chapter 7

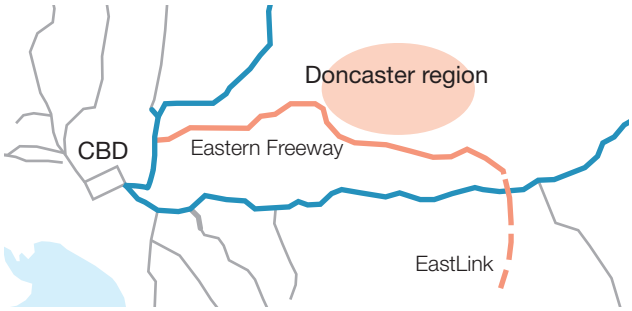
7. public transport and the doncaster corridor

A significant number of submissions to the EWLNA addressed transport issues in relation to the Doncaster region. The Study Team has explored these issues as part of its brief to examine opportunities for public transport in Melbourne's east-west corridor.

7.1 Background

The Doncaster/City of Manningham area is located around 12 km from the Melbourne CBD. It is a mainly residential area, with urban areas in the west and central part of the region and rural properties and hobby farms in the east. The region is home to 116,000 residents, forecast to grow to 132,000 by 2031 – an average annual population increase of 0.5 per cent.

Figure 82 – The Doncaster catchment



At present, around 8,500 of the region's residents commute to work in central Melbourne each day.[1] Figures from the 2006 Census show that well over half (60 per cent or 5,100 people) of all Manningham commuters to central Melbourne drive to work, while a smaller amount (37 per cent or 3,150 people) catch public transport.[2] Of those commuters using public transport, two thirds use buses along the Eastern Freeway and one third travel by either the Ringwood or Hurstbridge rail lines.

As shown in Table 20, levels of commuting by public transport in the Doncaster/Manningham area are significantly lower than in neighbouring municipalities: around 37 per cent, compared to 51 per cent in Banyule and 56 per cent in Whitehorse and Maroondah.

These figures suggest that the public transport options in the region do not meet the transport needs of many residents. They also suggest that the provision of better and more frequent public transport services to the region could significantly increase the use of public transport.

Commuters using improved public transport to the Manningham region would also include people outside this catchment, such as residents of Boroondara, Whitehorse and Banyule. To the extent such a service is used depends upon its accessibility (including the nature of stops/stations and parking and drop-off facilities).

Using the 2006 Census figures, an improvement to public transport services in Manningham could be expected to increase journey to work mode share in the morning peak period from 37 per cent to the 56 per cent currently experienced in Whitehorse and Maroondah.

This would be an increase of 1,600 people using public transport, out of the 8,500 Manningham residents who work in central Melbourne. This number is unlikely to grow significantly in the years ahead due to the demography of Melbourne. Indeed, the number of central Melbourne workers living in Manningham has actually decreased by 700 since the 2001 census.

1. EWLNA – using ABS 2006 Census data. This includes all potential commuters (including those who worked at home and did not go to work on Census day). This definition of central Melbourne includes the ABS Statistical Local Areas of Melbourne (c) – Inner, Melbourne (c) – Southbank and Docklands, and Melbourne (c) – Remainder. This broad definition has been used by the Study Team because it captures most employment destinations within the central city and enables the best comparison of public transport modes.
2. Ibid

Table 20 – Corridor Journey to Work mode share comparisons to the central city (including CBD, Docklands and Southbank), 2001 and 2006

	Manningham		Banyule		Maroondah		Whitehorse		Metro Melbourne average	
	2001	**2006**	2001	**2006**	2001	**2006**	2001	**2006**	2001	**2006**
Car	63.8%	**59.1%**	46.9%	**42.6%**	41.9%	**39.6%**	42.6%	**39.0%**	45.9%	**40.9%**
Public Transport	32.2%	**36.9%**	48.1%	**51.0%**	53.9%	**56.0%**	52.3%	**55.9%**	44.1%	**45.7%**
Walking & Cycling	0.3%	**0.6%**	1.1%	**2.2%**	0.3%	**0.8%**	0.5%	**1.1%**	5.3%	**9.2%**
Other JTW	3.8%	**3.4%**	3.0%	**4.1%**	4.0%	**3.6%**	4.6%	**4.0%**	4.7%	**4.3%**

Source: EWLNA – using ABS Census 2006 data

Doncaster – Fast Facts

Manningham resident population (2006 Census)	**116,000**
Current two-way daily bus patronage (Eastern Freeway buses)	**11,600**
Manningham residents working in central Melbourne	**8,500**
Freeway buses arriving in the city before 9am	**62**
AM peak patronage on freeway buses	**3,300**
Manningham residents catching public transport to work in CBD	**3,150**
Manningham residents catching bus to work in CBD	**2,110**
Manningham residents catching train to work in CBD	**1,040**

7.1.2 Existing public transport services

The Doncaster/Manningham region's public transport services are provided mainly by buses. The 2006 Census shows that 67 per cent of Manningham workers who travel to the central city by public transport use buses, compared to around 3 per cent using buses for commuting in the surrounding municipalities.[3]

At present, express bus services along the Eastern Freeway provide a reasonably high frequency connection from the Doncaster area to the inner north and the Melbourne CBD during peak periods. Routes 301-309, 313, 315, 316 and 319 provide around 62 services that arrive in the CBD between 7am and 9am on weekdays, carrying around 3,300 passengers. The services take between 25 and 50 minutes to travel from Doncaster to the CBD. Generally, these bus services are well-patronised and are increasing in popularity.

The 2006 Census Journey to Work figures show that (compared to 2001):

- Bus and rail patronage in the corridor has grown from 32.2 per cent to 36.9 per cent
- Commuting by motor vehicle has declined from 63.8 per cent to 59.1 percent
- The number of central city commuters from Manningham has decreased by about 700 (8 per cent) over the last five years (compared to a 9 per cent increase in overall numbers of people commuting to the central city from the rest of metropolitan Melbourne).[4]

The existing freeway bus services will not have been immune from the recent increase in public transport patronage in Melbourne. As the submission from Metlink to the EWLNA indicates, the mode share of public transport trips from the Doncaster region to the central city would now be higher than recorded in the 2006 Census.[5]

In the broader north east corridor, rail services are provided by the Hurstbridge and Ringwood lines. According to the 2006 Census, around 32 per cent of Manningham public transport users use these lines to access the central city. The most recent load surveys indicate that the Hurstbridge line is exceeding the load standards of an average of 800 passengers per train in the busiest peak hour, with several trains also exceeding this level on the Ringwood Line.

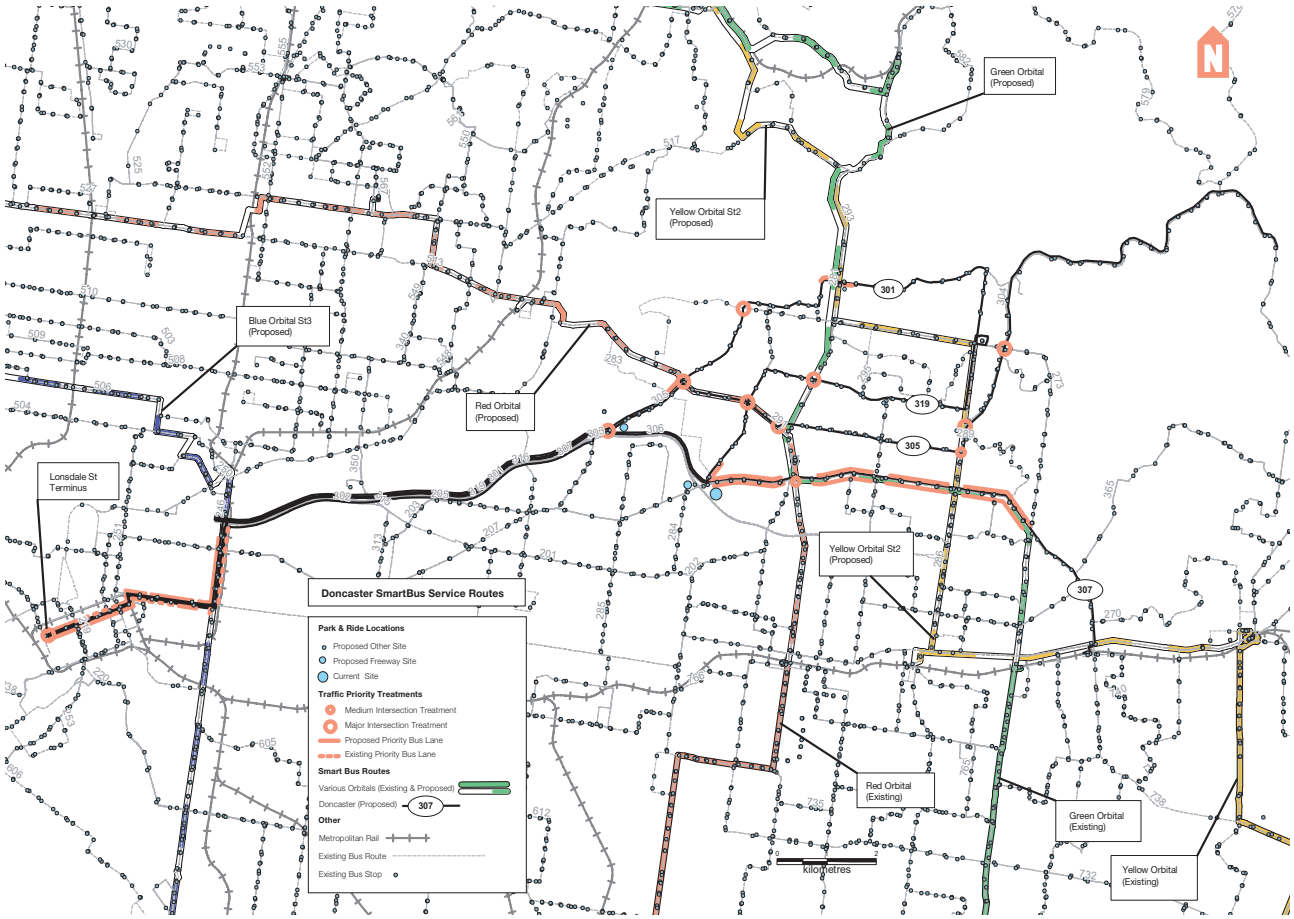
The Victorian Government has recognised the need for improvements to public transport services in the region and has provided $80 million to the Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) project with the aim of upgrading bus services in the Doncaster/Manningham corridor 'to a level of service comparable to rail'. Commencing in 2009-10 (subject to final budget allocations), the upgrade will include increased hours of operation, more frequent services, road bus priority measures, more Park & Ride facilities and improved accessibility for people with disabilities and restricted mobility. The Bus Association of Victoria has estimated that the DART upgrade will generate an extra 3,000 to 4,000 trips each day by 2016[6].

Manningham and adjacent areas will also benefit from two orbital SmartBus routes commencing in 2009. The Red Orbital will connect Box Hill, Doncaster, Heidelberg, Northland, Preston, Coburg, Essendon and East Keilor. The Green Orbital will connect Doncaster, Greensborough, Broadmeadows and Sydenham.

The evidence from other parts of Melbourne is that bus upgrades (especially SmartBus services) have boosted patronage considerably – to nearly 50 per cent along some routes.[7] This suggests that a strong increase in bus patronage is achievable from the DART upgrade and the new orbital routes, leading to an overall increase in public transport mode share in the region.

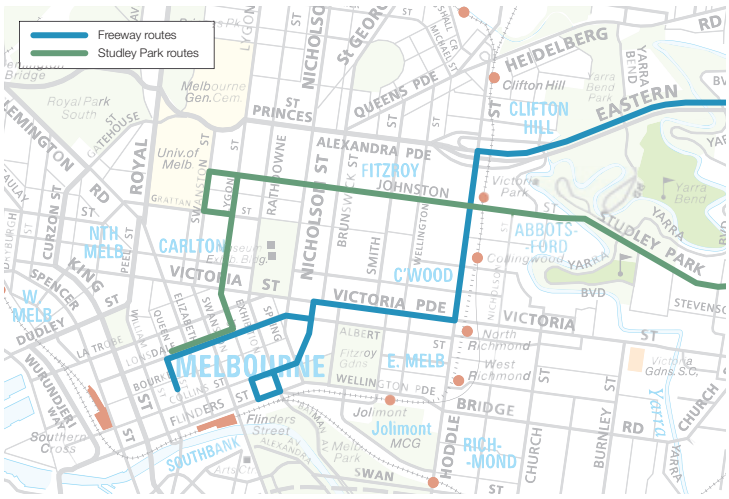
3. ABS 2001 and 2006 Census data
4. ABS 2006 Census data
5. Metlink submission to the EWLNA (2007), p.38
6. Ibid, p.17
7. Minister for Public Transport, 'SmartBus still the smart transport choice for eastern suburbs', Media Release, 20 December 2007, accessed at Victorian Government media site: www.dpc.vic.gov.au/pressrel

Figure 83 – Bus services in the Doncaster corridor – local links



Source: Public Transport Division (DOI)

Figure 84 – Bus services in the Doncaster corridor – links to the central city



Source: Public Transport Division (DOI)

7.1.3 Issues raised by submissions

Submissions to the EWLNA raised several issues about transport in the Doncaster corridor. The main assertions made by these submissions were:

- Public transport services and mode share in the region are poor compared to other corridors
- The recent growth in bus patronage and the success of Doncaster Park & Ride indicates support for public transport, but existing services have limitations in meeting the region's travel needs
- A heavy rail link would relieve traffic congestion at the western end of the Eastern Freeway

The Study Team has carefully examined these issues.

Low public transport mode share

As noted above, levels of commuting by public transport in the Doncaster/Manningham area are significantly lower than in neighbouring municipalities. The most common observation about this situation is that the lack of heavy and/or light rail services in the area has led directly to a relatively low public transport mode share and relatively high car ownership.

A comparison of existing service levels on the region's freeway bus services with neighbouring heavy rail lines shows that the frequency of some bus routes is relatively low and that there is a lack of late night, off-peak and weekend services.

This comparison suggests that the frequency and the availability of public transport services in the Doncaster corridor (when compared to adjoining heavy rail services) is significantly lower than in neighbouring areas – although the variety of local bus routes (see Figure 83) provides a local, close-to-home service that is potentially more convenient and flexible than a single local train station.

The Member for Doncaster, Mary Wooldridge, canvassed the views of her constituents in preparing a submission to the EWLNA and noted that:

> *"….there was much frustration with the current bus services offered to Doncaster residents, both during peak hour and also at weekends and outside of peak time. This is not confined to submissions to this study, it is a constant discussion point when transport is mentioned in Doncaster … It is clear from the many views of bus patrons that at the very least they want improvements to their current services as quickly as possible."*[8]

The Study Team agrees with the observation made in a number of submissions that public transport services in Doncaster are poor compared to other corridors.

Limitations of existing bus services

There are a number of limitations on the effective operation of existing bus services in the Doncaster corridor:

- As the demand for public transport continues to rise, peak period bus services must be added to keep pace. This increase in services is accompanied by issues of available parking spaces and adequate drop-off points.
- The frequency of services remains low, particularly in off-peak periods and at the weekend. Weekend services run hourly, compared to a 20 minute frequency in heavy rail services in adjoining municipalities. However, while bus frequencies might be lower than nearby rail services, the Doncaster region has the advantage of multiple bus routes servicing different streets, compared to a single corridor heavy rail service.
- Hours of service are also often cited as a shortcoming of the current bus services. Many of the weekday services do not continue beyond 9.00pm or 10.30pm, and some routes cease by 6.30pm. For many people who are unsure about when their working day or post-work activities may end, these finishing times are a disincentive to using public transport compared to the flexibility of a car. By contrast, rail services typically continue beyond midnight and later on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Service reliability is also an issue. Travel times for bus services can fluctuate significantly when buses compete with cars for road space. Recent improvements in road space prioritisation aim to improve this aspect of Doncaster corridor services, through the addition of dedicated bus lanes along Hoddle Street, Victoria Parade and along Lonsdale Street in the CBD. Doncaster buses also avoid car congestion by using the emergency lane on the Eastern Freeway.

  While these developments are positive, there remains considerable scope for improvement, particularly for journeys home from the city after work. Buses still get caught in congestion on Victoria Parade and the transit lane on Hoddle Street is still full of single occupant vehicles blocking the route of buses. This leads to widely fluctuating travel times that act as a disincentive for people to use the services.

8. Member for Doncaster submission to the EWLNA (2007), pp.7-8

Table 21 – Comparison of existing service levels – Eastern Freeway bus services and Hurstbridge and Ringwood rail lines

Services	Monday - Friday			Saturday		Sunday	
	Peak Freq (min)	Last Service	Typical Freq (min)	Last Service	Typical Freq (min)	Last Service	Typical Freq. (min)
301	5	6:26 pm	30	No Service			
302	13	11:12 pm	60	11:30 pm	60	7:39 pm	90
303	13	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
304	9	9:55 pm	30	9:30 pm	60	9:10 pm	60
305	9	10:25 pm	30	11:00 pm	60	6:05 pm	60
306	13	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
307	4	9:07 pm	30	9:08 pm	60	9:22 pm	60
308	4	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
309	13	6:08 pm	60	No Service			
313	13	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
315	13	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
316	13	Weekday Peak Only		No Service			
319	4	3:38 pm	60	No Service			
Hurstbridge Rail Line	6	12:05 am	20	1:10 am	20	1:10 am	20
Ringwood Rail Line	5-10	12:05am	15	1:10 am	20	1.10 am	20

Last Service = last service departing the CBD (Queen Street – Bus/ Flinders Street Train)
Typical Frequency = Typical daytime frequency (peak period frequencies are higher)

Source: EWLNA – using information provided by the Public Transport Division (DOI)

Growth in bus patronage and Park & Ride facilities

Patronage on Doncaster bus services has grown – to the extent that some services are now overcrowded.

The 2001 Census found that PT mode share for the journey to work from Manningham to central Melbourne was 32.2 per cent. In the 2006 Census, this had risen to 36.9 per cent – a significant increase in modal share. However, it is important to keep these numbers in perspective. The mode share increase over this five year period was offset by a reduction in the number of city workers living the area: overall, the actual increase was not great.

Nevertheless, in its submission to the EWLNA, Metlink reported that bus patronage in the Doncaster region has increased by a further 8 per cent in the 12 months since the 2006 Census.[9] Metlink's view was that this increase was being driven by better bus services and the introduction of Park & Ride sites.

In 2003, a Park & Ride facility (with parking for 400 cars) was opened at Doncaster Road along the Eastern Freeway. This facility has rapidly outgrown its designed capacity, with parking spilling over into neighbouring streets. At present, there are around 2,500 bus boardings each weekday at the facility, the vast majority of which are headed towards the city. This increase in demand has been met by increased peak period services – and these services continue to be very well patronised.

Clearly, as bus patronage grows, these peak period services and accompanying parking capacity issues must be addressed – and should be addressed – by DART.

9. Metlink submission to the EWLNA (2007), p.38

The NCCC strategy

As noted in Chapter 5, the draft Northern Central City Corridor Strategy was released in August 2003. While the NCCC covered a more limited study area than the EWLNA, it did discuss transport issues along the Doncaster/ Manningham corridor.

The strategy proposed consideration of a Doncaster Area Rapid Transit (DART) system as part of improvements to public transport in the inner northern suburbs. As proposed by the NCCC, DART would replace current bus services with dedicated bus, light rail, heavy rail or a 'hybrid' system. The NCCC noted that preliminary studies favour light rail or a hybrid system (mainly on cost grounds), but that detailed feasibility studies are needed to establish the best option.

Congestion on the Eastern Freeway

One observation when discussing the potential for enhanced public transport services to the Doncaster/Manningham region is that such services would relieve the daily congestion that occurs at the western end of the Eastern Freeway. This observation is based on the commonly held view that most of the traffic arriving at the end of the freeway during the morning peak period is coming from Doncaster.[10]

Each day, some 70,000 vehicles travel westbound along the Eastern Freeway from the east towards Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade. During each morning peak period (between 7am and 9am), 40 per cent exit at Hoddle Street and 60 per cent continue on to Alexandra Parade. This causes considerable congestion at the end of the Eastern Freeway and regularly results in traffic queuing back along the freeway as far as the Chandler Highway exit.

Analysis undertaken for the EWLNA shows that most of these vehicles have not travelled from the Doncaster/ Manningham region. The single biggest origin of traffic entering the freeway (33 per cent) is at Springvale Road, well to the east of the region (see Figure 85).

Another common belief is that a heavy rail service to the area will substantially reduce this congestion. However, analysis by the EWLNA shows that a large amount of Eastern Freeway traffic entering from the north and further east originates within 2 km of an existing train station (on the Hurstbridge and Ringwood lines). This is shown in orange in Figure 85.

In many instances, the drivers of these vehicles either reside near well-established heavy rail services or drive by existing rail services and stations each morning (although, as noted In Chapter 3, parking at train stations is at a premium). In other words, despite having access to a rail service to the central city, these commuters choose to travel by car. This may simply be a personal preference or it may be that many of these commuters require their cars during the day for work-related tasks or for multi-purpose trips (such as picking children up from school after work). This suggests that some of these vehicles will continue to drive along the Eastern Freeway irrespective of the provision of new or enhanced public transport services to the Doncaster/Manningham catchment. This is not peculiar to Doncaster – as noted in Chapter 2, many people are simply wedded to car travel.

These conclusions are reinforced by further EWLNA analysis of possible rail options for the corridor that show very clearly that an increase in rail patronage would occur largely at the expense of other public transport in the region (the adjacent rail lines and particularly existing bus services).[11]

Accordingly, while congestion at the western end of the Eastern Freeway is an important transport network issue (and an important issue for cross-city travel), it does not occur solely as a direct result of the level or type of public transport services provided to the Doncaster/Manningham region.

Analysis undertaken by the Study Team indicates that a multi-modal approach is needed to relieve congestion at the end of the Eastern Freeway: improved public transport capacity and access into the city, and improved road connections for through traffic to bypass the city and travel beyond the CBD.

However, it is vital that Doncaster corridor public transport services heading to central Melbourne are able to bypass, or have priority over, private motor vehicles to avoid being caught up in this congestion and further discouraging public transport use.

As the City of Yarra noted in its submission:

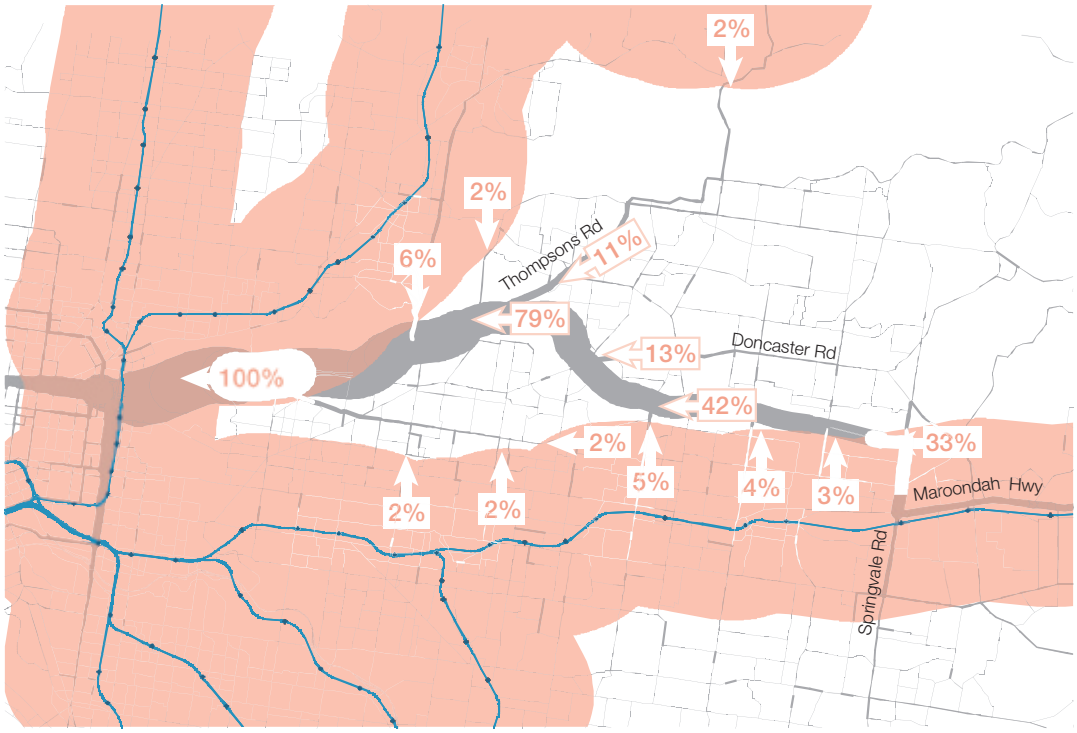
> *"Public transport is clearly a preferred method for catering for commuters due to the efficiency of movement in transit way space."*[12]

10. See Chapter 5 for further discussion about congestion at the western end of the Eastern Freeway.

11. See Chapter 7.2

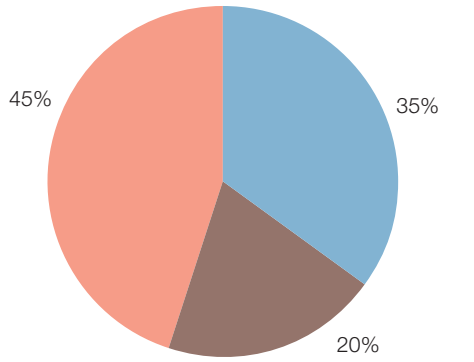
12. City of Yarra submission to the EWLNA (2007), p.11

Figure 85 – Percentage distribution of origins for all traffic exiting the Eastern Freeway at Hoddle Street and Alexandra Parade, AM peak



Source: EWLNA (Veitch Lister)

Figure 86 – Origins of traffic at the end of the Eastern Freeway, AM peak – proximity to rail options



- Within 2km of an existing rail station
- Within 2km of a proposed new rail station
- Not within 2km of an existing or new rail station

Source: EWLNA (Veitch Lister)

7.2 Exploring the options

The Study Team has reviewed a range of public transport options in the Doncaster corridor, including:

- Heavy rail
- Light rail
- DART (with further service enhancements).

These options are set out in more detail in Appendix C.

Table 22 summarises the options reviewed by the Study Team. These options assume a frequent, reliable service to the heart of the Manningham/Doncaster region, accompanied by the most flexible options for access to the central city and Parkville (Melbourne University).

The Study Team's view is that the quickest and most cost-effective way of achieving a substantial boost in public transport along the Doncaster corridor is through the planned DART upgrade, with some additional service enhancements. These enhancements would leverage off the DART upgrade by delivering:

- Much higher bus priority through new bus-only lanes and ramps, and greater enforcement of bus-only lanes (including continuous bus-only lanes from the end of the Eastern Freeway into the CBD)
- A major new interchange at Victoria Park Station, giving passengers a choice to travel directly to the central city or to Carlton/Melbourne University and Parkville, as well as further west or south-east via a new Parkville underground rail station.
- Tram-like service levels and hours of operation (7 day operation to midnight, 5 minute or better peak and daytime service)
- New hybrid buses
- Expanded Park & Ride facilities

With the right measures in place, these enhancements could cut the travel time between Doncaster Hill and Melbourne Central from around 38 minutes to 25 minutes – approaching the travel time that could be achieved by a dedicated rail line. These enhancements have the potential to provide the residents of the Doncaster/Manningham region with a state-of-the-art public transport service to the central city.

Projected patronage

A fixed rail link via the Eastern Freeway would have little local catchment along the freeway due to its inaccessibility. Few houses are within walking distance of any stops along the freeway, requiring nearly all access to be by car or bus. Major car parks would need to be constructed adjacent to the freeway.

Analysis by the EWLNA shows the total potential patronage in 2021 of approximately 25,500 (all day, two way). This should be considered in context with current (2007) patronage on the Hurstbridge line (around 38,000) and the Frankston line (around 51,500). In addition, these figures include boardings from outside the Doncaster/Manningham region and assume stops along the Eastern Freeway (irrespective of the difficulties in accessing these stops or the challenges in providing adequate Park & Ride facilities to service these stops).

The analysis also shows much of the rail patronage would relocate from the existing freeway bus service and the Ringwood and Hurstbridge heavy rail lines, with a smaller number of people shifting from private cars (see Figure 87).

In summary, the EWLNA analysis indicates that implementing an $80 million DART initiative in 2009 will provide a substantial boost to patronage in Doncaster as it addresses many of the shortcomings identified in existing public transport services.

The Study Team modelled the different options to compare patronage levels in 2021.

The rollout of DART should see bus patronage increase to over 15,000 trips per day in 2021, with a further boost to 20,000 trips per day through the implementation of further priority measures identified by the Study Team (see Figure 87).

These measures have the ability to provide commuters with the same frequency and hours of operation as heavy or light rail – and to deliver those services quickly. The flexibility of a bus service also allows a rapid response to any unexpected increase in patronage or any change in catchment characteristics.

The Study Team acknowledges that the expectations of some residents of the Doncaster area have been raised in relation to a rail link. This is unfortunate as the substantially improved services offered by an enhanced DART service can provide a bus service that is as fast, comfortable and reliable as a fixed rail service. As a number of submissions to the EWLNA pointed out, bus has proved to be a successful rapid mass transit system in many cities around the world and there is no reason why buses cannot perform the same role along the Eastern Freeway for the Doncaster area.

The EWLNA analysis shows that a heavy or light rail service to Doncaster would attract a relatively small number of extra people to the public transport system, with most people using the services simply switching from services such as DART or the Hurstbridge and Ringwood rail lines.

Compared with the patronage of 20,000 forecast from the enhanced DART service, the analysis shows that of the 24,500 daily trips made if a heavy rail solution was implemented, only 2,500 of these trips would be new public transport users (see Figure 87).

In the case of light rail, an additional 6,000 trips would be new public transport users.

While this modal shift is desirable and important, when the relatively small number of additional people switching from private vehicles is taken into account – and when compared to other public transport priorities competing for government funds – such heavy or light rail investments would not represent value-for-money for Melburnians.

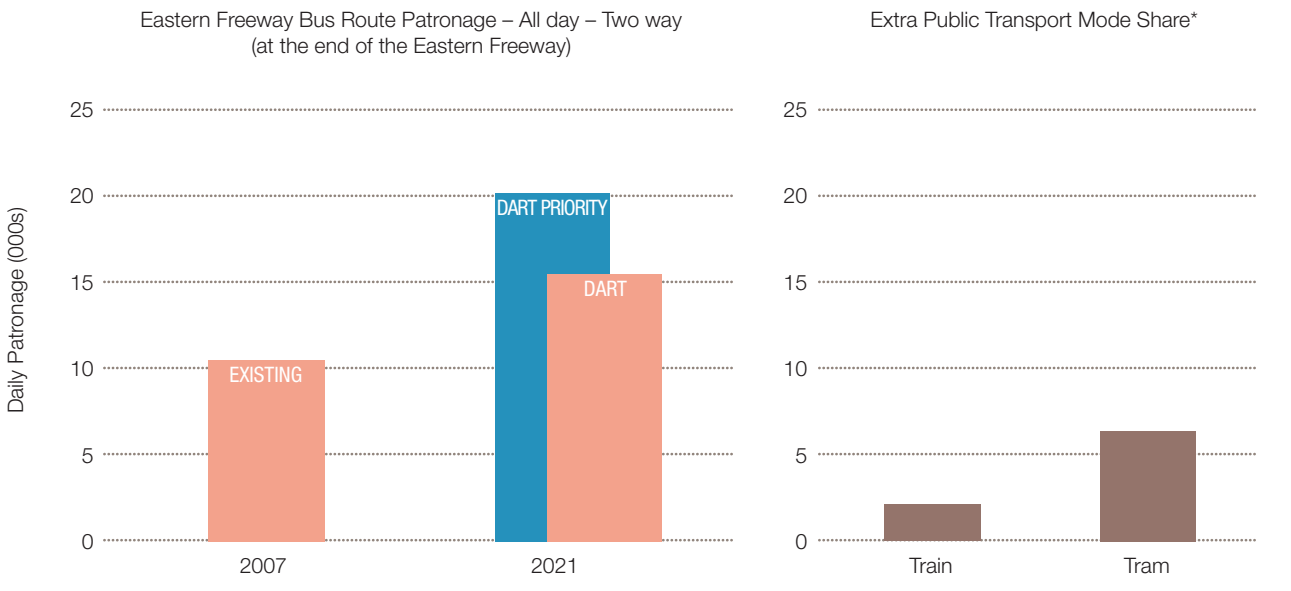
By way of comparison, the recommended $8.5 billion 'new generation' rail tunnel recommended by the EWLNA will provide capacity to meet demand for an additional 40,000 in the morning peak hour on Melbourne's busiest rail groups – the Northern and Caulfield Groups.

The challenge and the opportunity in Doncaster is to implement a world class rapid bus service that dispels once and for all the notion that buses are not as 'good' as trams or trains. In fact, with local street access and with main road priority, Doncaster should look forward to one of the best public transport services in the city.

Table 22 – Summary of Doncaster options

	Existing	Heavy Rail	Light Rail	Enhanced DART service
Capital cost	n/a	$1.7 b - $2 b	$600 m - $710 m	$230 m - $280 m
Journey time	34 to 47 minutes	25 to 30 minutes	35 to 40 minutes	25 to 35 minutes
Environmental impact	Low	Low to moderate	Low	Very low
Total PT trips per day by 2021	10,500	24,500	25,500	20,000

Figure 87 – Extra patronage under different transport modes



Source: EWLNA (Veitch Lister)

* The net increase in public transport use after allowing for people already using public transport switching to the new service.

What DART should deliver for Doncaster

Based on preliminary discussions with the Public Transport Division of the Department of Infrastructure, and the EWLNA's own modelling of required bus services, the Study Team believes that the DART upgrade should include a minimum 50 per cent boost to peak hour services to relieve current overcrowding and to provide for future growth.

Even more substantial increases should be provided in off-peak and weekend services, including a 100 per cent increase in weekend services running from 6am to midnight.

To achieve the desired increase in patronage, DART must provide commuters with a frequency of service and hours of operation similar to existing tram and heavy rail services in neighbouring municipalities.

The Study Team believes that service improvements under the initial DART roll-out should include:

- Minimum 50 per cent increase in peak hour bus services into the CBD
- Minimum 100 per cent increase in weekend services into the CBD
- Peak hour frequencies of around 5 minutes
- Weekend services from 6am to midnight
- Upgrading of a number of routes to SmartBus standard

The roll-out must deliver a major improvement to public transport services along the Doncaster corridor. It must also provide passengers with a bus system that has the quality and popular features of rail services combined with the flexibility and cost advantages of buses. It must aim to be a rapid transit, high capacity transport system with major elements that include:

- Dedicated, bus-only priority lanes or rights of way along routes
- Special stations
- High frequency services
- The use of intelligent transport systems to keep passengers informed about travel times and wait times.

The benefits delivered by similar bus rapid transit systems in cities around the world are well documented and include:

- Performance improvements – such as travel time savings, greater reliability, improved safety and greater capacity
- Higher levels of bus (public transport) patronage
- Relatively low capital costs per mile of investment
- Environmental benefits – where hybrid/low carbon buses are used, DART also has the potential to make a contribution to reducing GHG emissions.

Study Team Findings

Currently, the Doncaster corridor is not as well-served by public transport as adjoining municipalities. Existing bus services connecting the area to central Melbourne offer levels of service that do not fully meet residents needs, resulting in relatively low levels of patronage for public transport.

The quickest and most cost-effective way of achieving a substantial boost in public transport along the Doncaster corridor is through the planned DART upgrade, accompanied by further service enhancements.This has the potential to provide residents of the Manningham/ Doncaster region with a state-of-the-art public transport service to the central city that is as fast, comfortable and reliable as a fixed rail service – at around one tenth of the cost.

Building a heavy rail link to Doncaster would not significantly relieve congestion at the city end of the Eastern Freeway.

The Study Team's view is that the evidence does not support investment of between $600 million and $2 billion in a heavy or light rail link to the Doncaster area being given priority. When the relatively small number of additional people switching from private vehicles is taken into account – and when compared with other public transport priorities – these investments do not represent value-for-money for Melbourne.

Implementing DART and the EWLNA recommended enhancements has the potential to give Doncaster a world class rapid bus transit service that is one of the best public transport services in the city.