19 December 2024

Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC
Treasurer
Level 4, 1 Treasury Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
Email: jaclyn.symes@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Treasurer

2025/26 Pre-Budget Submission

I am writing to seek your consideration for NORTH Link's key priorities in the 2025/26 State Budget and ongoing policy considerations.

NORTH Link is the pre-eminent organisation representing – and advocating for – economic development in northern metropolitan Melbourne. Members span the education, health, research, industry and government sectors, all with a shared desire to attract and create jobs, innovation, investment and opportunity in Melbourne's North.

This pre-budget submission is informed by NORTH Link's members and Partners/Supporters and seeks planning, infrastructure and policy support to progress transformative job and investment-creating projects.

Our key asks are below. We have also provided a Background and Context document at Appendix 1.

Key Asks:

Beveridge Intermodal Precinct (BIP)

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Provide planning certainty for the BIP

Epping MAC

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Recognise the Epping MAC as a key economic and employment precinct and assist in investing in projects identified as a part of precinct planning. This includes:
    - Assess adequacy of energy grid including renewable energy opportunity with battery support and Electric Vehicle infrastructure
    - Improve bus transport links from Epping MAC to employment, educational and residential precincts

Postal Address & Location
NORTH Link
Suite 120
John Scott Meeting House, Building MH
La Trobe University Vic 3086

Telephone: +61 3 9479 3339
Email: info@melbournesnorth.com.au
Web: www.northlink.org.au
www.nbaa.com.au
www.melbournesnorthfoodgroup.com.au

ABN 23 226 473 941

Melbourne's Northern Economic Wedge Inc. (trading as NORTH Link)
Australian Registered Body Number (ARBN) - 669 523 086
Registered office: NORTH Link, Suite 120, John Scott Meeting House, Building MH, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY VICTORIA 3086
Place of origin: Victoria
Under section 52(1) of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (VIC), except as provided in its rules, a member of NORTH Link is not liable to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the association or any costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the association.

- Improve funding for Primary Health Care as follows:
    - DPV Health Epping Hub - Operational funding to expand service delivery and meet the growing community demand for Aged Care Allied Health, Women's Health, Refugee Health, Homelessness, Early Childhood Services - $1 million
    - DPV Health Epping Hub - Capital funding to support the establishment of a new bulk billing GP Clinic located within the Epping Hub - $800,000

- Support a rail extension to Wollert.
    - To progress this initiative, NORTH Link asking to be engaged with its partners in the development of the Wollert Rail Study and request the findings be made public, as well as seeking a commitment to the expedited delivery of the project and any interim measures to improve transport along this corridor.
- Support, planning and establishment of Food Manufacturing and Export Hub at the 51-hectare vacant site adjoining the Melbourne Market as follows:
    - Work with NORTH Link, Councils and industry to activate planning for this opportunity
    - Share the findings of the business case studies that DJSIR undertook in 2020 and 2021
    - Appoint an industry stakeholder group to input into master planning of the site including the City of Whittlesea and NORTH Link
    - Work with industry and local government to identify and prioritise infrastructure needed to activate the site.
    - Incentivise a major industry player to locate to the Epping site as an anchor tenant to attract other suitable investors.
    - Retain a level of control of the adjacent Melbourne Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Market and the adjacent 51 hectares of land via the existing Melbourne Market Authority, which knows the site well, to ensure competitiveness in the overall food economy is retained and synergies are captured and maintained with the newly developed site.

<u>Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct (NISP) – formerly known as La Trobe NEIC</u>

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Make the NISP a priority precinct
- Establish a Council and industry stakeholder group on master planning
- Support our planned application for funds under the Commonwealth Government's Urban Precincts and Partnerships Program to develop a business case for funding to develop the NISP
- Financially support the Commonwealth and State Government progression of the La Trobe University City of the Future expansion
- Support a transport planning study, including the potential for delivery of on-demand transport services

- Support sustainable energy generation investment including battery systems to support future energy needs
- Invest in social and key worker housing in the precinct including West Heidelberg and East Preston to support future workforce needs
- Develop a fast bus route mimicking the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) to bring radial transport benefits ahead of the planned SRL opening in Melbourne's North.

Broadmeadows Town Centre

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Commit to Stage 2 of Kangan Broadmeadows Campus Redevelopment, valued at approximately $225 million.
- Commit to a refresh of Broadmeadows Railway Station as soon as possible as a gateway to the Broadmeadows MAC
- Facilitate investment in social and worker housing in proximity to Broadmeadows MAC to support future jobs
- Facilitate investment in east-west transport/ bus routes to better link employment precincts, airport and Broadmeadows MAC
- Support further DPV Health investment stages to support its community and health and expand the DPV Health Broadmeadows Super Clinic as follows:
    - Urgent Care Clinic - Operational funding to provide an Urgent Care Clinic to divert community from acute services and address the unmet need for urgent care in the City of Hume southern catchment - $ 1.5 million
    - Expanded primary care & community services - Operational funding to expand service delivery Mental Health, Refugee Health, Aged Care Allied Health, Men's Behaviour Change Program and Youth Services - $500,000
    - Capital funding to expand footprint by 50%. Updated concept plan in development, to be presented at the December Broadmeadows Revitalization Board Meeting - $20 million
- Support DPV Health in reach services @ Banksia Gardens Estate (Broadmeadows) as follows:
    - Operational funding to provide in reach services within the new Banksia Gardens development including health literacy, service navigation & case management support, Youth Services, Mental Health and AOD services - $500,000
    - Capital funding to fit out new service location within the new residential setting (120 dwellings) - $500,000

Coburg, Brunswick, Northcote, Preston, Reservoir and the Inner North

To progress economic development in the Inner North, we recommend the Victorian Government:

- Support the Central Coburg revitalisation as follows:
    - Fund the significant drainage upgrades that are required as part of bringing this major revitalisation project to fruition

    - Further develop Coburg as an arts precinct – with additional creative and co-working spaces; funding studio spaces for creatives as per the 'making space' program in 2021.
    - Improve links to Central Coburg with nearby sub-precincts such as Coburg Health Precinct, Pentridge and Coburg Lake
- Support the Brunswick Revitalisation as follows:
    - Work with Council to utilise public assets anchoring the Brunswick Design District such as RMIT University Brunswick Campus and Dawson Street Police Complex site (future creative/manufacturing redevelopment potential). Specifically:
        - Commit to providing a new site for the police to free up Dawson Street, so that its potential in supporting creatives/start ups and the emerging Bio MedTech scene in Brunswick can be realised
    - Support the development of commercial office and employment space including for Bio MedTech uses complementary to the Parkville Biomedical Precinct
    - Support the 'Vibrant Brunswick' Activity Centre Plan for Brunswick
- Undertake a feasibility study for the duplication the Upfield rail line and extending it the via the Upfield-Somerton link to Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn, which would double Coburg and Brunswick's catchment of workers, students and consumers overnight. Further information is available below.
- Connect Preston to the Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct (NISP) with innovative transport solutions such as rapid bus transit
- Protect live music venues and affordable space for creatives, with a focus on live music venues, musicians, music manufacturing companies and independent labels
- Commit to utilising State Government land to deliver much need affordable housing targeted at key workers who work in the main employment industries in the north
- Support higher capacity, more frequent trains (north -south) and buses (east–west) and particularly facilitate the use of the Bell St arterial road for rapid east-west buses
- Develop a fast bus route mimicking the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) to bring radial transport benefits ahead of the planned SRL opening in Melbourne's North.

<u>Melbourne Airport</u>

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Fund the Melbourne Airport Rail project to ensure future passenger growth can be met by multiple modes of transport.
- Fund improvements to the airport's public bus links to provide passengers and airport workers with better connections to nearby communities.
- Support planned projects including Elevated Roads, Elite Park, and further terminal expansion to support continued growth.
- Support extra capacity in markets constrained via bilateral air service agreements and new international carriers to maintain our competitive edge against other jurisdictions.

Outer North

We recommend the Victorian Government:

- Expanded the capacity of the Hume Freeway to support future need
- Fund a feasibility study on the Upfield-Somerton Link/Upfield Line duplication and explore of on-demand transport for industrial estates, particularly for shift workers
- Support E6/Outer Metropolitan Ring Road planning and investment to link this precinct to the North-East Link and the western suburbs in the future
- Plan and deliver Bus Rapid Transit and public bus network expansion for improved workforce access
- Invest in Wallan Rail Electrification including new stations at Cloverton MAC and Beveridge.
- Invest in transport upgrades including east-west road network such as Donnybrook Road, Gunns Gully Road and Beveridge Road.
- Plan for health, education and other social infrastructure to be located at Cloverton MAC, including a new Outer North Hospital, as well as power, water and telecommunications utilities for new suburbs and business precincts. Two key infrastructure items would catalyse development of this future city:

  The Outer North Hospital

  - **Land Acquisition -** $25,000,000 for the acquisition of 10 hectares of land for the future hospital as advocated by the Northern Councils Alliance.
  - **Feasibility Study** – completion of a feasibility study to determine the future scope of the Outer North Hospital
  - **Construction** – appropriate funding for the construction of the Outer North Hospital

  Cloverton Train Station

  - **Land Acquisition** - $20,000,000 to acquire land for the future Cloverton Station, associated transport hub, and the potential realignment of the ARTC track to enable dual platforms as per the advocacy on the Upfield Duplication and Extension.
  - **Construction** – Appropriate funding for the construction of the Cloverton Station and associated infrastructure
- Primary Care

  - DPV Health Craigieburn Hub:
    - Operational funding to expand service delivery at DPV Health's new Craigieburn Hub site: Alcohol & Other Drugs (AOD), Aged Care, Youth Services, Men's Behaviour Change Program - $1,000,000
    - Capital funding to support the fit-out of vacant space within DPV Health's new Craigieburn Hub site - $800,000
  - Child & Family Hubs (Across Hume & Whittlesea)
    - Operational funding to deliver evidence-based, integrated Child & Family Hubs using DPV Health's existing site infrastructure in Epping, Mernda, and Whittlesea. Operational funding will provide the missing 'glue' to connect with families into

early development and health and wellbeing services including health literacy, care navigation and peer support - $1,350,000

- Capital funding to retrofit existing sites for Child & Family Hub services (includes accessible playground areas, therapy rooms) - $750,000

Public and Road Transport – supporting the advocacy of the Northern Councils Alliance in their campaign to Connect Melbourne's North.

Specifically, we are supporting the NCA in seeking:

- Upfield Rail Corridor duplication and upgrade, Clifton Hill Rail Exchange, Wollert Rail Extension, Wallan Rail Electrification, Melbourne Metro 2 and OMR/E6.
- Specifically in relation to Upfield Rail specific asks are as follows:
  - Approximately $4 million for scoping study to plan and map out the duplication of Gowrie to Upfield Line, extension to Craigieburn Line and electrification to Wallan with service provision to Cloverton.
- improve the network of buses that connect the Melbourne's north community to major precincts and health and education facilities, as outlined in the Northern Region Transport Study Stage 2: Bus Networks. This includes but not limited to: improved services to Melbourne Airport and La Trobe University, improved SmartBus access, increased northern growth corridor services and buses replicating the future Suburban Rail Loop route
- Fund the transition to electric vehicles and support for implementation of recommendations resulting from the evidence-based Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan – particularly financially supporting transition of Council fleet vehicles to electric (particularly heavy fleet), and grid connection and grid stability upgrades for Council depots, offices and community facilities.
- Provide liveability funding for northern trails, specifically a 10-year pipeline of funding (estimated $110 million) to complete all stages of the Northern Trails project, including delivery. Northern Trails 2022 provides a planning framework and action plan to establish a network of integrated and connected shared trails (primarily for walking and cycling) that link communities, destinations and a range of urban and natural environments across the region.
- Bring forward construction of the E6 Freeway to 2027-28 to ensure it is complete by 2032-33 and also accelerate planning for the rest of the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR) project

Health

Together with the Northern Councils Alliance, we support the following:

- Plan for a new public hospital in Melbourne's north to cater for the growing population and increasing health needs in our community, providing emergency care with provision for specialist services such as oncology, maternal, neonatal and paediatric services. Major public hospitals in the north (Northern Hospital and Austin/Mercy) are at capacity, with the Northern Hospital in particular under significant pressure.
- Provide a funding plan for primary care in Melbourne's North, with consideration of planning for population growth in the Outer North
- Provide better support to end family violence in communities across Melbourne's north and increase early intervention to support children and young people's wellbeing, including

commitment to improving the service system in each Council area, four years of funding to establish a Northern Councils Violence-Free Team and four years of funding to deliver Gender Equity Action Plans and Gender Impact Assessments.

- Support for a greener north to meet canopy cover and biodiversity targets set within the Plan Melbourne: Northern Metro Land Use Framework Plan. Tree canopy cover in this region is the second lowest of any region in metro Melbourne. Funding of $25 million per annum for four years will support delivery of canopy plans in areas of community vulnerability, tree planting programs and biodiversity actions along waterways.
- Increase funding and services to improve and support mental health and wellbeing, and an increased focus on mental health prevention across the region. This can be achieved by funding Councils to engage in mental wellbeing activities, Council representation on key governance structures and in planning processes, funding for current promotion and prevention work, and to improve availability of local mental healthcare services.

Education and Skills

- ***Centre for Urban Electrification***
    - Fund the establishment of the Centre for Urban Electrification at Melbourne Polytechnic's Heidelberg Campus strategically aligns with the Victorian Government's commitment to revitalising the State Electricity Commission (SEC) and achieving 95% renewable energy by 2035 and net-zero emissions by 2045.
- ***Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence (AMCOE) – next stage***
    - Fund the next stage of growth for the Advanced Manufacturing Centre of Excellence (AMCOE) at Melbourne Polytechnic's Heidelberg Campus holds significant implications for the priorities of Melbourne's north, especially in fostering economic competitiveness and innovation
- ***Kangan Institute – Broadmeadows (Stage 2)***
    - Provide an additional $225 million for the final stage of the Braodmeadows Campus Revitalisation, which will establish the Trades and Skills Centre of Excellence and the Foundations and Pathways Centre. These centres will drive job creation and improve employment outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged groups, by providing high-quality TAFE education aligned with industry needs
        - The full masterplan will also consolidate operations, freeing up 35,000m² of land and enhancing Kangan Institute's financial sustainability through reduced operating costs, expanded revenue from co-located partners and offerings, and better asset utilization—all while advancing government priorities

Business Costs, Energy Costs and Regulatory and Taxation Reform

- Refocus on "taking costs out" to ensure our businesses are more competitive with those in other States and internationally
- Provide certainty for manufacturers over the use of gas for high-intensity production processes and address industry confusion over the pathway to a replacement fuel.
- Provide a new education program with simple steps to help businesses, especially manufacturers implement least cost steps towards energy efficiency with particularly reference to electricity use.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this submission in greater detail. In the meantime, if you or your office should require further information, please contact me on 0417 353 650 or via email at c.james@latrobe.edu.au .

Yours sincerely,

Chris James

Executive Director

(0417) 353-650

c.james@latrobe.edu.au

More information can be found in NORTH Link' Investment Attraction Strategy and Prospectus here and in *The Future Workforce – Melbourne's North* (https://northlink.org.au/future-workforce-2022/).

We acknowledge the work of the Northern Councils Alliance, particularly in the area of public transport , health and environment, including the document Northern Region Transport Strategy and Bus Networks

NORTH Link is an independent association that seeks to promote and improve the economy and liveability of Melbourne's north. We communicate regularly with local businesses and organisations of all sizes. Key Partners include the municipalities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Mitchell, Merri-bek, Nillumbik and Whittlesea, universities and TAFEs, Melbourne Airport, Jemena, Yarra Valley Water, hospitals and health providers and large and small businesses in the region.