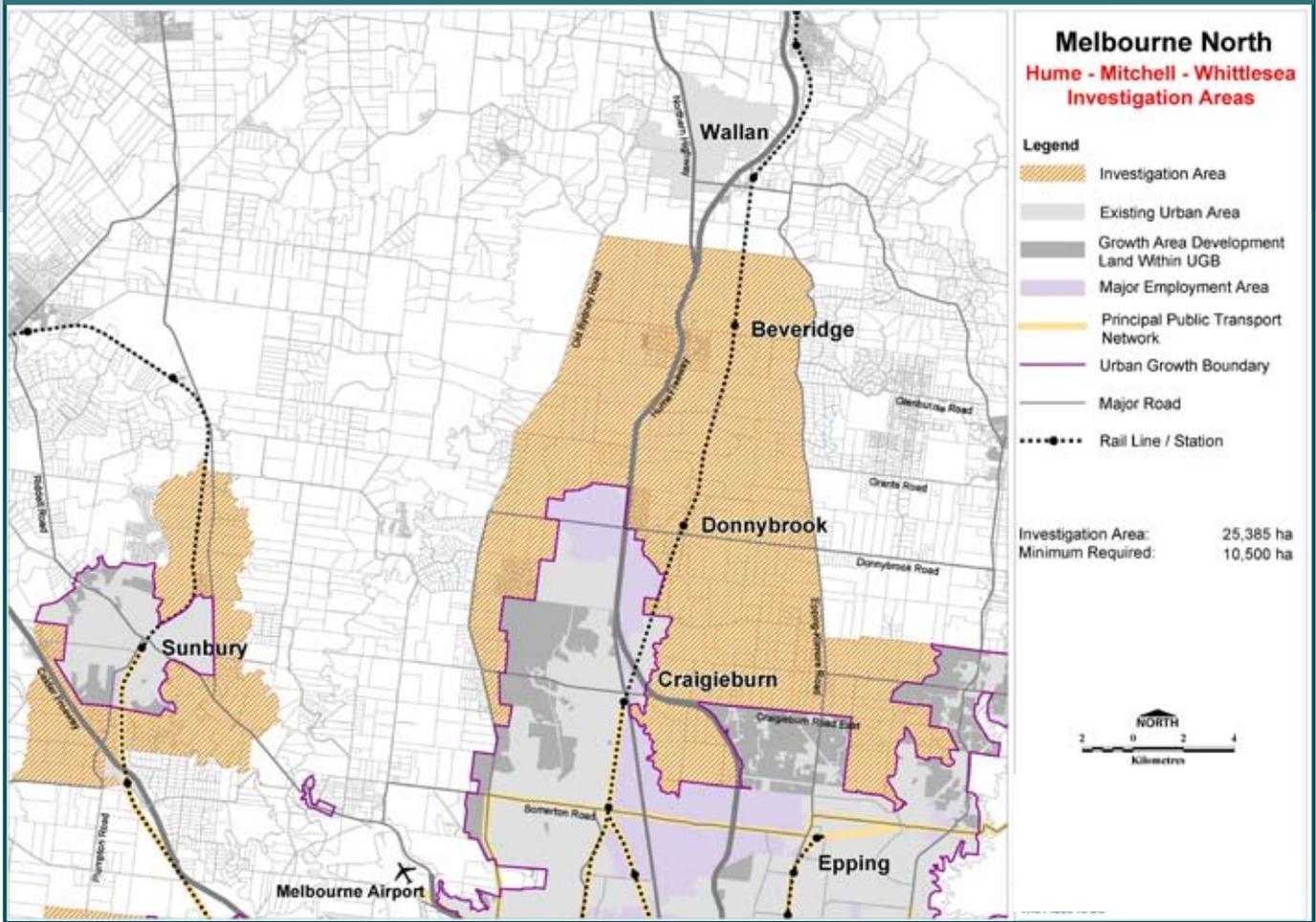
The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor is an integral part of the planning to review the Urban Growth Boundary. Reviewing the Urban Growth Boundary appropriately relies on ensuring that major transport infrastructure such as the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor and the Regional Rail Link corridor from the west of Werribee to Deer Park has been provided for.

“Networks with the regional cities

- > *Efficient and effective links between Melbourne and Victoria’s regional centres”*

Melbourne @ 5 million identifies that around 40 percent of regional Victoria’s growth is expected to occur in Geelong, Bendigo and Ballarat. *Melbourne @ 5 million* also identifies that a significant proportion of regional Victoria’s population growth will also be centred in the Shires around Melbourne. The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor will support that growth by better connecting growing regional areas with employment areas and key international and national terminals, such as Melbourne and Avalon Airports, Port of Geelong and Mickleham.

FIGURE 1-2 URBAN GROWTH INVESTIGATION AREA - HUME/WHITTLESEA



“A greener city

> *Creation of two grassland protected areas in Melbourne’s west.”*

Planning for the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor has considered how to minimise impacts on proposed protected grassland areas. In some sections, the proposed OMR/E6 Transport Corridor would be located between the proposed grassland protected areas and proposed areas for future urban growth, hence acting as a protective buffer between the two.

VICTORIAN TRANSPORT PLAN (2008)

The *Victorian Transport Plan* (VTP) sets out the Victorian Government’s plan to deliver short, medium and long term transport projects for Victoria’s cities, regional centres, country towns and rural areas.

The VTP identifies the 70 km long Outer Metropolitan Ring (OMR) Transport Corridor as the biggest of a range of planned transport projects that the Victorian Government is considering and preparing for in the longer term. The VTP confirms that this project is unlikely to be considered for construction before 2020, but provides funds to undertake the planning for the OMR Transport Corridor required in the short to medium term.

The VTP noted that *“EastLink was able to be built because previous transport planners identified it as a future need. Land for a transport corridor was reserved and purchased over a forty year period. Similarly, we need to plan, identify and secure transport corridors now for future major road and transport options so the coming generations are able to address their transport needs.”*

The VTP also identified planning for the E6 and the Deer Park Bypass - Outer Metropolitan Ring Road connector (refer Figure 1-3).

FREIGHT FUTURES (2008)

Freight Futures is the Victorian Government’s long term plan for ensuring that freight networks, systems and infrastructure continue to perform well in meeting the current and future freight task. *Freight Futures* states that:

A key initiative of Freight Futures is to plan for the relocation of domestic interstate rail freight handling from South Dynon to an alternate terminal site in the Donnybrook/Beveridge area to the north Melbourne metropolitan area. The new terminal will enable interstate domestic freight (which currently travels though the metropolitan area to Dynon) to terminate at Donnybrook/Beveridge for distribution throughout Melbourne.

The OMR/E6 strongly complements this key initiative by providing for more direct road and rail connections between this terminal, interstate destinations, regional centres and Melbourne’s growing northern and western suburbs.

1.4 PLANNING FOR OUTER METROPOLITAN RING / E6 (OMR/E6) TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

The intention to plan for a future Outer Metropolitan Ring corridor was announced in ‘Meeting our Transport Challenges’ in May 2006. In November 2007, the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon Tim Pallas MP, announced the start of a preliminary planning study into an outer metropolitan transport corridor stretching from Werribee to Mickleham (refer Appendix D). This announcement was reported in state-wide and local media.

FIGURE 1-3 VICTORIAN TRANSPORT PLAN PROPOSALS



Early in 2008, VicRoads launched a web page that has been kept updated to provide relevant information for interested stakeholders. Emails and phone calls from interested community members have been responded to and recorded within VicRoads' Electronic Tracking System. Persons whose details were recorded in the database of email contacts have been kept informed of any changes to the webpage to keep them up to date with the status of the planning study.

A Technical Reference Group was formed to bring together relevant state agencies, and later relevant councils were included, to discuss strategic issues and constraints associated with the OMR.

1.5 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANNING PROPOSALS

Planning for the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor has involved coordinating the planning of this corridor with:

- > Development planning within the current Urban Growth Boundary and existing and possible future transport corridors within that Urban Growth Boundary. These include:
 - the existing E6 reservation between the Metropolitan Ring Road at Thomastown and Findon Road, and
 - proposals in the Victorian Transport Plan for an Alternative to the West Gate corridor which would connect West Melbourne to West Footscray, and potentially later would connect to the Deer Park Bypass at Derrimut;
- > The review of the Urban Growth Boundary;
- > The need to protect rare and endangered grasslands;
- > Planning for the Regional Rail Link corridor from the west of Werribee to Deer Park;
- > Planning for the proposed Donnybrook/Beveridge Interstate Rail Terminal; and
- > Planning for an expanded arterial road and suburban rail network to serve an expanded urban area.

1.6 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.6.1 BROAD ULTIMATE CONCEPT

The OMR/E6 Transport Corridor from west of Werribee to Kalkallo is being planned to allow for a freeway standard road, capable of being upgraded ultimately to four lanes in each direction (with appropriate auxiliary lanes), together with four railway tracks in the median for interstate freight and high speed passenger trains. The proposal would ultimately enable the road development to include freeway to freeway and freeway to arterial road access points, with grade separated interchanges. No other access would be provided to the freeway, except for emergency purposes. Roads severed by the proposed corridor would have alternative access arrangements provided.

The proposal provides for connections from the railway corridor in the median of the OMR to existing railways, west of Werribee (west to north), near Rockbank (south to east) and near Beveridge (west to north).

Between Kalkallo and Epping, the E6 Transport Corridor would ultimately enable the provision of a freeway standard road with three lanes in each direction. This new corridor would link to the existing E6 reservation at Findon Road, Epping, which provides for a six lane freeway standard road connecting southward to the M80 at Thomastown, between Dalton Road and Plenty Road.

The Deer Park Bypass/OMR/E6 Transport Corridor connector would ultimately provide for a freeway standard road of three lanes in each direction.

Adjacent properties would not be able to gain access to the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor, other than for approved emergency purposes. Access restoration roads would be provided to restore access to land severed from road access by the proposed corridor in most cases. In some cases, it may be more appropriate to combine land titles.

The proposal also includes treatments to provide replacement or better managed habitat to replace the vegetation cleared as part of the construction process, within the framework provided by the habitat management approach associated with the review of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary.

VicRoads will ensure the provision of noise reduction measures in accordance with its noise policies and undertake measures to protect the water quality of rivers and creeks. The proposal will also incorporate extensive landscaping measures.

1.6.2 ROUTE DESCRIPTION

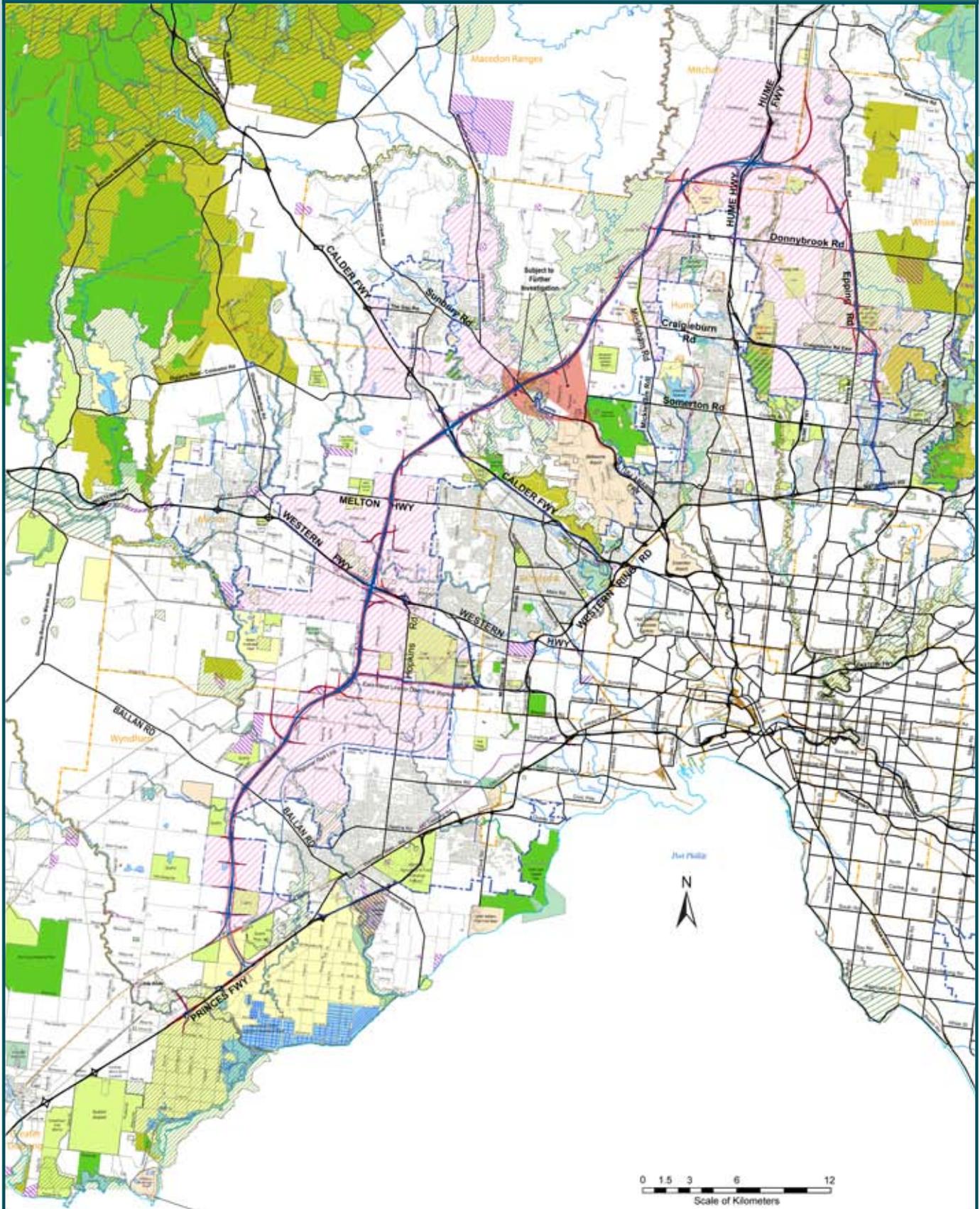
The proposed route of the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor is shown at Figure 1-4.

The proposed OMR/E6 Transport Corridor would start at the Princes Freeway, west of Werribee. It would head north to pass west of the existing residential area of Wyndham Vale, and then head north-east towards Tarneit. At around Boundary Road, Mount Cottrell, the corridor would then swing north, run just to the east of Troups Road South, and cross the Western Freeway, east of Troups Road North, Rockbank. It would then shift slightly east to head north, just to the west of Plumpton Road. North of the Melton Highway (Keilor-Melton Road), the corridor would swing north-east to cross the Calder Freeway between Calder Park and Diggers Rest. It would then cross Jacksons and Deep Creeks and pass to the north of Bulla and west of Craigieburn. North of Donnybrook Road, Mickleham, the corridor would swing east to cross the Hume Highway between Kalkallo and Beveridge, in the vicinity of Donovans Lane. The corridor would cross the Melbourne-Sydney railway and then swing south-east before heading broadly southerly paralleling Epping Road and then Bindts Road to meet the existing E6 reservation at Findon Road. The corridor would then follow the existing public acquisition overlay reservation to the Metropolitan Ring Road at Thomastown.

Additionally, the proposal provides for an east-west link between the Western Freeway, Deer Park Bypass and the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor, broadly following a line just south of Middle Road, Truganina. VicRoads has also defined a study area for a possible high standard connection between the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor and Melbourne Airport, with potential for this connection to pass either to the east or to the west of Bulla. Investigations for this corridor will be undertaken in the future.

The proposal includes changes to a number of existing interchanges on the Princes, Western and Calder Freeways because of their proximity to proposed freeway interchanges on the OMR/E6 Transport Corridor.

FIGURE 1-4: OUTER METROPOLITAN RING ROAD/E6 TRANSPORT CORRIDOR



Legend		
OMR & E6 Corridor	Environmental Significance Overlay	Public Conservation & Resource
Urban Growth Boundary	Vegetation Protection Overlay	Public Park & Recreation
Public Acquisition - Roads	Commonwealth Land	Rural Conservation
Heritage Overlay	Municipal Boundary	Special Use
GAA Investigation Area		Public Use

**Outer Metropolitan Ring / E6 Transport Corridor
Recommended Option
Figure 1-4**

NOTE: PLANNING SCHEME OVERLAYS DATA JUNE 08 SIMPLIFIED OVERLAY DESCRIPTIONS FOR CLARITY PURPOSES