

# **Title; Beyond Roads, Rates and Rubbish-Innovation in Managing Community Expectations with Intense Growth and Major Arterial Roadworks.**

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## **1 Introduction**

The Wyndham City is one of Australia's principal growth municipalities, increasing from 227,008 in 2016 to 255,322 in 2018 (1) expected to grow over 450,000 by 2050. This is adding 65,000 people in 5 years or 35 people every day. As a matter of fact 14 babies are born to Wyndham mothers each day.

Located on the western fringe of Melbourne the population is centered in the residential areas around Werribee, Point Cook, Hoppers Crossing Truganina and Tarneit. Wyndham covers an area of 542km<sup>2</sup> and features 27.4km of coastline bordering Port Phillip to the east. The municipality is situated in one of Australia's most productive regions, part of the largest area of rich basalt soils on the continent.

## **2 Findings and argument**

Primary movement for Wyndham residents for work is towards the city which is predominantly served by the Princes Freeway, the Princes Highway, the Western Ring Road, and two rail lines-Metro and Regional Rail Link. 7 in 10 employed residents leave Wyndham every morning to go to work. Access though is marginalized by over-reliance on roads, an arterial network that hasn't kept pace with growth whilst also being too reliant on the Princes Freeway without capacity upgrades at the city outlets.

As per Metropolis research 2018, Traffic management issues remain the most significant issues in the City of Wyndham. More than one-third (35.6%) of respondents raised these mainly congestion and commuting related issues as the top issues to address in the municipality now. This result is close to double the metropolitan Melbourne average of 19.8%, and the growth area councils' average of 18.1%. The second most commonly raised issue for the City of Wyndham was road maintenance and repairs, with 16.0% of respondents raising these issues this year. This is also more than double the metropolitan Melbourne average of 7.6%. It is noted this year that many respondents were commenting on the perception that road works are constantly being undertaken and seem to take a long time to complete. This does suggest that the community acknowledges the efforts in relation to roads, even if they are inconvenienced in the short term by the construction works.

Average commuting times appear to have remained relatively stable this year, with a little more than half (52.6%) of respondents taking less than one hour per day to commute to and from work, and 47.4% taking one hour or more.

### 3 Methods

To address these deficiencies, the Victorian Government under a Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement have initiated a program of road arterial upgrades that seeks to dramatically improve arterial road capacity. This upgrade will prepare your local area for its growing population and increased demands on our road network. This contracted arrangement is known as the Western Roads Upgrade (WRU) which includes a significant investment of \$1.8 billion in Melbourne's West. The Western Roads Upgrade will improve 8 main roads across the West. The project will also repair and resurface 37 roads and strengthen seven structures, mostly bridges. It also includes a 20-year maintenance contract, which guarantees the ongoing care of 260kms of road from Footscray to Werribee.

The project has many benefits for growing communities in the western suburbs. It is expected to improve travel times, create growth opportunities and improve active travel options.



While this investment is highly welcomed, Wyndham City acknowledges its role in coordinating these works with WRU team keeping Wyndham community's interests.

This presentation details the efforts that the Wyndham City have initiated to proactively minimise the impacts on the community as below:

- Review of road network in the corridor and identify potential issues and opportunities. This included managing short-term deficiencies (WRU construction phase) and capital planning review/remodel of Council road projects to build some extra capacity.

- A new dedicated role to represent the local community working with WRU as a one point contact for the broader project, to plan and coordinate the works to minimise existing service disruption while achieving best asset standards.
- Identify the potential impacts of the overwhelming quantity of construction to the road network, that would be further complicated by the WRU works. Also the identification of the contributing works such as Council's capital Works program , Greenfield land development/ subdivision works, Utility trunk services upgrade etc.
- Engage early with state roads authority to undertake a similar type of traffic impact modelling and more proactively manage the construction impacts.
- Creating a virtual team to support design review of the project and ensuring timely response is provided to the project team.
- Developed fast track review and support process for WRU team to support delivery team while getting a preferred outcome for Wydham.
- Influencing external stakeholders and building relations.
- Community engagement framework.

#### **4 Conclusions**

We are nearly 12 months into the project delivery timeline and based on above proactive approach, Council have build great in-roads on developing good professional relationships with the Major Roads project Victoria-MRPV (the client) and Netflow JV (The head contractor). We have been able to manage the extra workload for the project and drawn down resources on need basis from various teams to provide Council position on certain elements. We have also been able to represent Council in various meetings and workshops to make sure our submissions are heard and actioned on.

We did have a few small wins in first 12 months but expect that in coming months, when construction ramps up, we will be able to handle traffic disruption while having functional community engagement framework in place.

#### **References:**

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics.
2. Metropolis Research 2018, community satisfaction survey.