

Parliament of Victoria

Mapping public transport walkability and access in Victoria

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Research Note

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Executive Summary

Public transport remains the subject of considerable policy debate in Victoria. The Victorian Government recently responded to cost-of-living pressures and increases in fuel prices by reducing fees for public transport (PT) services. The Victorian Government continues to invest in services through the Big Build and other programs. This short paper is based on a [dashboard](#) featuring data on the walkability of PT services across the state by Legislative Assembly electoral district. It builds on recent analysis and publications and utilises publicly available datasets to provide fine-grained estimates of which areas within electorates have PT services within walkable distances.

The paper outlines the history, legislative framework and institutional architecture of public transport services in Victoria. The *Transport Integration Act 2010* provides the current framework for PT services and planning. The paper summarises the considerable debate and research on PT within Victoria, and details the methods used and instructions on using the [dashboard](#). Both the paper and [dashboard](#) adopt widely accepted measures of walkability.

The maps on public transport availability suggest four main observations:

1. The proportion of the state's population with nominally no walkability to PT services is low, although the paper does not discuss the quality and regularity of these services.
2. Trains remain the most popular PT mode, despite being the least accessible in terms of walkability.
3. The tram network has limited reach, serving only 22 of Victoria's 88 electoral districts. However, it is heavily used.
4. Buses are the most accessible mode of transport in terms of walkability and reach in both metropolitan and regional areas. Their use lags behind that of other modes.

Introduction

Public transport (PT) remains a key policy area for state governments, including in Victoria. PT has attracted increased attention recently. Rising living costs in 2026—amplified by conflict in the Middle East—have increased private transport costs for commuters. The Victorian Government responded by granting greater concessions for rail, (most) buses and tram use.

However, these policies are limited by the state's PT system. Using one criterion, walkability for most users (further defined in section two) and access to services vary considerably across the state. Less ambulatory members of the public face additional obstacles and are the subject of specific policies and ongoing research aimed at enhancing access.¹

Victoria's PT system comprises various categories: metropolitan and regional passenger trains; trams; metropolitan and regional buses; and regional coaches.² While the Department of Transport and Planning administers the system, a range of government and non-government institutions engage with it and participate in policy debates.

This report is designed to complement a range of resources that help explain the overall picture of PT and service provision across all 88 Victorian Legislative Assembly (LA) electoral districts. These include the following:

1. Maps of the state and metropolitan Melbourne outlining the extent of service provision across the main branches of PT
2. Online and downloadable maps of each state electoral district with estimates of PT services' walkability, using a simplified model of walkability
3. An online [dashboard](#) summarising levels of walkability and providing access to these resources, available [here](#).

The report also provides some background and observations on the type and extent of coverage and walkability across different PT services.

There are five sections. The 'Transport planning and policy' section outlines Victoria's legislative and policy context. 'Public transport studies and debates' reviews existing approaches to measuring PT walkability and effectiveness. 'Mapping walkability' explains the methods and approach used to create the maps. These are underpinned by a simplified notion of access, namely, walkability to services. 'What the maps suggest' outlines some of the main trends surrounding walkability. The final section summarises the report.

¹ Victorian Government (undated) 'Accessible Public Transport Action Plan 2020-24', Victorian Government; E. van Holstein et al. (2022) 'Mobility Justice and Accessible Public Transport Networks for People with Intellectual Disability', *Applied Mobilities*, 7(2), pp. 146-162.

² Department of Transport and Planning (undated) '[Department of Transport and Planning](#)', DTP.

1 | Transport planning and policy

Planning for PT services—passenger rail, trams, and buses—occurs within the broader scope of state transport policy. Separate transport planning only emerged after the 1960s and has increased in more recent years.

Historical context

Rail and tram transport emerged during the colonial era. Melbourne's growth in the early 20th century eventually led to stronger planning controls, including over transport (focusing mainly on roads and rail services). Legislation passed in 1922 established the Metropolitan Town Planning Commission.³ Its 1929 report recommended expanding rail services.⁴

Despite the growth of private car transport in the post-1945 period, which began to change the planning landscape, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works eventually presented very similar proposals in a 1954 strategy paper.⁵ It largely reiterated the themes of the 1929 report.

The Bolte government formulated the earliest comprehensive plan focused specifically on transport, the Melbourne Transportation Plan, in 1969. However, it focused primarily on freeway planning, with many of these roads constructed over the following decades (despite considerable controversy). The most significant PT element of that plan was the original city loop rail service, which opened in stages from the early to mid-1980s.⁶

Legislative framework

Two significant Acts subsequently emerged that covered both overall transport and PT in Victoria.⁷ First, in 1983, the Cain government introduced a new, comprehensive *Transport Act* ('the Transport Act'), integrating all facets of transportation and amalgamating several statutory authorities.⁸

The Brumby government introduced the second of these Acts 25 years later, along with an extensive plan. The Victorian Transport Plan of 2008 envisaged a range of 'generational' changes to rail transport, including '\$38 billion in projects and initiatives', 'a framework for future land development to bring jobs and housing together' and 'a sequential plan for major transport investment over the short, medium, and longer term to respond to current demands and shape Victoria for future generations'.⁹

The *Transport Integration Act 2010* (TIA), which also amended the 1983 legislation, renaming it the *Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983*, provided the primary policy framework for transport planning. It empowered agencies to decide on the planning and operation of the state's transport system. The TIA's 'vision statement' states that 'Parliament recognises the aspirations of Victorians for an integrated and sustainable transport system that contributes to an inclusive, prosperous and environmentally responsible State'.¹⁰

³ *Metropolitan Town Planning Commission Act* (1922).

⁴ Metropolitan Town Planning Commission (undated) '[Plan of General Development \(1929\)](#)', Planning Victoria.

⁵ Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (undated) '[Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme 1954](#)', Planning Victoria.

⁶ L. W. Davies & I. Woodcock (2019) '[50 Years on from the Melbourne Transportation Plan, what can we learn from its legacy?](#)', *The Conversation*, 8 December.

⁷ See Victorian Government (undated) '[Transport legislation and regulation](#)', VicGov, for the full list of Acts governing transport.

⁸ *Transport Act 1983*.

⁹ Victorian Government (2008) *[The Victorian Transport Plan](#)*, East Melbourne, Victorian Government, p. 10.

¹⁰ Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2021) '[Integrated Transport Planning](#)', VAGO; *Transport Integration Act 2010*.

However, while the TIA called for ‘integrated planning’, criticisms emerged about what this meant in practice. The Victorian Auditor-General’s Office concluded in 2021, for instance, that the then Department of Transport and its predecessors ‘have not, over the past decade, demonstrably integrated transport planning and are yet to meet the Act’s requirements for the transport plan’.¹¹

Transport architecture

PT was historically administered by one of several statutory bodies responsible for different functions. Legacy et al. state that ‘transport infrastructure was delivered by powerful central government faculties’.¹² Planning remained somewhat fragmented between different services.

The 1983 Transport Act, and later privatisation in the 1990s, brought further changes. VicRail was divided into two, before services were merged under the umbrella of the Public Transport Corporation (‘The Met’) in 1989. In 1999, a Director of Public Transport, a statutory office within the Department of Transport, undertook the franchising of rail and tram activities.¹³

Subsequently, the standalone Public Transport Victoria, established in 2012 to act as a ‘system authority for all PT and an advocate for public transport users’, was progressively dismantled between 2019 and 2025.¹⁴

The Department of Transport and Planning currently administers PT.¹⁵ The current amended version of the TIA (Part 4A) delegates all responsibilities for PT to the ‘Head, Transport for Victoria’.¹⁶ The current version of the TIA and the department webpage specify no further delegations. The Department of Transport and Planning’s *Annual Report 2024–25* primarily details payments made to franchises and designates PT as the responsibility of the Deputy Secretary for Transport Services.¹⁷

Recent Developments

The concentration of responsibility has accompanied a range of initiatives by the current government. The most prominent are extensive investments in rail infrastructure as part of the ‘Big Build’ program.¹⁸ These projects include the Metro Tunnel project, ongoing level crossing removals, train station upgrades, the South Geelong to Warrn Ponds duplication and the Melton line upgrade.

However, although new services have been added over the years, the state’s bus services remain a source of ongoing debate. Victoria’s bus system has been referred to by Peter Parker, a former Department of Transport bus planner, as the ‘ugly duckling’ of the state’s PT, receiving less funding and attention than rail and trams.¹⁹ Spending per person on urban buses was estimated at just \$112 in Victoria, lower than in all other states.²⁰

Victoria’s Bus Plan was announced in 2018.²¹ The plan entailed reducing and simplifying routes, increasing service frequency, and conducting extensive public consultation. However, these changes did not proceed. A Victorian Legislative Council request for documents on bus

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² C. Legacy et al. (2024) ‘Proposing an Ethics of Care: Tracing Victoria’s transport planning history’, *Geographical Research*, 62(3), p. 395.

¹³ Public Record Office Victoria (undated) ‘[Public Transport Corporation](#)’, PROV.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Department of Transport and Planning (undated) *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Transport Integration Act 2010*, Part 4A.

¹⁷ Department of Transport and Planning (2025) *Department of Transport and Planning Annual Report: 2024–25*, Melbourne, DTP.

¹⁸ Victorian Government (undated) ‘[Road and Rail Projects to Improve Your Travel](#)’, Victoria’s Big Build.

¹⁹ M. Paul (2025) ‘[A Plan to Simplify Melbourne’s Bus Network went to Government, So why hasn’t it happened?](#)’, *ABC News*, 17 September.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Department of Transport (2023) *Victoria’s Bus Plan*, Melbourne, Victorian Government.

planning demonstrated that considerable research had been conducted and that detailed documents were produced.²²

Moreover, in June 2026, the Victorian Auditor-General issued a report assessing the Bus Plan. Focusing on the role of the Department of Transport and Planning and bus providers, the key findings were:

1. The way the department measures and reports bus network performance does not fully reflect users' experience.
2. The Bus Plan has an ambitious objective for the network to become a mass transit option, but current progress will not achieve this.
3. The department is not transparent about the Bus Plan's progress.²³

Note that this paper does not take any position on these matters, beyond recognising that transport planning is a difficult problem.

Alongside route simplification in the Bus Plan, there appear to be attempts to integrate town and transport planning into PT policies. Transport corridors (as defined in clause 18.01 of the Victoria Planning Provisions) are envisaged as areas where commercial and other development can be concentrated.²⁴ The Big Build also identifies 15 priority precincts, including the first six Suburban Rail Loop precincts.

The independent advisory body, Infrastructure Victoria, has repeatedly advocated for extending PT services.²⁵ Its 30-year infrastructure plan, released in 2025, set out nine key recommendations for PT. These ranged from extending the tram network's coverage to building a 'new bus rapid transit network'.²⁶ Accordingly, the *Fast, frequent, fair* document from the same year draws upon extensive public consultation to argue:

Many Melburnians are willing to switch from their cars if the bus system can deliver a fast, frequent, safe, connected and reliable service. We found that up to 25% of people would love to get rid of their cars but do not feel that they have a viable alternative.²⁷

Beyond Infrastructure Victoria, a range of other institutions and stakeholders engage in debate and research on PT in Victoria, while others campaign on particular issues. The franchises appear primarily focused on service delivery rather than strategic research, although they fund some community-based projects.²⁸ The Public Transport Users Association remains a key player in policy debates. Their *Connecting to the Future* report, for instance, argued that buses could run every ten minutes on major arterial roads for little extra cost.²⁹ Researchers from the University of Melbourne also helped develop the *Better Buses for Melbourne's West* plan to help address serious shortcomings in that region. It is unclear if these reports and contributions have influenced policy directly.³⁰

²² Victorian Government (undated) '[Priority Precincts: Developing thriving places to live, work, study, invest and visit](#)', Victorian Government.

²³ Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2026) *Improving Bus Services: Independent assurance report to Parliament 2025–26*, Melbourne, VAGO.

²⁴ Department of Transport and Planning (undated) op. cit.

²⁵ Now soon to be abolished. See R. Eddie (2026) 'Government to shut down independent body Infrastructure Victoria', *ABC News*, 18 August.

²⁶ Infrastructure Victoria (2025) *Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2025–2055, November 2025*, IV, p. 7.

²⁷ Infrastructure Victoria (2025) *Fast, Frequent, Fair: How buses can better connect Melbourne*, IV, p. 5.

²⁸ Kinetic (undated) '[Moving Communities Fund](#)', Kinetic.

²⁹ Public Transport Users Association (undated) '[Public Transport Users' Association](#)', PTUA.

³⁰ I. Lawrie & J. Stone (2022) *Better Buses for Melbourne's West*, Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne.

2 | Public transport studies and debates

There has been considerable debate and research on PT access in Melbourne and across Victoria. There are both conceptual arguments over PT policy and several more technical analyses of transport systems in Melbourne and Victoria.

Transport debates

At the conceptual level, many studies of transport systems focus on private car dependence and its associated health, quality-of-life, and environmental impacts. Transport alternatives tend to focus on how effective PT can coexist with a primary reliance on private car use.³¹ Better PT services—alongside other measures—are increasingly featured in planning debates.

In Victoria and much of Australia, the debate on PT has tended to focus on population density and consumer preferences for private car use. Paul Mees, a Melbourne-based planning academic, devoted considerable attention to contesting these arguments.³² Australia's low-population-density cities (like Melbourne) have suburban densities comparable to those of some North American cities (like Toronto) that boast vastly higher PT usage.³³

The amenity, environmental and health arguments over transport policy notwithstanding, perhaps the greatest demand for increased PT stems from cost pressures. Oil and energy costs figured prominently in both the 'great inflationary' period of the 1970s and the more recent 'cost of living crisis'.³⁴ While economic policymakers have recognised that energy cost spikes are 'exogenous' shocks (from external sources), their main policy response is usually a change in monetary policy (for example, an increase in official interest rates) that disproportionately affects a narrow segment of the population.³⁵

Historically, cost pressures spurred innovation in transport efficiency, including shifts away from private transport preferences. The recent bout of both general and transport-associated cost increases reflects a range of problems, including 'dependence on fossil fuels, fragile supply chains and the monopolisation of key industries'.³⁶ Increased transport costs tend to filter through to general price increases. Household travel costs further compound matters. One way to reduce vulnerability to these pressures is to ensure more viable transport alternatives to private car use.³⁷

Consumers are unlikely to abandon private car use altogether. However, available PT options can provide some cost relief through occasional PT journeys during periods of high fuel prices, with flow-on social and environmental benefits. The Victorian Government provided periods of free travel and half-price fares to incentivise PT use in response to the most recent round of oil price rises.³⁸ These costs need to be carefully weighed against other measures, such as reductions in fuel excise and improvements in transport infrastructure. The 2026 Victorian budget also provided modest increases to both the frequency and extent of some transport services.³⁹

³¹ P. Newman & J. Kenworthy (2015) *The End of Automobile Dependence*, Washington, DC, Island Press.

³² P. Mees (2010) *Transport for Suburbia: Beyond the automobile age*, London, Routledge.

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ M. Bryan (2013) 'The Great Inflation 1965-1982', Federal Reserve History.

³⁵ A. Pennington (2026) 'Increasing rates is such a blunt instrument. There are other, better ways to target inflation', *The Age*, 17 March.

³⁶ J. Mason (2022) 'Today's Inflation Won't be Solved by the Fed', J. W. Mason; Pennington (2026) *op. cit.*

³⁷ P. E. Thoresen (1983) 'Inflation controlled by energy prices', *Energy Economics*, 5(3), pp. 202-206.

³⁸ J. Allan (2026) *Public Transport Now Free Every Day Until The End Of April*, media release, 31 March.

³⁹ J. Allan (2026) *West Wins With Budget Boost To Health, Trains and Safety*, media release, 21 April.

Existing studies

A starting point is to better understand the current state of service walkability in Melbourne and other parts of the state. This paper provides an overview of the issues, illustrated with online maps in the dashboard. It draws on a range of studies already conducted, mostly in metropolitan Melbourne. These are included for reference and may be useful for further reading.

Alamari and colleagues analyse service accessibility by local government area (LGA), but their work is limited to metropolitan Melbourne. They utilised many of the same open datasets (publicly accessible). They find a strong relationship between population density and PT accessibility at the LGA level.⁴⁰ Access improved with increasing population density. By contrast, this study focuses on state electoral districts. It also examines areas outside of Melbourne and other urban areas.

Likewise, Taylor and Somenahalli focus more on walkability to transport services.⁴¹ They determined walkable distances for accessing bus, train, and tram services: 580 metres, 700 metres, and 400 metres, respectively, or 860 metres, 1 kilometre, and 600 metres, depending on the model used. This paper adapts some of these observations (see section 3).

In contrast, a range of studies focus on more specific access for vulnerable groups. Qu and colleagues caution against simply treating all residents within a zone or area as having the same needs, and against disregarding issues such as service reliability.⁴² Likewise, Fatima and colleagues emphasise the needs of older people and deploy a time-travel-based framework.⁴³ While noting these issues, this report employs a broad definition of walkability.

The Climate Council campaign group found that ‘between a third and up to two-thirds of people living in each city don’t have access to all-day, frequent services’.⁴⁴ Their analysis used a GIS-based (geographic information system) approach and identified several ‘holes’ in Melbourne’s transport service coverage. They also discuss the increasing range of emerging transport options, such as ride-sharing and various electronic mobility devices. This paper makes similar findings on the areas where PT services are lacking.

The Auditor-General’s report on bus services includes a section focusing on specific addresses and their accessibility to bus services. It is focused on buses rather than other modes of transport and its criteria for defining regular and reliable services are undefined.⁴⁵ They focused on Melbourne’s outer western areas.

⁴⁰ S. Alamri et al. (2023) ‘GIS Analysis of Adequate Accessibility to Public Transportation in Metropolitan Areas’, *ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information*, 12(5), pp. 180.

⁴¹ M.A.P Taylor & S. Somenahalli (2024) ‘Distributions of Walking Access to Public Transport in Melbourne, Australia – Evidence on acceptable and tolerable walking distances’, *International Journal of Sustainable Transportation*, 18(7), pp. 576-588.

⁴² Y. Qu et al. (2026) “‘Accessibility Misrepresentation’ in Public Transport”, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 133, pp. 1-13.

⁴³ K. Fatima et al. (2022) ‘Development of a Public Transport Accessibility Index for Older Commuters: A Time-Based Approach’, *Journal of Advanced Transportation*, 2022(1), pp. 1-15.

⁴⁴ H. Cheung et al. (2024) *Next stop Suburbia - making shared transport for everyone in Aussie cities*, Climate Council, p. i.

⁴⁵ Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (2026) op. cit.

3 | Mapping walkability

The analysis developed here builds on the research contributions detailed in the previous section while focusing on estimating transport walkability for Victoria's electoral districts. It uses the following methods:

- It adopts a fine-grained approach based on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) mesh blocks (MBs).⁴⁶ MBs are roughly comparable to suburban blocks. As the ABS explains:

Mesh Blocks are the smallest geographic areas defined by the ABS and form the building blocks for the larger regions of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). They broadly identify land use such as residential, commercial, primary production and parks.⁴⁷

In Victoria, an average of 32 dwellings and 72 residents exist per MB. Map 1 illustrates an example MB with its associated location identity code.
- The main data sources are accessible datasets on transport services detailing stops and routes, as well as the PT timetable API and monthly patronage.⁴⁸
- Utilising a combination of R computational coding and GIS software, the analysis assesses transport walkability by applying walking-distance criteria (as outlined in Table 1). Each MB is coded by distance, and population counts are tallied at the district level. This gives a rough estimate of walkability.
- For trains and trams, 800 and 400 metres are used respectively, as the rough boundary points for walkability. This simplifies Taylor and Somenahalli's findings.⁴⁹ They note that widespread observational studies suggest that users have a higher tolerance for longer distances when travelling by train.⁵⁰ They introduce an intermediate 'medium' category for buses. While 400 metres is generally accepted as the upper distance tolerance, there are normative reasons to adopt a lower threshold of 200 metres.

More details on the methods used to generate the map and analyse the data are available on request.

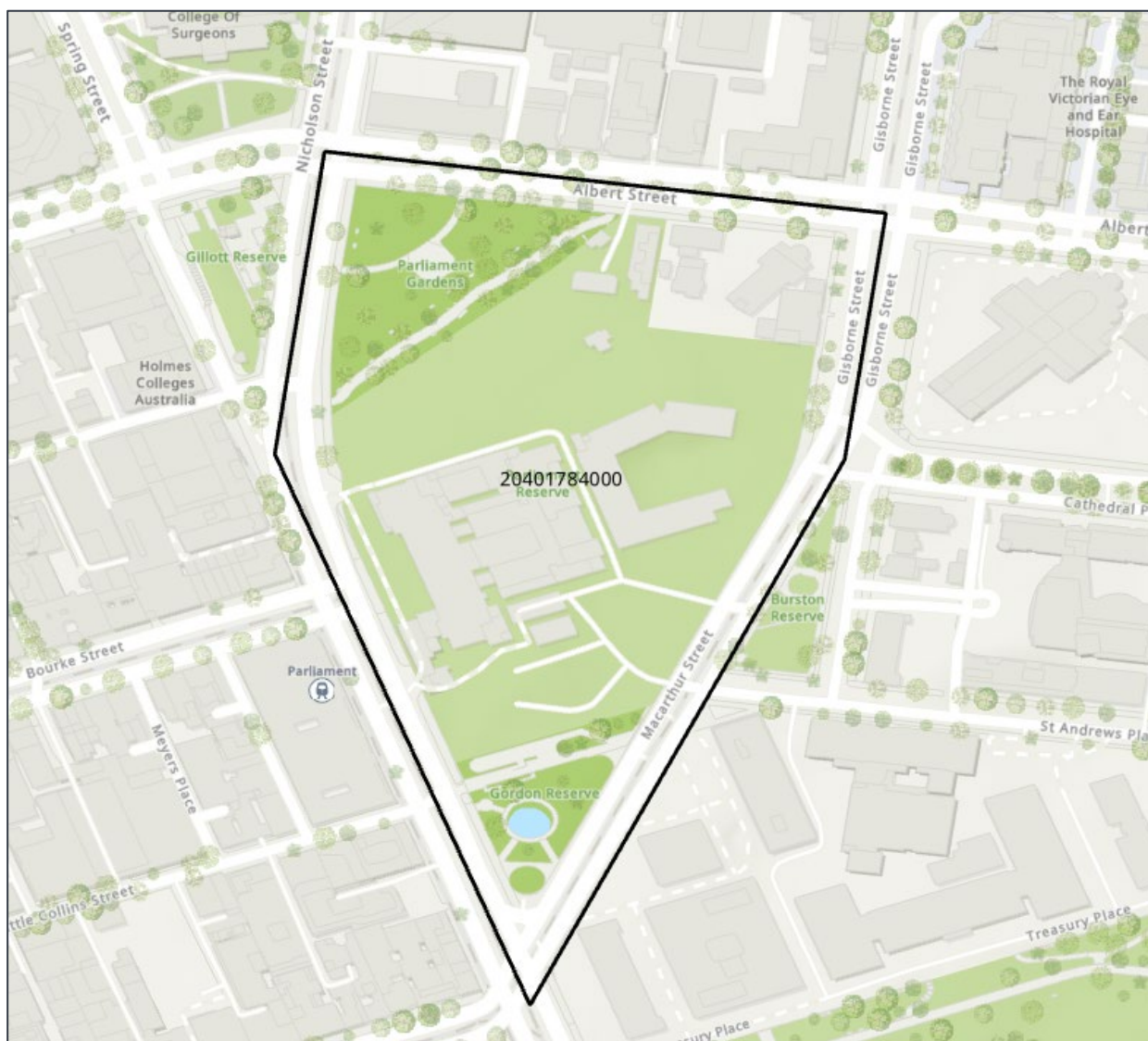
⁴⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2026) 'Mesh Blocks: Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS)', ABS.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Transport Victoria (undated) 'Public Transport Stops'; Transport Victoria (undated) 'Public Transport Lines'; Victorian Government (undated) 'Public transport timetable API'. Department of Transport and Planning (2026) *Monthly Public Transport Patronage by Mode*.

⁴⁹ Taylor & Somenahalli (2024) *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ Taylor & Somenahalli (2024) *op. cit.*, p. 577.

Map 1: Example mesh block 20401784000 (Parliament of Victoria)⁵¹**Table 1: Mesh block distance criteria from service stops**

Mode	Close (metres)	Medium (metres)	Distant (metres)
Buses	<200	201-400 m	>400
Trains	<800	N/A	>800
Trams	<400	N/A	>400
Coaches	<800	N/A	>800

⁵¹ ABS (2026) op. cit.

The associated [dashboard](#) allows the reader to zoom in on electoral district maps and survey the extent of coverage for different services. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how to do this. Map 2 is an example map of one LA district (Albert Park).

Figure 1: Dashboard page one: selecting data

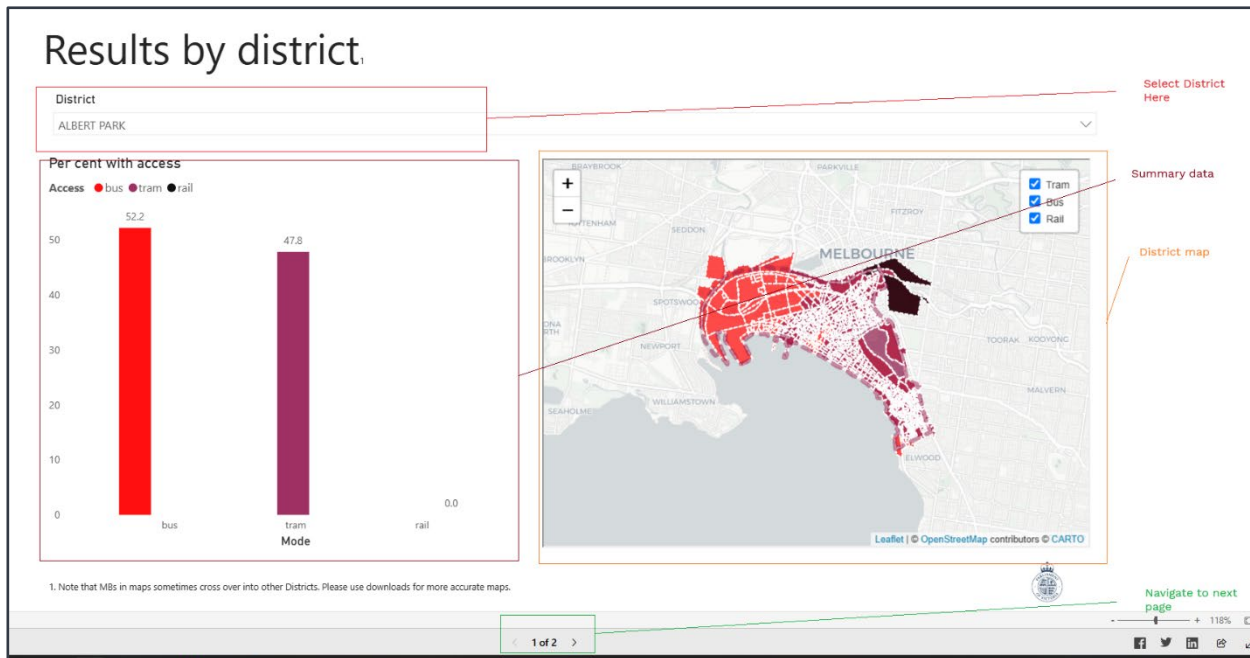


Figure 2: Dashboard page two: downloadable maps

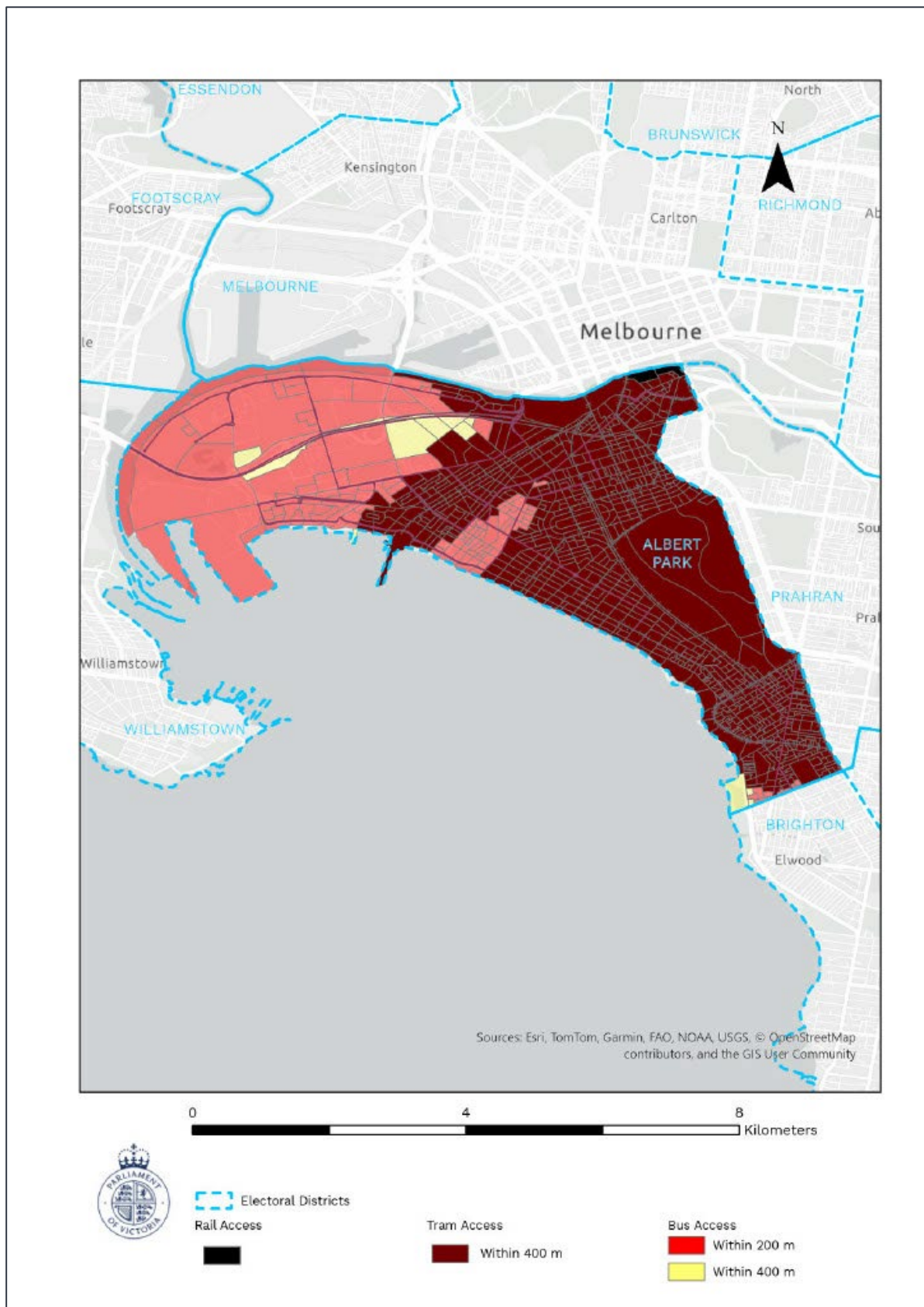
Downloadable maps in pdf form

Area	Url
Map 1: Whole of state	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Map1.pdf
Map 2: Metropolitan Melbourne and environs	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Map2.pdf

District	Url
ALBERT PARK	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_ALBERT%20PARK.pdf
ASHWOOD	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_ASHWOOD.pdf
BASS	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BASS.pdf
BAYSWATER	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BAYSWATER.pdf
BELLARINE	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BELLARINE.pdf
BENAMBRA	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BENAMBRA.pdf
BENDIGO EAST	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BENDIGO%20EAST.pdf
BENDIGO WEST	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BENDIGO%20WEST.pdf
BENTLEIGH	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BENTLEIGH.pdf
BERWICK	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BERWICK.pdf
BOX HILL	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BOX%20HILL.pdf
BRIGHTON	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BRIGHTON.pdf
BROADMEADOWS	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BROADMEADOWS.pdf
BRUNSWICK	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BRUNSWICK.pdf
BULLEEN	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BULLEEN.pdf
BUNDOORA	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_BUNDOORA.pdf
CARRUM	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_CARRUM.pdf
CAULFIELD	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_CAULFIELD.pdf
CLARINDA	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_CLARINDA.pdf
CRANBOURNE	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_CRANBOURNE.pdf
CROYDON	https://povresearch.blob.core.windows.net/2022/2023/PT/Districtmaps_CROYDON.pdf

Annotations: Download either area or District maps.

Map 2: Example district map (Albert Park)



4 | What the maps suggest

The mapping and analysis suggest four main observations, both overall and across different areas. There are considerable differences between electoral districts and regions in terms of overall walkability and the types of PT available. The reader can examine these proportions using the dashboard [here](#). Victoria's electoral system is based on 88 LA districts. These districts are grouped into eight LC regions (five metropolitan and three non-metropolitan). These regional categories also provide a useful point of comparison, as marked differences exist between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas (although considerable differences exist within the latter).

Overall walkability

Overall, combining all modes of PT, the proportion of the state's population with no access to PT services—using the MB walkability criteria—is quite low: 11.1 per cent. Yet these proportions warrant caution. First, there is considerable variation across LA districts and LC regions. The proportion of the population without walkable services is much higher in non-metropolitan regions, ranging from 30.6 per cent in Northern Victoria to 27.3 per cent in Eastern Victoria and 19.4 per cent in Western Victoria. Non-metropolitan regions also contain large urban areas, such as Geelong and Melbourne's peri-urban suburbs (such as Whittlesea, Mernda, Lilydale, Mooroolbark, Ferntree Gully, Pakenham, Mornington, Hastings and Mount Martha).

Differences between areas are most apparent when comparing electoral districts. Eildon has the highest rate of no walkability in Victoria (48.5 per cent), while South Barwon has the lowest in non-metropolitan electorates (7.1 per cent). In metropolitan regions, the estimate of people with no walkability ranges from Cranbourne (15.9 per cent) to Prahran (0.01 per cent). The mean proportion without walkability is 26 per cent in non-metropolitan districts and 4.6 per cent in metropolitan districts.

Second, these proportions include coaches, which are accessible by walkability criteria to an average of 2.3 per cent of the population in metropolitan districts. The average proportion is 11 per cent in non-metropolitan districts. Depending on how PT is defined, these longer-distance services may be included or excluded as they are less likely to be used for daily commutes. Without them, the proportion without access to transport services increases significantly. Regional coaches also account for an average of only 0.245 per cent of monthly patronage.⁵²

Rail services

Using 800 metres as the walkability criterion means only a small proportion of the state's population has access to rail stations. Overall, just 130,035 people, or 1.7 per cent of the population, live within a walkable distance of a rail station. There is some variability across districts and regions. The highest level of access is in Hawthorn, where 6.2 per cent of the population is within 800 metres of a station. All districts (Hawthorn, Northcote, Williamstown, Melbourne and Oakleigh) where more than 5 per cent have access are metropolitan-based.

Access also varies across metropolitan electoral districts. The only district with zero per cent of the population having walkable access to a train service is Albert Park. While a small area (three MBs) is near Flinders Street Station, there are no residents living there (at least according to ABS Census data). Similar trends exist across the various districts, with MBs categorised as 'residential' comprising only 55 per cent of areas that are within 800 metres of stations. Overall, 70 per cent of MBs are categorised as residential, suggesting that areas near stations are less likely to be densely populated with residents. Twenty-seven per cent of MBs near stations are 'commercial', despite this category comprising less than 5 per cent

⁵² Department of Transport and Planning (2026) op. cit.

of overall MBs. The areas near train stations are far more likely, on average, to be commercial (and less heavily populated) than residential.

Here, the limitations of the methods become apparent. Train travel accounts for around 38.5 per cent of all PT patronage, according to monthly usage data from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP).⁵³ If 800 metres is considered a reasonable walking distance, many people clearly use another mode of transport to reach train stations.

Anecdotal evidence (a survey of colleagues) suggests a large proportion of these trips are made by private car or other transport (for example, scooters). Many train stations feature ‘park and ride’ facilities for private cars, bicycles and scooters.⁵⁴ It also affirms the need for a ‘whole-of-journey-based’ or multimodal approach to understanding accessibility, as trips usually involve more than one mode of travel (other than walking). Research in other states suggests that e-scooters and similar devices may be emerging to ‘close the gap between PT hubs and starting locations’.⁵⁵

Trams

Melbourne’s iconic trams make it the only city in Australia with significant light rail facilities. However, the data suggest that access to trams across the state is somewhat limited. A fairly small proportion—10.3 per cent—of the state’s population live in areas that are within 400 metres of a tram stop. Just 22 of the state’s 88 electoral districts have access to the tram system. Yet, significantly, trams still account for a monthly average of 32 per cent of PT patronage.⁵⁶

The proportion of the population with access to trams in the 22 districts with trams ranges from 0.12 per cent in Mill Park (at the very edge of walking accessibility, with a stop in the next district) to 55.3 per cent in Richmond. All of these districts are located within metropolitan LC regions.

Buses

Buses are by far the most accessible type of PT travel in terms of coverage.⁵⁷ The model estimates that 73.1 per cent of Victoria’s population lives in MBs within 400 metres of a bus stop. Paradoxically, metropolitan and regional buses account for averages of 22.5 per cent and 2.6 per cent of monthly patronage, respectively.⁵⁸ As with other modes, however, there is considerable variation between districts.

First, walkability to bus services varies from a low point of 39 per cent in (perhaps surprisingly) Richmond to 99.5 per cent in Bulleen. However, low access to bus services in metropolitan districts is associated (to some extent) with higher access to trams. As noted above, Richmond has the highest level of tram walkability. Access to buses across the 22 districts with light rail services is lower as tram services are the main alternative.

Second, two main trends are evident in the 66 districts without tram services. On the one hand, apart from Cranbourne at 81.2 per cent, all metropolitan districts have at least 88 per cent of residents within walking distance of a bus route. On the other hand, non-metropolitan districts vary considerably, with bus walkability ranging from 39 per cent in Gippsland South to 87 per cent in Bellarine. Preliminary analysis suggests that the strongest indicators of higher bus service levels are population density and proximity to either metropolitan Melbourne or Geelong.

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Victorian Government (2023) ‘Car Parks for Commuters program’, Victorian Government.

⁵⁵ Inside State Government (2026) ‘Are e-scooters and e-bikes the missing public transport link?’, *Inside State Government*, 10 June.

⁵⁶ Department of Transport and Planning (2026) *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Paul (2025) *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Department of Transport and Planning (2026) *op. cit.*

Third, a few caveats are necessary when discussing bus walkability. As groups such as the Public Transport Users Association note, these nominal high levels of walkability should be treated with caution.⁵⁹ Service frequency, reliability and connectivity vary considerably and can pose barriers to higher patronage.

For example, remote localities like Thologolong (in Benambra District) and Woods Point (in Eildon District) appear to be highly accessible. Yet the former is serviced by a once-a-day bus that runs between Albury and Corryong, and the latter by a weekly service to Mansfield. Rapidly growing suburbs like Beveridge, north of Melbourne, have three or four services per weekday to Craigieburn Station. The Auditor-General's 2026 report provides more detail on peri-urban areas in the outer western suburbs, using a slightly different approach. They found that these communities 'had lower access to bus services than the Melbourne average, when using the 400 and 800 metre standards. For each of these areas, there was no other high-quality PT service'.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Public Transport Users' Association (undated) '[The problem with Melbourne's transport](#)', PTUA.

⁶⁰ Victorian Auditor-General's Office (2026) op. cit. pp. 17-20.

5 | Summary

This short paper comments on a [dashboard](#) summarising the walkability of PT services across Victoria. As the introduction and section 2 outlined, rising fuel prices and living costs have brought renewed attention to Victoria's PT system. The Auditor-General's recent review of bus services has also highlighted PT walkability.

Victoria's PT system is administered as part of a broader transport system that is predominantly focused on facilitating private car and freight use. Plans dating back to the late 1960s emphasised freeway and road development to improve accessibility. Yet PT remains an important part of the state's transport network, encompassing rail, tram, and bus services. Although private car use remains the most popular mode of transport, evidence suggests that users could switch to PT if accessibility and reliability improved.

Legislative changes in the 1980s and 2010s aimed to consolidate transport planning across the state. The latter changes also made integrated transport planning a mandatory component of state policy, though critics question how fully it has been implemented in practice. More recently, the state formulated a Bus Plan to reinvigorate this aspect of its PT system.

A variety of government and non-government agencies and researchers have published research on the state's PT system. The maps and [dashboard](#) associated with this report are further contributions.

The analysis highlights some strengths and weaknesses of the PT system. Section 4 applies a basic walkability framework to the state, based on ABS MBs, to assess walkability to PT across modes. It suggests the following:

- Overall, the proportion of the state that nominally has no walkability to PT services is low. Yet this should be viewed with caution, as some services, such as coaches and regional (and some metropolitan) bus services, are irregular.
- Trains remain the most popular PT mode, although they are the least accessible in terms of walkability. Train use is often associated with 'mixed' journeys that combine private car use with other PT modes.
- The tram network has limited reach, serving only 22 of Victoria's 88 electoral districts. Nevertheless, it is heavily used.
- Buses are the most accessible mode of transport in terms of walkability and reach in both metropolitan and regional areas. However, their use lags behind that of other modes.

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