

Shaping a city

A whole of Government approach
to the City of Melton's
population boom



2020—2021 Federal Government
Budget Submission

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Melton is one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities; growth that represents not only exciting opportunities, but also significant, immediate and emerging challenges.

Melton City Council is calling on all levels of government to partner to deliver essential infrastructure and services as we shape an emerging city to increase liveability.

KEY PRIORITIES

This document outlines Melton City Council's Federal budget submission for the municipality, with a view to having these priorities included in the Federal Government's 2020/2021 Budget:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|---------|
| HEALTH PRECINCT | Contribute funding to build the new Melton Hospital or fund a specialist centre within the hospital | Page 10 |
| PUBLIC TRANSPORT: RAIL | Co-fund the Western Rail Plan with the Victorian State Government to deliver an efficient and frequent train system with new stations for residents to access employment, education and health services | Page 11 |
| FREIGHT | Commit to co-fund the Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT) as part of the Commonwealth Inland Rail Project to increase productivity and reduce congestion | Page 12 |
| WESTERN HIGHWAY | Use the committed \$50 million congestion fund toward the development of a business case and upgrade the critical arterial road link | Page 13 |
| A TERTIARY EXPERIENCE | Deliver TAFE and tertiary education in the City of Melton | Page 14 |
| EARLY YEARS EDUCATION | Ongoing universal access funding for four-year-old kinder | Page 15 |
| SPORTS & RECREATION | Build critical sport and recreational infrastructure including the Macpherson Regional Park (Stage 2) redevelopment. Council seeks access to additional funding opportunities for sporting and recreational infrastructure | Page 16 |

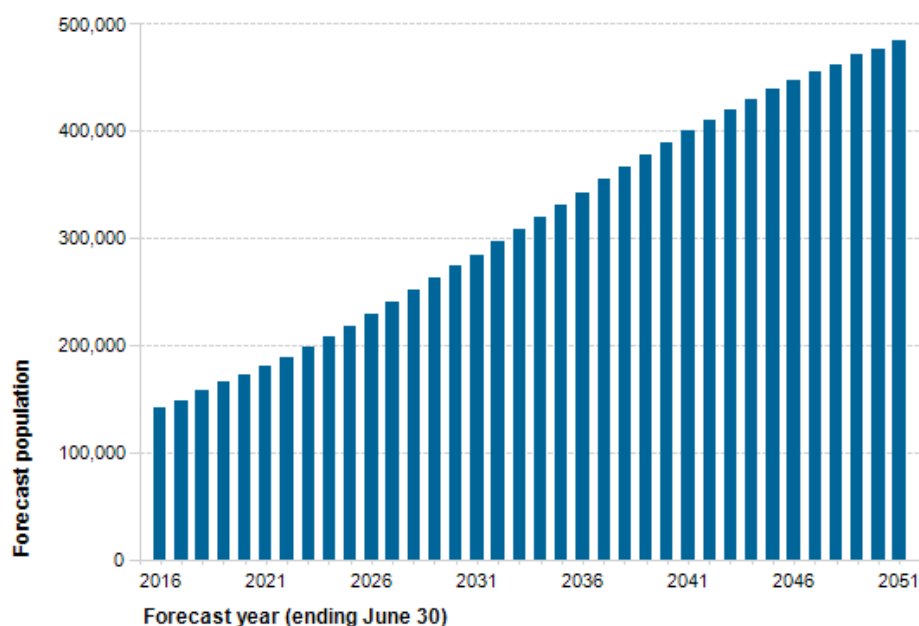
ABOUT THE CITY

By 2036, the City of Melton will be the fastest growing municipality in metropolitan Melbourne, set to grow significantly at a rate of 4.3 percent. By 2051, the projected population will triple from 164,984 to 485,061.

Located 19 kilometres northwest of Melbourne's Central Business District (CBD), the municipality covers an area of 527.3 square kilometres.

Forecast population

City of Melton



Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2051, prepared by .id, May 2019.

.id the population experts

Source: Victoria in Future 2019,

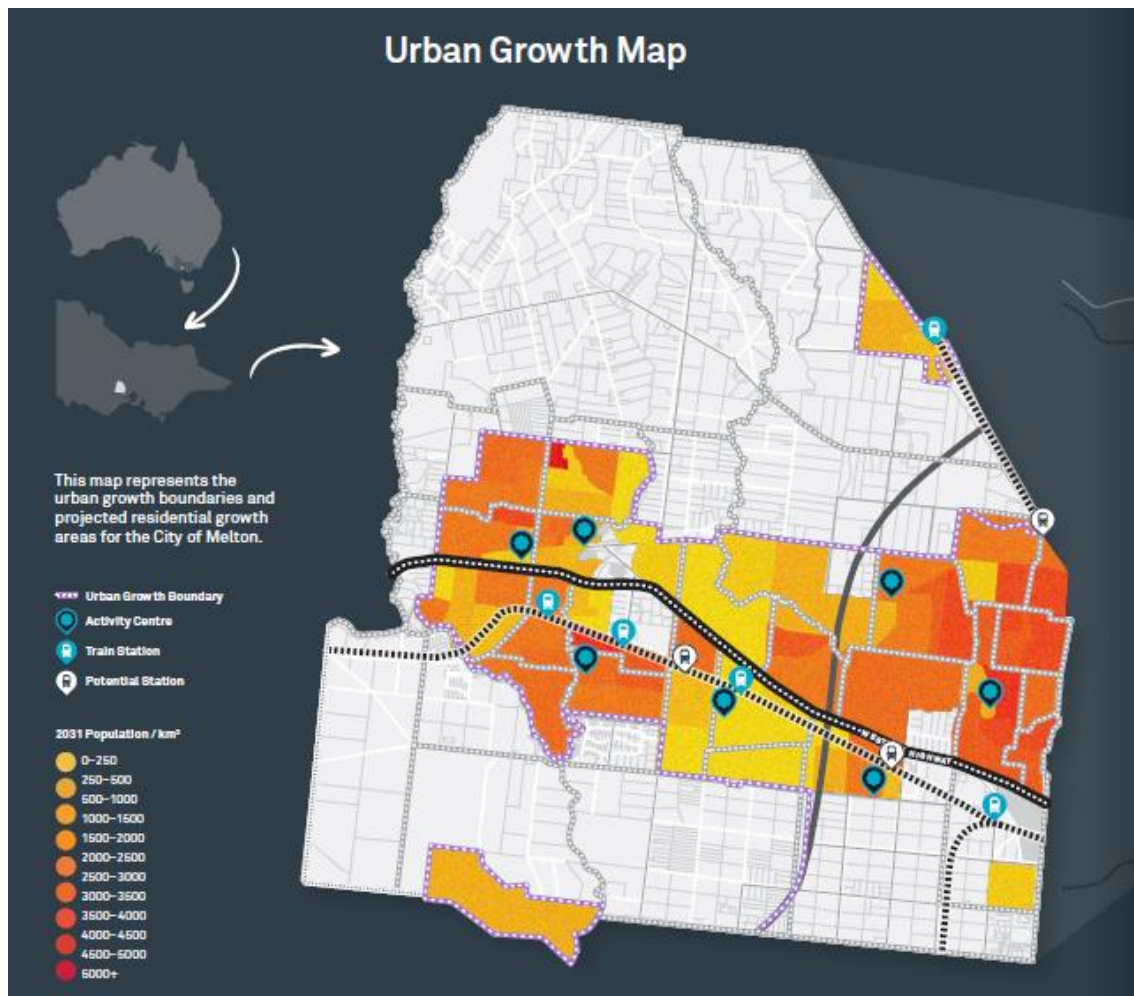
The population of the City of Melton will triple in the next thirty years.

Forty-three percent of our residents are couples with children, 52 babies are born and 52 families move to Melton each week. Our diverse, vibrant community includes more than 40,000 residents that are born overseas, representing more than 130 different nations. Housing affordability has attracted many people to the municipality with house and land packages selling across a number of sites within the City for around \$400,000; approximately \$515,000 less when compared to the Melbourne average house price of \$915,000 (Domain. March 2018).

OUR LOCATION: CONNECTIVITY

The City of Melton is connected to Melbourne's major freeways, airports, industrial hubs and the Port of Melbourne. City of Melton has an area of 527.3 km² compared to the City of Melbourne, which has an area of 36.2km². The Western Highway is a critical national freight route that runs through the municipality.

ABOUT THE CITY continued...



GROWTH CORRIDOR

In 2017, 11 new suburbs were established across the growth corridor between Melton township and Caroline Springs in areas including Plumpton, Rockbank and Truganina.

Further underpinning the residential and commercial growth being experienced within the City of Melton is a suite of Precinct Structure Plans that are currently being developed with, and have been approved by, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA). These include:

- Diggers Rest PSP
- Melton North PSP
- Rockbank and Rockbank North PSPs
- Taylors Hill West PSP
- Toolern and Toolern Park PSPs
- Plumpton PSP, and
- Kororoit PSP.

The PSPs are concentrated in Diggers Rest, Aintree, Cobblebank, Deanside, Strathtulloh, Rockbank, Truganina, Weir Views and Thornhill Park areas.

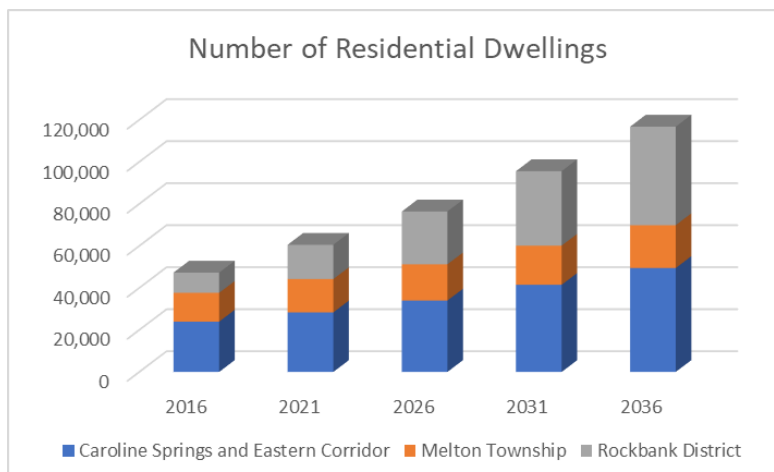
ABOUT THE CITY continued...



In addition, Plan Melbourne has identified the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre as a higher order employment precinct that will serve the region as the main hub for shopping, services, food and entertainment, similar to Sunshine and Broadmeadows town centres.

Centred around the new suburb of Cobblebank, the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre, is of strategic importance to the City of Melton. A new train was officially opened in Cobblebank in December 2019. The precinct is also the proposed location for a new hospital, justice precinct, tertiary education institution, and a mix of residential and commercial areas.

There are an additional five PSPs yet to be developed within Melton's Urban Growth Boundary and these will provide significant residential and employment opportunities. Managing rapid growth is an on-going challenge for all levels of government and policy makers. Facilitating the development and construction of key infrastructure projects is necessary to ensure that access to roads, healthcare, schools, and public transport is planned and funded in-line with growth projections. Although the City of Melton will grow rapidly, since this growth is still in its infancy, there is a wonderful opportunity for government to facilitate a state of the art approach to the development of a growth region by investment early rather than playing catch up later.



ABOUT THE CITY continued...

EMPLOYMENT

The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Australia, however, jobs growth is not keeping up at the same rate. More than 80 per cent of working residents currently travel outside the municipality for work, each day.

State-Wide Victorian Integrated Transport Modelling (S-VITM) indicates that the City of Melton currently has the lowest rate of employment per household in the Melbourne metropolitan area, at 0.61 jobs. This is less than half the Melbourne average of 1.33 jobs per household.

As population growth in the municipality outstrips the growth in employment opportunities, jobs per household are expected to be further reduced to 0.59 by 2031, whilst metropolitan Melbourne will increase to 1.39 jobs per household over the same period. As a result, residents of the City of Melton will continue to travel considerable distances to access employment compared to other municipalities.

Local job creation is paramount in ensuring the future prosperity, economic and environmental sustainability of our municipality. Government funding of critical roads, transport, education and services will increase the attractiveness of the municipality for commercial investment creating local jobs for local people.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The City of Melton ranks lower than inner-city areas across a range of health and wellbeing indicators, and is home to certain suburbs with higher than average levels of disadvantage, according to the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas chart.

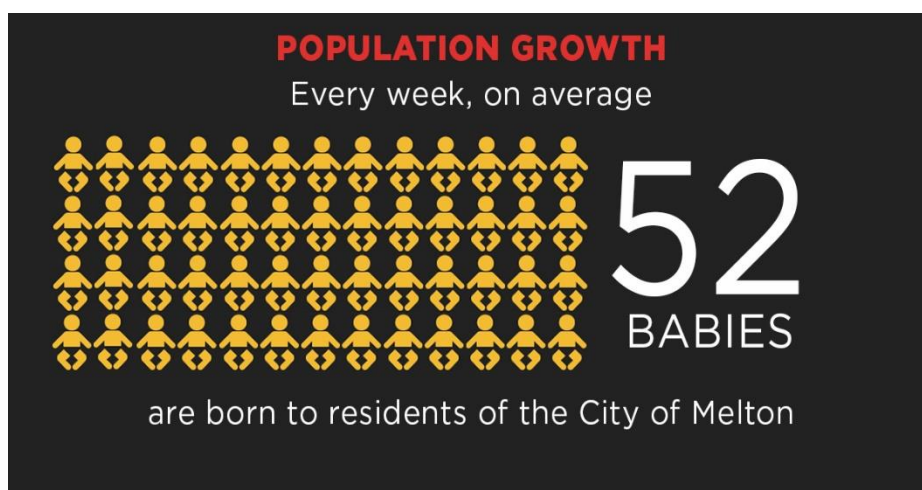
City of Melton residents are more likely to be obese with 74.3% of the population either overweight or obese, the highest in Victoria. (Source: Grant McArthur, 'City-country divide in Victoria's obesity crisis' Herald Sun, 10 October 2019). Our residents are also physically inactive, with a low fruit and vegetable intake and almost half (46.5 per cent) experiencing at least one chronic disease, such as diabetes or heart disease. With a lack of public transport and poor road networks, residents experience higher levels of stress and social isolation compared with the Victorian and north western Melbourne averages.



More than 7,000 people move to the municipality every year, increasing pressure on community support and health services.

ABOUT THE CITY continued...

There are considerable gaps in the regional provision of social services, including the accommodation for support services, pedagogical assessments, mental health services, prevention programs for chronic physical health and maternal and child health nurses, exacerbated by a high demand for treatment for methamphetamines and amphetamines. There is a shortage of regional detox beds and long wait times for access to mental health services. There are considerable skills gaps in this sector that can see local residents trained with the establishment of a tertiary and TAFE facility.



Many health and human services programs catering to outer-Western Melbourne, including the City of Melton, are actually delivered from Brimbank, a neighbouring municipality.

The City of Melton, however, is four times the size of Brimbank and by 2041 will be home to 70 per cent more people. Our residents continue to experience difficulty accessing vital services, including psychiatric, family violence and full-service emergency treatment, with many Melton residents forced to travel outside the municipality without reliable connections via public transport.

With the diversity in the community, there is also a strong need for cultural safety in the provision of services for community wellbeing across indigenous and migrant groups.

In the City of Melton, although housing is affordable in comparison to other Melbourne LGA's, affordable housing for the most vulnerable, continues to be a significant social issue. In 2016, there was a shortfall of 1,747 in the availability of affordable and social housing. This pressure contributes to homelessness with a cost estimated at \$8.53 million annually in terms of crime, health and human capital in City of Melton alone.

While the growth areas in the fast growing outer suburbs provide more affordable housing, this does not always equate to liveability. New suburbs are lacking in connected efficient public transport, health and human services, community recreational facilities and education.

We acknowledge and appreciate the significant transformational projects being delivered by the State and Federal Governments in our City that will positively impact our community including the new Melton Hospital, the Ballarat Rail Line upgrade, Western Rail Plan, new bus routes and schools. However, as a City set to have a population the same size as Canberra, there is still much more to do. The need for further investment and partnerships between all levels of government will be a critical success factor in building great communities. Melton City Council has identified a set of advocacy priorities that is requested for inclusion in the 2020-2021 Federal Budget.

Key priority

BUILDING BETTER REGIONS FUND

Melton City Council recognises the value and importance of the Building Better Regions Fund for creating jobs and driving economic growth to regional communities and is calling on the Federal Government for its expansion to facilitate greater impact and penetration within the interface areas facing rapid growth.

The National Growth Areas Alliance's 2018 State of Australia's Fast Growing Suburbs report states that growth areas' populations and economies are becoming more diverse. Critically, the role of growth areas in relation to national productivity is crucial to connect the growing skilled labour market to industry and increasingly developing an entrepreneurial economy.

Fast growing outer municipalities, like the City of Melton, are absorbing considerable population growth as a result of migration and accessibility to affordable housing. High growth outer interface council areas incorporate large rural areas and require investment into roads infrastructure and local jobs to achieve equality in social and economic benefits to those of inner city regions. Interface growth council areas have residents with limited access to efficient public transport, increased congestion, limited local job opportunities and little or no tertiary education, leading to isolation and high levels of youth unemployment. The continued population growth and housing development is placing considerable pressure on local government to keep up with infrastructure and community services requirements. Melton City Council is seeking a commitment to extend the Building Better Regions Fund to interface growth councils to create local jobs and support economic growth.



Key priority

BUILD MELTON HOSPITAL

The Victorian State Government is in the process of planning a new public hospital in the City of Melton, having provided \$2.4m towards a business case. Additionally, it has announced that Western Health will operate the hospital. The hospital will deliver services to the Melton region and also regional centres including Sunbury, Bacchus Marsh, Macedon, Woodend, Blackwood and Gordon. Cobblebank, within the Toolern Metropolitan Activity Centre, is the preferred location for the hospital. It is envisioned that specialist health and justice services, tertiary education facilities, accommodation, and a key employment precinct will be co-located at Cobblebank. The Federal and State Governments jointly opened a new train station in December 2019 in Cobblebank providing access to an emerging employment precinct and the delivery of skills and training to local residents as well as neighbouring suburbs and regions.

Building a public hospital in Melton will improve health outcomes and quality of life for one of Australia's fastest growing municipalities and reduce pressure on hospitals in Sunshine, Footscray, Werribee and Bacchus Marsh. A Melton Hospital will be a trigger for local jobs and investment and be a catalyst for a major health precinct, with both public and private hospital services. The ability to attract private health services in addition to public will provide a major employment hub for the outer west and into the Ballarat region.

Melton City Council is calling on the Federal Government to contribute to funding the construction of the hospital or allocate funding for the provision of specialist services that may include an emergency department to relieve pressure from Sunshine and Footscray Emergency Services, a specialist Mental Health facility with innovative program services for young adults and adolescents that is only currently available in Parkville or any other service provision and specialist research centre that is identified as a gap through the business planning process.



Key priority PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Rail

WESTERN RAIL PLAN

Currently in planning stage, the Western Rail Plan is a significant State Government initiative that will provide a sleek and efficient public transport network to service Melbourne's fast growing west.

Melton City Council seeks a commitment from the Federal Government to co-fund the Western Rail Plan with the Victorian State Government to:

- Deliver the electrification to Melton and the separation of the Ballarat rail line by 2025-2026
- Acquire land and build two new stations at Hopkins Road and Paynes Road
- Upgrade Melton Station to improve all-abilities access, safety and urban amenity, including the construction of car spaces in addition to the 100 committed in the 2019/2020 Victorian State Budget.



Key priority FREIGHT

Fund freight infrastructure to increase productivity

The Western Interstate Freight Terminal (WIFT) is a transformational, regionally significant project. Melton City Council seeks a commitment from the State and Federal Governments to:

- acquire land in Truganina to construct the WIFT
- develop a masterplan to transform our region by reducing freight traffic on inner city roads
- create employment and investment opportunities within the City of Melton, as well as neighbouring Wyndham and Brimbank council areas, in Melbourne's significant Western Industrial Precinct.

Establishing this interstate rail freight terminal and warehousing precinct will have an extremely positive effect on local job creation and an increase in commercial productivity.

Part of the Commonwealth Inland Rail Project, the Victorian Western Growth Corridor Plan and Victorian Freight Plan—Delivering the Goods, the WIFT will dramatically improve efficiencies in local, national and international freight movement by bringing local warehouse precincts closer to freight terminals, and limiting the number of trucks and trains required to transport interstate freight into the Dynon Precinct in Port Melbourne.

Infrastructure Australia states that freight will grow by 26 per cent from 2016 to 2026 and that land for consignment processing, for warehousing, for intermodal terminals and for container parks needs to be located near, or have high-quality transport links to ports, airports and local manufacturers. Freight transport in our fast-growing cities is impacted by congestion leading to increased costs. If this is not addressed, delays in our urban supply chains will become more common and costs will increase as our cities grow. (Source: Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019, Infrastructure Australia, Publication Date 13 August 2019)

The WIFT is a critical infrastructure project that will be located centrally to the ports, airports, logistics warehousing and inland rail. The investment into the WIFT will also create investment opportunities in warehousing and logistics, industries perfectly suited to the vast land availability and connectivity of the City of Melton.

Key priority

WESTERN HIGHWAY

An upgrade to the critical arterial road link that functions as an important economic driver.

Melton City Council is seeking a commitment from both Federal and State Governments to fund the upgrade of the Western Highway within the City of Melton to an urban freeway standard. The upgrade of the Western Highway is a key safety and productivity priority for our municipality. A \$50 million congestion fund commitment was made by the Federal Government in 2019 and council is asking for its use toward the development of a business case.

The Western Highway is the major road between Melbourne and Adelaide, providing for major freight transport both interstate and regionally. It is the second largest freight carrier of any national highway, and is the major transport corridor between Caroline Springs and Melton township. The highway corridor within the City of Melton is characterised by aged and rural-standard freeway infrastructure, including direct property accesses and at-grade interchanges. Additional lanes and upgraded interchanges are needed to support the booming growth in population and maintain efficient freight movements in and out of Melbourne. If nothing is done, traffic modelling indicates that the Western Highway will be gridlocked by 2021.

The Western Highway currently accommodates approximately 60,000 vehicles per day, however this is projected to increase to 85,000 vehicles per day by 2021 and 113,000 vehicles per day by 2031. Approximately 10 per cent of vehicles on the Western Highway are trucks that service the Central Highlands and Wimmera South Mallee regions, as well as the Adelaide freight route. Melton City Council considers the lack of interchanges and overpasses in this section of the Western Freeway present a significant safety risk to all road users.

This section of the highway requires removal of at-grade access to the highway and:

- an interchange at Bulmans Road
- an interchange at Harkness Road
- a pedestrian overpass bridge at Arnolds Creek
- an interchange at Mt Cottrell Road and
- an overpass at Paynes Road.



Key priority

EDUCATION: TERTIARY AND TAFE

Educating tomorrow's workforce: A tertiary and TAFE learning environment locally.

Young people living within the municipality have no local access to tertiary and vocational education. Both the Federal and State Governments have identified vocational education and training as key drivers for boosting the economy and employment. Yet these programs are not available within the City of Melton, and young people experience significant barriers to accessing opportunities in other areas.

Melton City Council calls on the State and Federal Governments to deliver TAFE and tertiary education within the City of Melton, by funding:

- A business case that incorporates a needs analysis and scopes the facilities required to provide contemporary, inclusive and accessible tertiary and TAFE education in the City of Melton
- The delivery of tertiary education within the municipality that may include a multi-varsity Global Learning Hub model.
- TAFE programs including pre-apprenticeship, early childhood, aged care and education support to fill existing skills gap
- New programs and services that provide young people at risk of disengagement.

A MODEL FOR DELIVERY

There is a strong correlation between career success and education and training. The majority of the jobs growth projected for our municipality will require post-secondary qualifications including VET, university or TAFE. In the next 10 years, the number of 15-19 year olds living within the City of Melton will increase from 10,685 to 19,152 in 2029. That's an increase of 79 per cent. By 2051, this will increase further to 34,881. Since the closure of the Victoria University's (VU) Melton campus in 2010, there has not been any tertiary presence within the City, forcing residents to travel for both TAFE and university.

Melton City Council is seeking a business case that outlines the skills required in the future for the municipality and surrounding region. This may include a Global Learning Hub model for on-demand higher education delivery and clear learning and skill development pathways.

Tertiary education has experienced a level of shift to online learning and micro-credentialing, therefore the business case may consider an overview of online versus classroom, self-directed, experiential learning, and demonstrate the cost benefit analysis for each.

In addition, it should provide a campus life experience and consider Recognition of Prior Learning as an equitable path to gaining qualifications. In particular the process for equalisation of international qualifications for our skilled migrants would be beneficial.

SHAPING EMPLOYMENT

The Australian Jobs publication demonstrates that employment is linked to post-secondary education and that most of the future projected jobs growth is in occupation groups (including managers, professionals, technicians and trades workers, and community and personal service workers) that require higher skills. The biggest barrier to further education is access, and the absence of a local delivery of TAFE and tertiary education greatly impacts students that are prone to disengagement.

Key priority EARLY YEARS LEARNING

Australia's federal, state and territory governments have been jointly funding kinder for all four-year-olds since 2013. The Federal Government contributes around one-third of total funding. As a result of this national agreement, enrolments have improved and almost all 4-year-old children are now enrolled in 15 or more hours of kindergarten per week.

Federal funding to date has made early childhood learning more accessible. However, there is no ongoing certainty of this funding support beyond December 2020. If this funding ceases, families may pay an extra \$2,000 per child per year. This could mean some children will miss out on valuable early childhood education.

Melton City Council supports the Municipal Association of Victoria "I Love Kinder" campaign and is requesting the Federal Government continue funding five of the fifteen hours per week of kindergarten for four year-olds. We are seeking a long term commitment to the continuation of this funding to guarantee certainty for parents. The Victorian Government has committed to funding the remaining 10 hours long term.



Key priority SPORT AND RECREATION

Melton City Council is seeking a commitment from the Federal Government to provide additional funding opportunities for recreation and leisure facilities including leisure aquatic facilities, indoor sport stadiums, and multi-use community facilities including spaces for young people. Funding currently available is limited and not adequate to support the infrastructure required to service increased participation rates.

Immediate funding is also required for delivery of key community sporting and recreation facilities including:

- New and upgrade project (Stage 2) for the Macpherson Park Regional Sports Precinct including the replacement of two multi-purpose community sport pavilions servicing soccer, rugby league, rugby union and gridiron along with construction of two additional sports fields to meet existing demand. Existing pavilions are at end of life, dilapidated and do not meet compliance guidelines.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Around 74.3 per cent of City of Melton residents are considered overweight or obese - the highest rate in Victoria, and as a community we experience high levels of childhood obesity. Insufficient exercise is one risk factor that relates to the development of chronic health conditions.

Health outcomes in the City of Melton indicate that the percentage of residents who report Type 2 diabetes is significantly higher than the Victorian average; the percentage of residents reporting a high/very high degree of psychological distress is 15.5 per cent. This is higher than the Victorian average of 11.4 per cent. They also have poorer nutrition and lower levels of physical activity than the Victorian average (27.2 per cent and 29.4 per cent respectively).

By providing greater participation opportunities, a major benefit will be healthier lifestyles and increased social connectivity opportunities.

