7.1.4 CAULFIELD – ROWVILLE TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT

Responsible Manager:	Ross Evans, Manager Engineering
Responsible Director:	Peter Panagakos, Director City Development

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **Notes the current progress of the Trackless Rapid Transit developed and promoted by Vicinity Centres and Monash University which connects Caulfield Station to Rowville via Chadstone Shopping Centre, Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC) and Monash University Clayton.**
2. **Provides continued public support and advocacy for the project to maintain its status as a high priority for state and federal government funding.**
3. **Supports ongoing officer involvement representing City of Monash Council as a stakeholder in the project.**

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recent briefing with Vicinity Centres (co-owner and operator of Chadstone) and Monash University who are undertaking strategic work on transport improvement options to connect Caulfield Station, Chadstone Shopping Centre, Monash University and Rowville (The Project).

COUNCIL PLAN STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Sustainable City
Prioritise sustainable transport options, including walking/ cycling paths and public transport.

BACKGROUND

Vicinity Centres and Monash University have been investigating options for developing an improved transport corridor between the Monash campuses (Caulfield and Clayton), Chadstone Shopping Centre and Rowville since 2020. Their investigations to date indicate a preference for a Trackless Rapid Transit (Trackless Tram or Bus Rapid Transit). This is due to cost effectiveness of

this model, efficient delivery timeframes and less complexity than delivering a traditional rail solution.

At the Monash Council meeting of 30 March 2021, Council noted that officers would provide regular updates on the progress of the Project.

On 1 June 2023 Monash University and Vicinity Centres provided Council officers with a briefing on further refinements to their proposal and an update on advocacy for the Project.

DISCUSSION

The Project scope has been further developed to a preferred option which involves use of Trackless Rapid Transit (TRT) technology connecting Caulfield to Rowville.

The proposed TRT route connects Caulfield Station, Chadstone Shopping Centre, Monash University and Rowville via Dandenong Road, Ferntree Gully Road, Blackburn Road and Wellington Road. The Project presents no impact to existing traffic capacity on these roads.

The route allows for an interchange with the Cranbourne-Pakenham Railway Line and a future interchange with the Suburban Rail Loop at Monash. The proposal is for a 'turn up and go' service which operates every five minutes, with an estimated total journey time of 31 minutes between Rowville and Caulfield. Thirteen stations are proposed along the line.

The Project has been costed at $1.4 billion – which officers have been advised is approximately half the cost of a traditional tram line construction.

Vicinity Centres and Monash University advise the Australian and Victorian governments have provided in principle support for the proposal. The Australian government committed $6 million for development of a business case in 2022-2023. The full business case is anticipated to be completed by mid-2024. Vicinity Centres and Monash University is seeking a commitment from both levels of government to deliver the project by late 2024. A target date for operation of the TRT has been set for 2027-28.

The Project proponents are seeking Council's continued public support and advocacy for the Project to maintain its status as a high priority – particularly given the current financially constrained budget environments. They have suggested stakeholders – including Monash Council – could write to or discuss with Ministers and local Members of Parliament to confirm support, consider inclusion of the TRT in Council advocacy programs and look for opportunities to promote the TRT project website (https://trt.etc.org.au) via social media and other channels.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for Council apart officer time at this stage. The business case is being funded by the Australian Government.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Project is consistent with the broader State and Council policy objectives of improved transport options and access to employment in the Monash NEIC. It is in line with Council's

Integrated Transport Plan, which seeks to improve opportunities for public transport, walking and cycling.

CONSULTATION

Vicinity Centres and Monash University continue to engage with a broad range of stakeholders including Australian and Victorian Governments (and oppositions) through to the local community. Their research shows that while there is strong community support for the concept, there remains low awareness.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Project has the potential to provide a transport alternative to cars and reduce congestion on the roads.

The Project has a built-in expectation around the increasing of density of development along the proposed corridor in order to make the best use of the infrastructure and contribute to the projects viability.

While it is expected that the project can be accommodated mainly in the road reserve, any impacts on adjacent properties will need to be closely monitored and considered.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are no immediate human right considerations, but the provision of public transport offers good opportunity for transport choice and any designs should incorporate fully accessible stops.

GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A gender impact assessment has not been undertaken on this project at this time.

CONCLUSION

The Project proposal by Vicinity and Monash University is worthy of continued support by Council as it provides a potentially viable and deliverable option to improve non-vehicular transport to Monash University and the Monash NEIC. The development of a public transport link to Rowville has been a position long supported by Council. In principle support for ongoing officer involvement is sought from Council.

ATTACHMENT LIST

1. 20230601 Caulfield to Rowville TRT - Stakeholder Update _ Final [**7.1.4.1** - 22 pages]

MONASH University

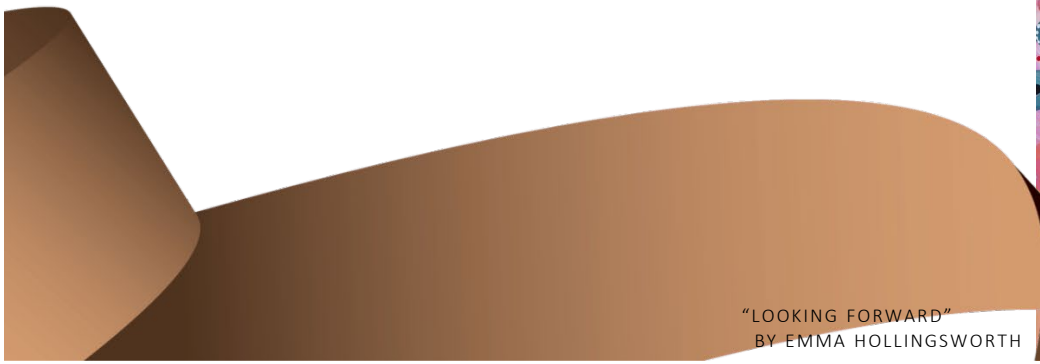
VICINITY CENTRES

CAULFIELD – ROWVILLE TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT

UPDATE – 1 JUNE 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

I wish to acknowledge the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose land we are gathered today. I pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.



"LOOKING FORWARD"
BY EMMA HOLLINGSWORTH

TRT VIDEO


TRACKLESS
RAPID
TRANSIT
(TRT)
MONASH
University
VICINITY
CENTRES


MONASH University
VICINITY CENTRES
Project Refresh

CAULFIELD ROWVILLE TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT

WHY TRT?

- Melbourne's South Eastern Economic Corridor (SEEC) is home to the largest area of employment opportunities outside Melbourne's CBD
- But:
  - Traffic congestion is getting worse
  - East-west bus connections are slow and getting slower
  - The first stage of the Suburban Rail Loop won't be completed until 2032 at the earliest
  - Rowville is still waiting for a long-promised mass public transport connection
- Victorian Government plans for Caulfield to Rowville light rail and Federal Government plans for 'Monash Rail' have not progressed – too complicated and too expensive
- Trackless Rapid Transit (TRT) is the solution
  - Modern, cheaper, faster to deliver, just as effective

CAULFIELD ROWVILLE TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT
OVERVIEW

MONASH University

VICINITY CENTRES

Cost
Caulfield-Rowville TRT will cost approximately $1.4 billion. A tram would cost $2.9 billion.*

Timing
The proposed TRT system could be operational by 2027, at least two years faster than a new tram link.

Speed
Caulfield-Rowville TRT will have an average operating speed of 33-59km/h. The average speed of a Melbourne tram is 16km/h.

Frequency
Services running every 5 minutes in peak periods will offer a turn-up and go experience.

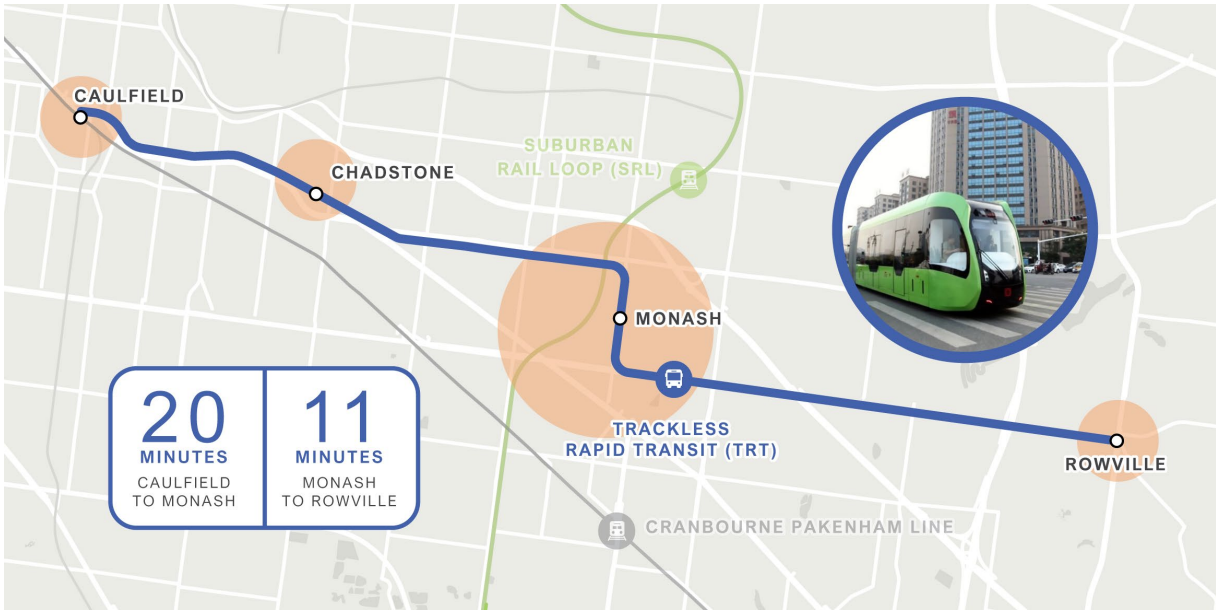
High capacity
TRT vehicles could move up to *1,800* passengers per hour in each direction.

Road network
TRT can be delivered while maintaining existing road network capacity.

* 2020 cost assessment

CAULFIELD ROWVILLE TRACKLESS RAPID TRANSIT
THE ROUTE

- Dandenong Road, Ferntree Gully Road and Blackburn Road between Caulfield and Monash Clayton (via Chadstone), and then via Wellington Road to Rowville
- Interchange with the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) station at Monash

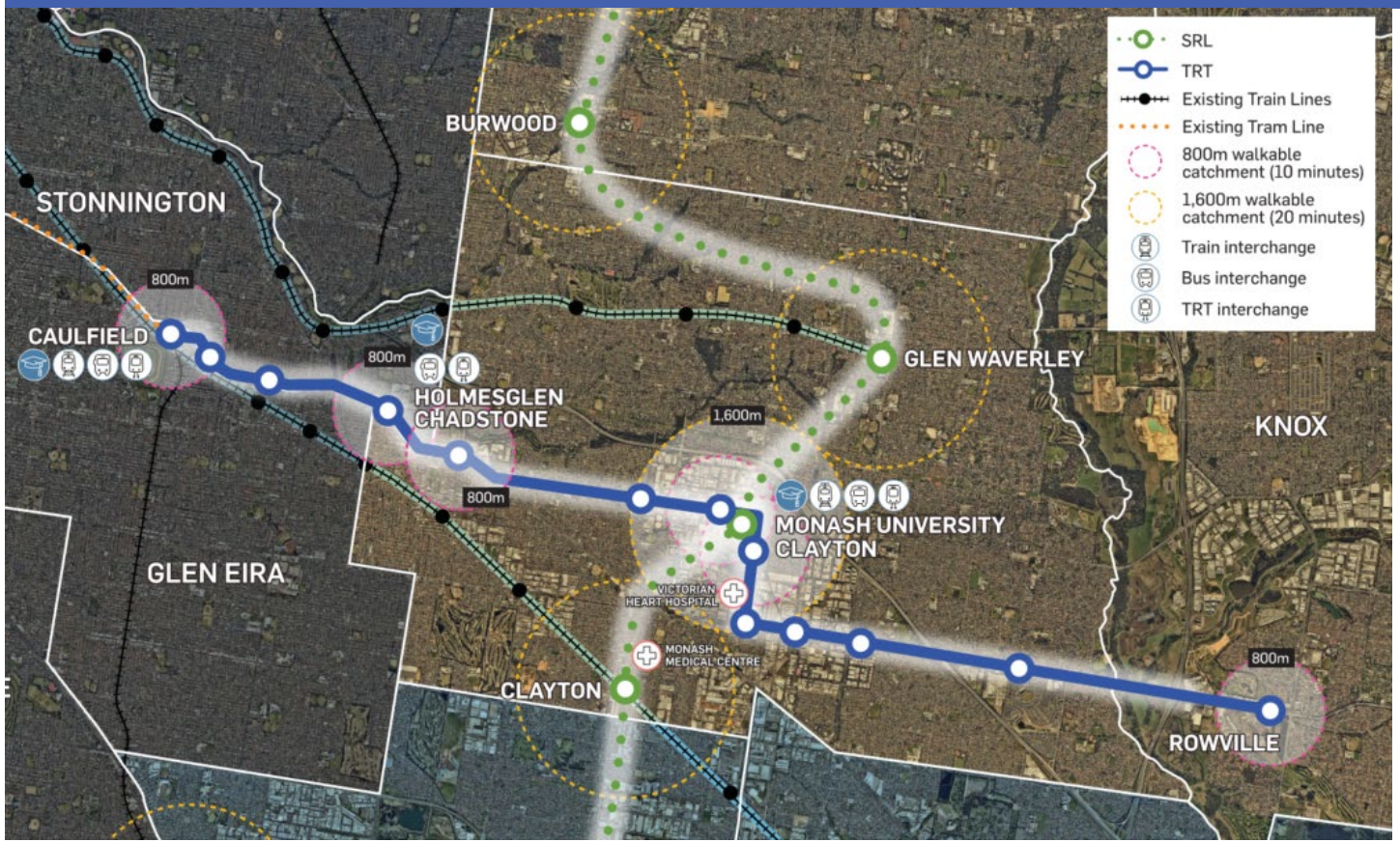


13 NEW STATIONS

2,244 JOBS DURING CONSTRUCTION, LOCAL MANUFACTURING OPPORTUNITIES
$5.7 BILLION ECONOMIC UPLIFT AND 33,700 JOBS BY 2040

MONASH University

VICINITY CENTRES



Proposed new stations include:

- Caulfield
- Carnegie
- Chadstone
- Oakleigh
- Mount Waverley
- Clayton
- Monash University
- Mulgrave
- Wheelers Hill
- Rowville

Current Status

CAULFIELD-ROWVILLE TRT- STATUS

Vicinity Centres and Monash University submitted the TRT concept to the Victorian and Federal Governments in late 2020, with a recommendation that the two governments jointly fund and deliver the project.

CURRENT STATUS:

Federal Government:

✓ Committed $6 million for the TRT business case, funded in October 2022-23 Budget

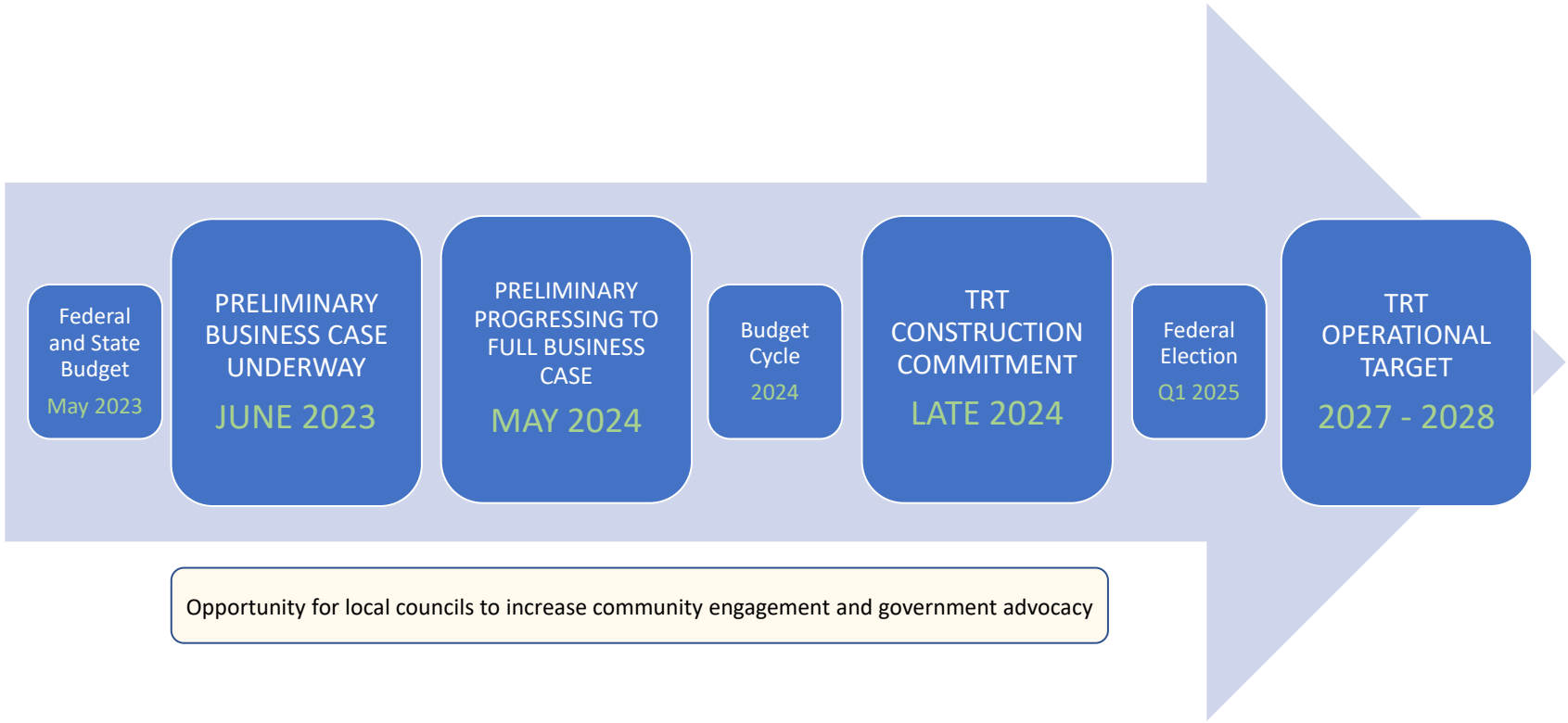
Victorian Government:

✓ Supportive – work on the preliminary business case currently underway (full business case anticipated to be completed in mid-2024)

Federal and State Opposition:

✓ Federal Opposition committed to the business case while in office, State Opposition supported TRT business case its 2022 election policy platform

TIMELINE

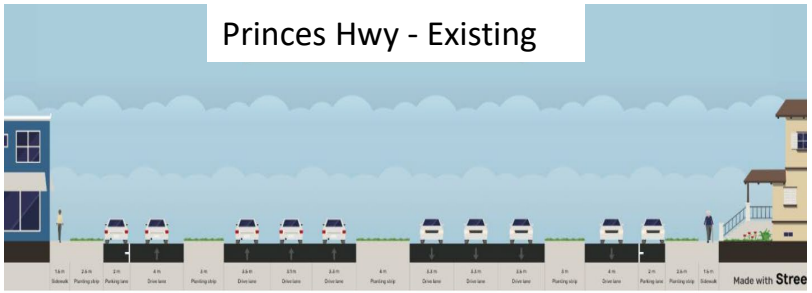

Federal and State Budget
May 2023
PRELIMINARY BUSINESS CASE UNDERWAY
JUNE 2023
PRELIMINARY PROGRESSING TO FULL BUSINESS CASE
MAY 2024
Budget Cycle
2024
TRT CONSTRUCTION COMMITMENT
LATE 2024
Federal Election
Q1 2025
TRT OPERATIONAL TARGET
2027 - 2028
Opportunity for local councils to increase community engagement and government advocacy

TRT Technology update

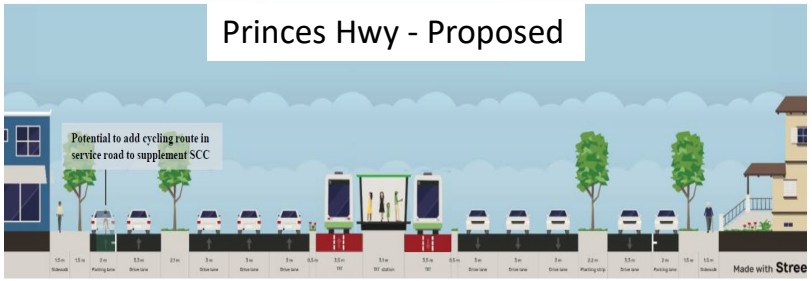
URBAN CORRIDOR FIT

POTENTIAL CROSS SECTIONS VARY ALONG ROUTE

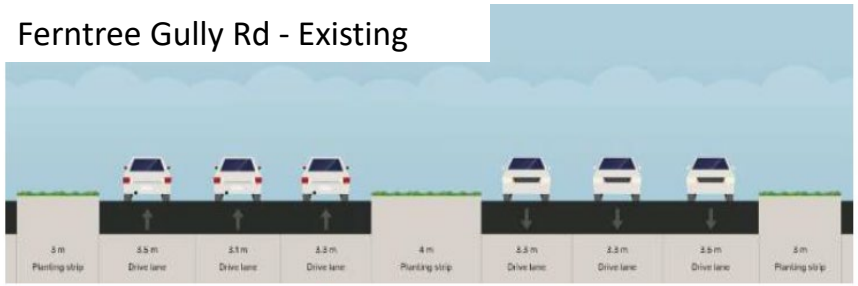
Princes Hwy - Existing



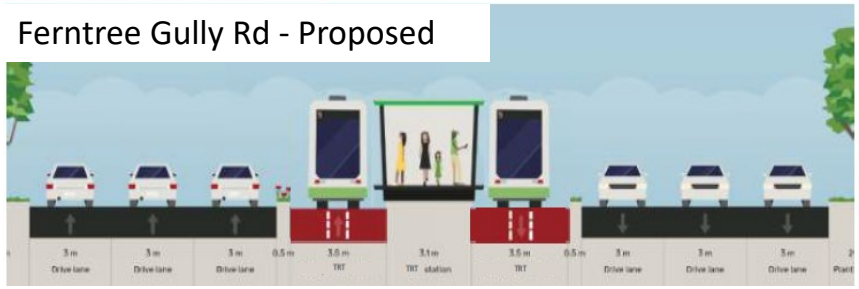
Princes Hwy - Proposed



Ferntree Gully Rd - Existing



Ferntree Gully Rd - Proposed



CAULFIELD-ROWVILLE TRT: BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MONASH University

VICINITY CENTRES

GREENER CONSTRUCTION

Unlike a traditional tram system, building TRT will not require steel tracks or overhead wiring.

This could save more than 27,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions in the construction process – equivalent to taking 6,460 cars off the road.

Savings equivalent to taking 6,460 cars off the road during construction.

GREENER VEHICLES

Next generation TRT vehicles are battery-powered, charging overnight and at key stops.

Running TRT vehicles on the route, as opposed to diesel bi-articulated buses, would save more than 1 million litres of diesel fuel each year.

This will save an estimated 55,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over 20 years.

Saving more than 1 million litres of diesel fuel each year.

GREENER TRAVEL

Once Caulfield-Rowville TRT is operational, it will provide residents in the south-east with a genuine alternative to cars.

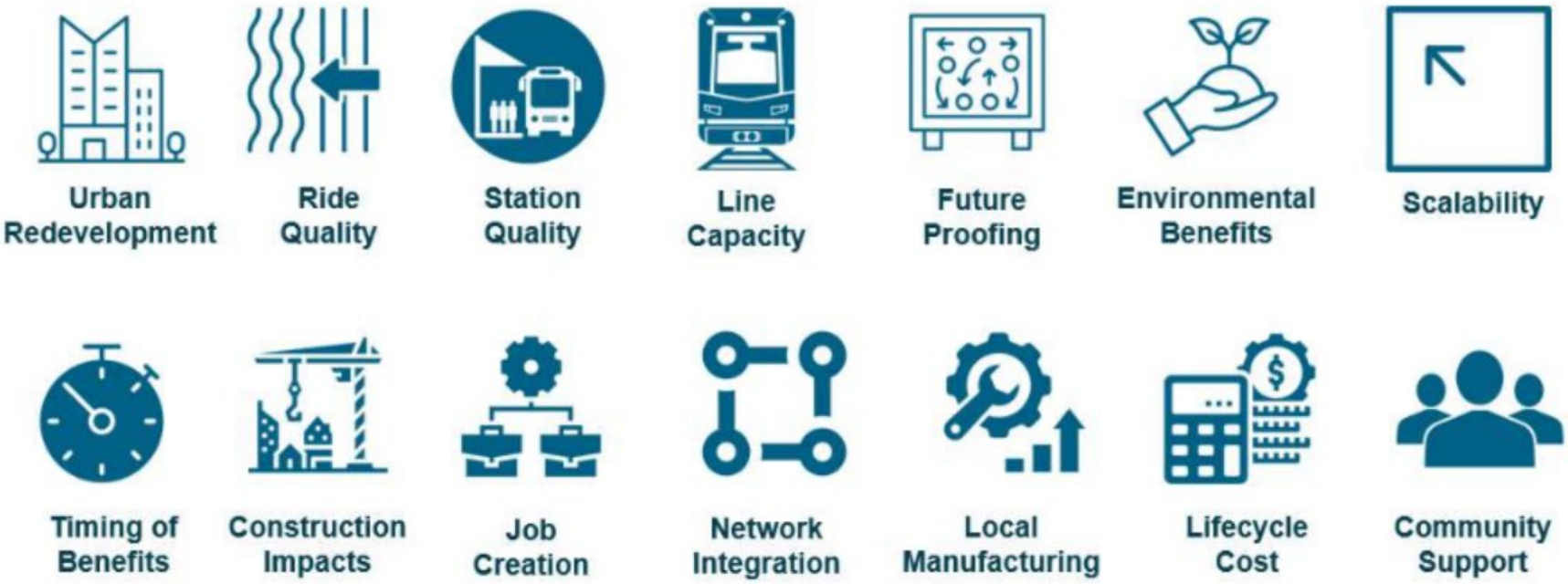
It's estimated the project could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 50,000 tonnes over 10 years by replacing car travel with a fully electric mass transit service powered by renewable energy.

Reducing emissions by more than 50,000 tonnes over 10 years.

ASSESSING THE TECHNOLOGY

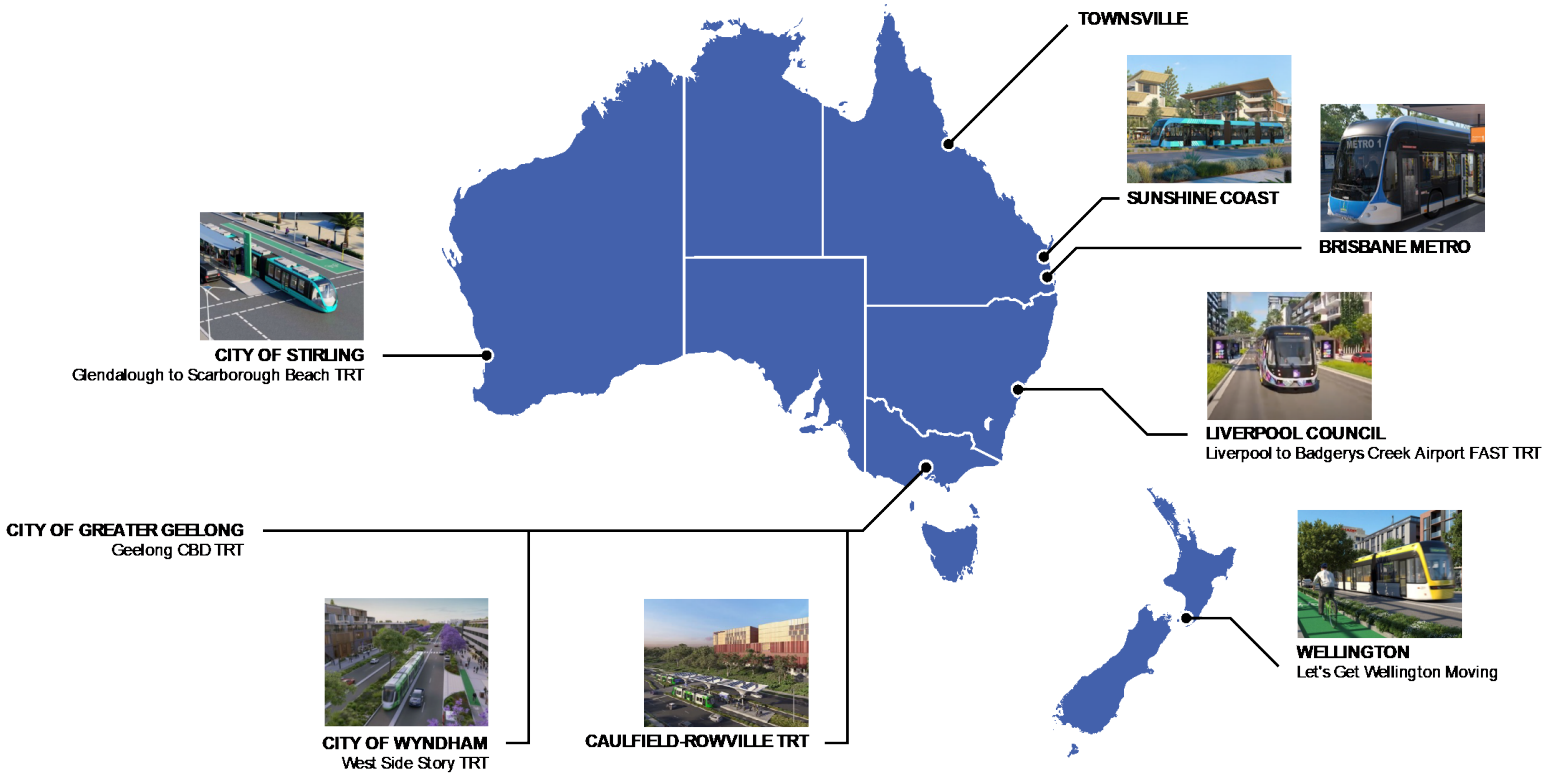
MONASH University VICINITY CENTRES

BUSINESS CASE UNDERWAY



EXAMPLE TECHNOLOGIES

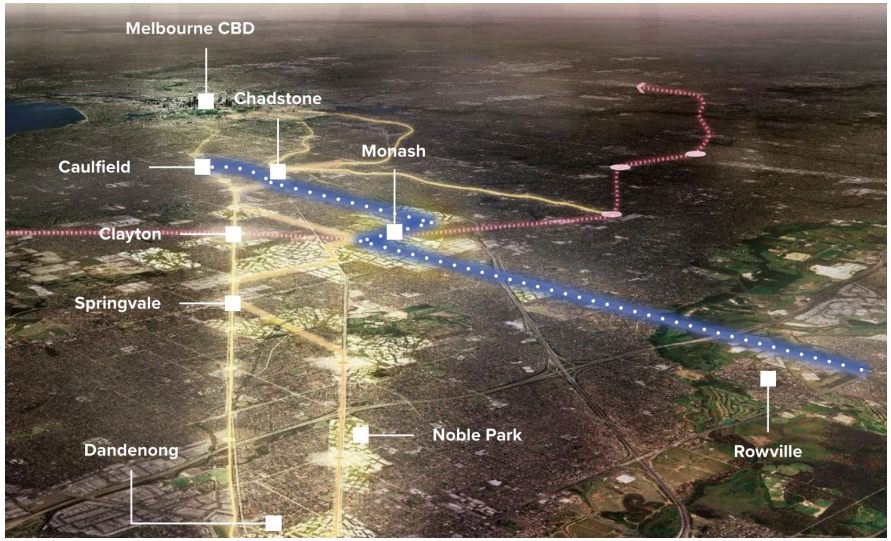
PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT




MONASH University
VICINITY CENTRES
Advocacy Update

ADVOCACY CHALLENGES

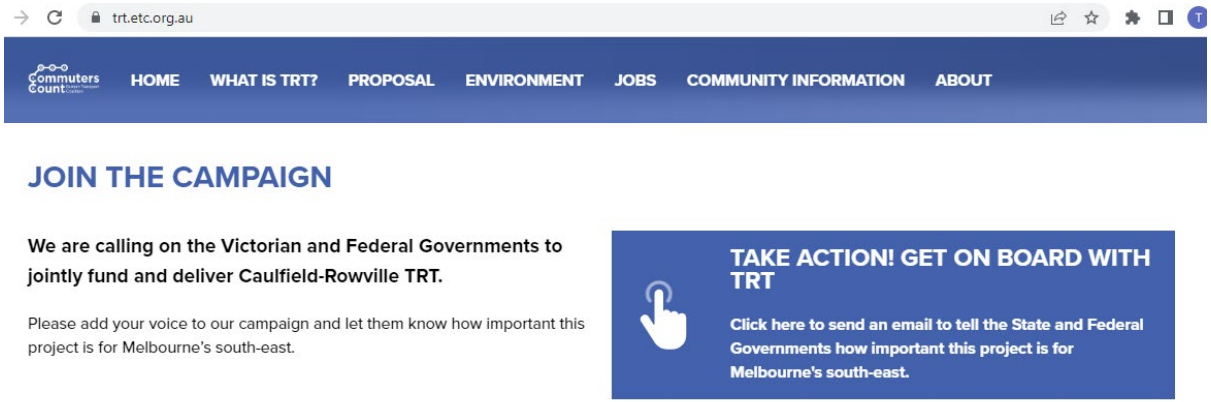
- Caulfield Rowville TRT has bipartisan support
  - Needs to remain a high priority for local Federal or State MPs
- Federal Government Infrastructure Review
  - Federal Government is being more selective about the types of projects it is willing to fund
- Victorian State Budget
  - Slow down on some infrastructure projects (e.g. Airport Rail), limited capacity to fund additional major projects
- Additional transport mode for Victoria
  - Opportunity for DTP to embrace a transport mode beyond train, tram and bus
- Community awareness
  - Research shows strong community support for concept, but there is low awareness



ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

HOW CAN STAKEHOLDERS HELP?

- ✓Renewed resolutions in support of TRT
  - Write to Ministers and Local MPs confirming support
- ✓Promote TRT website via social media and other communications channels https://trt.etc.org.au/



ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

HOW CAN STAKEHOLDERS HELP?

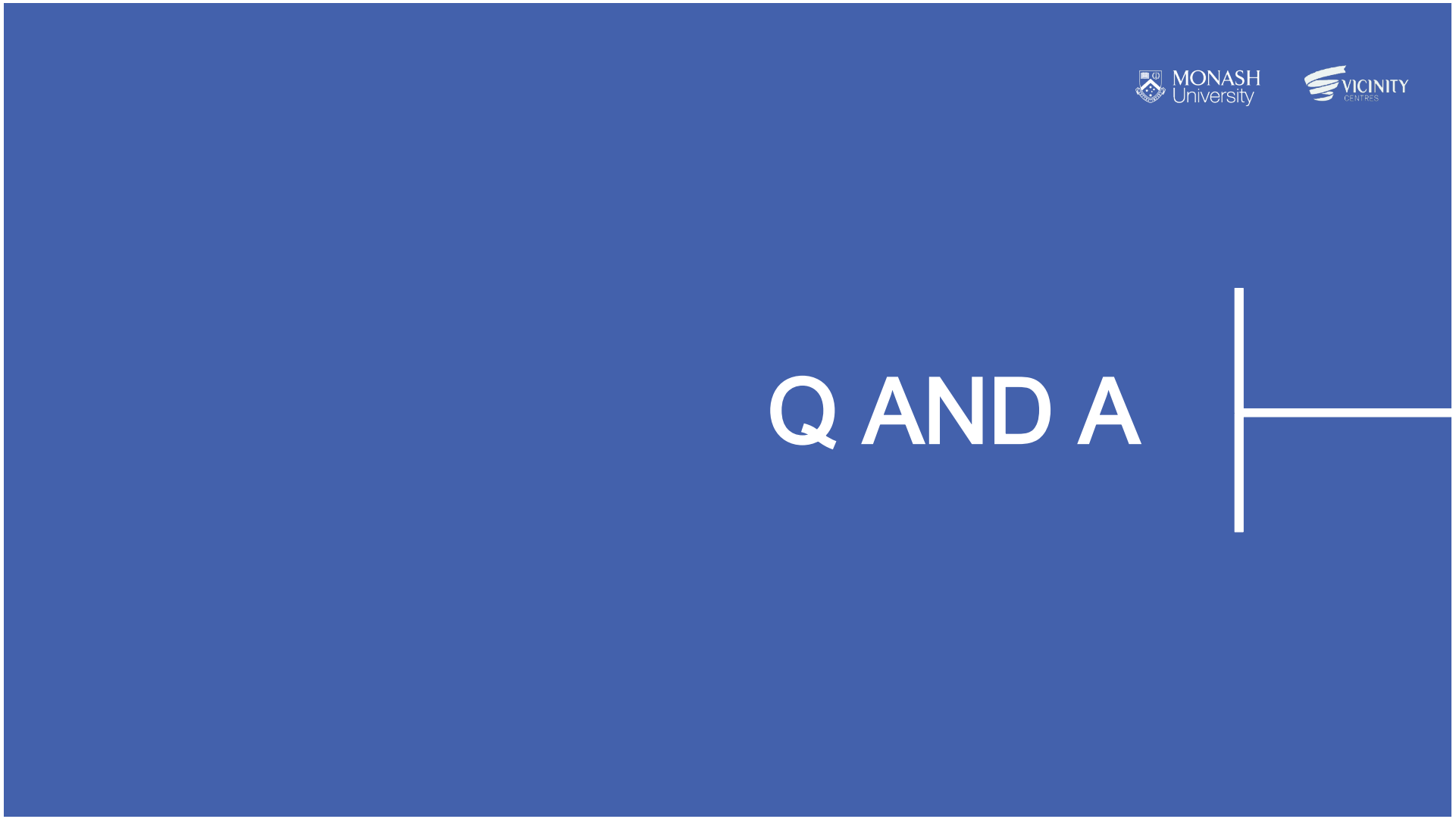
MONASH University VICINITY CENTRES

✓Include Caulfield–Rowville TRT as part of advocacy programs

✓Raise TRT with Ministers and Local MPs as part of regular interaction with Governments

✓Others?

- Media opportunities?
- Community events or information evenings?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VICINITY CENTRES
Q AND A