



**NATIONAL
Growth Areas
ALLIANCE**

National Road Safety Strategy 2021–30

Consultation Draft

Submission from National Growth Areas Alliance



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Contact

For more information on any issue raised in this submission, please contact:

Bronwen Clark

Executive Officer

National Growth Areas Alliance

bronwen.clark@ngaa.org.au

Locked Bag 1, Bundoora MDC, VIC 3083

Tel: 0448 401 257

Web: www.ngaa.org.au

Executive Summary

- Australia's fast-growing cities, towns and suburbs on the outskirts of our major cities are home to 20% of the population. Population growth rates in these areas are double the national average.
- Federal Government investment in growth areas has not kept pace with population growth, resulting in significant deficits in transport infrastructure provision.

About the National Growth Areas Alliance

The [National Growth Areas Alliance](#) (NGAA) is an alliance of Councils from the fast-growing outer metropolitan areas of Australia's major cities. Five million people live in growth areas – a number that has doubled in one generation. Until 2020, populations had been growing at more than double the national rate.

Fast growing outer suburbs generated 35% of population growth and 25% of job growth between 2011-16 but only received 13% of infrastructure investment (.id [State of Australia's Fast Growing Outer Suburbs, 2018](#)).

NGAA member councils have first-hand knowledge of:

- the impact of unplanned population growth rates at double the national average,
- inadequate transport, health, education, community and social infrastructure to cope with increased demand, and
- lack of government focus on the health, education and employment prospects of communities in rapidly-developed greenfield suburbs.



The map shows Australia divided into states and territories. Blue circles indicate the locations of member councils: one in Western Australia (southwest coast), one in Queensland (northwest coast), one in South Australia (south coast), one in New South Wales (southeast coast), and one in Victoria (southeast coast).

Members – WA
[City of Wanneroo](#)
[City of Swan](#)
[City of Cockburn](#)
[City of Kwinana](#)
[City of Armadale](#)
[City of Gosnells](#)

Members – SA
[District Council of Mount Barker](#)
[City of Playford](#)

Strategic Partners - QLD
[Council of Mayors South East Queensland](#)

Members - NSW
[Blacktown City Council](#)
[Camden Council](#)
[Liverpool City Council](#)
[Penrith City Council](#)
[Wollondilly Shire Council](#)

Members – VIC
[City of Casey](#)
[Cardinia Shire Council](#)
[Wyndham City Council](#)
[City of Melton](#)
[Hume City Council](#)
[City of Whittlesea](#)
[Mitchell Shire Council](#)

Response to draft National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30

The National Growth Areas Alliance welcomes the draft Strategy and commends the Office of Road Safety on the ambitious targets and comprehensive governance arrangements put forward.

What is your primary area of interest in road safety?

The outer suburbs of Australian cities expanded rapidly with increased private car ownership and the desire for affordable living away from inner-city congestion.

Life in most outer urban growth areas is not a 30 Minute City experience. Given the gaps in public transport infrastructure and the “last-mile” challenge, community reliance on the private car to get to jobs located far from home is significant. The demand for improved roads and road performance is now critical.

Regional integrated land use planning – involving all relevant state agencies, local government and developers – must make local transport and connection major transport a core focus. Improving travel time, network coordination, cost and accessibility must be a priority, to reduce reliance on private vehicles.

Research by Astrolabe Group conducted in 2020 on behalf the Alliance found that the most common commute from growth areas to place of employment was 10-30 kms and a significant proportion travel 30km or more to get to work – that’s just in one direction. For commuters in outer growth suburbs, even a 5km commute from a growth suburb with poor roads and inadequate public transport can take an unreasonable amount of time due to congested intersections, single lane arterial roads and inadequate freeway access.

The average daily commute for workers driving from outer growth suburbs costs \$36.28 per return trip (if only considering running car costs, tolls and parking), or \$58.35 per return trip if including running costs plus standing costs such as insurance, registration and maintenance.

Commuting by car to work from outer growth suburbs costs commuters \$5.4 billion a year. That’s \$8,380 a year for full-time workers and \$4,170 a year for part time workers just to drive to work. The average income in these outer growth suburbs is only \$49,250 a year, resulting in more than 15% of income spent just on getting to work.

Public transport costs commuters \$2,540 a year for full-time workers and \$1,270 a year for part-time workers to get the train, bus or tram to work. Public transport is often a much cheaper alternative, with public transport commutes from outer growth suburbs costing just \$11.00 per return trip.

However, for many people in outer growth suburbs, public transport is not available or viable in terms of timetables or length of commute and may still require multiple modes such as driving to get to a transport route. ([Jobs and Commuting in Outer Growth Suburbs](#), Astrolabe Group, 2020)

What road safety issues are the most important to address?

For National Growth Areas Alliance member councils, planning and building fit-for-purpose road infrastructure to respond to existing and evolving need is vital. While safety on local roads is a welcome focus of the draft Strategy, the major safety risks of low grade, congested highways and freeways that are unequipped to deal with the volume of traffic caused by greenfield developments in outer suburbs must also be addressed.

In 2015, \$48.3 billion of government investment in transport infrastructure in growth areas was needed to ensure outer suburbs receive a level of service equivalent to established areas of Australian cities ([Meeting Growth Area Infrastructure Investment Needs](#), SGS Economics and Planning, 2015)

Federal Government investment since then has been significant but not enough to increase service levels sufficiently.

Case Study – Western Highway at Melton

The Western Highway in Melbourne is a critical arterial road link that functions as an important economic driver at a National, State and Metropolitan level.

Unfortunately, the section of highway within Melton City Council suffers from significant levels of congestion during the peak periods. This stretch of road is also grow considerably in the next two years with already approval for 6 new estates directly on the adjacent to the highway with 55,100 new dwellings and an estimated population of 153,400.

Within Melton City Council, the Western Highway is projected to accommodate 85,000 vehicles per day by 2021 and 113,000 vehicles per day by 2031. Traffic modelling indicates that if nothing is done, this highway will be gridlocked by 2021. The AM congestion will increase from 62kms (2018) to 152kms (2031) and in PM congestion from 72kms (2018) to 279kms (2031).

The highway corridor within the City of Melton is also characterized by aged and rural-standard freeway infrastructure including direct property accesses, at-grade interchanges and at-grade bus stops. Additional lanes and upgraded interchanges are necessary in order to support the booming growth in population and maintain efficient freight movements in and out of Melbourne.

What do you believe are the strengths of this draft Strategy?

The Alliance strongly supports the draft Strategy's focus on improving engagement across three levels of government and embedding road safety as a key reporting requirement.

At a time of significant resource constraints and competing priorities responding to increased community and economic vulnerability, growth area Councils welcome the Strategy's commitment to provide low cost and accessible reporting frameworks for the provision of road network safety plans.

Growth areas and the dominance of greenfield residential and industrial developments also offer ideal conditions for pilot programs for integrated transport (including active transport) planning. With a continued shift to localism and working at or close to home, the large

populations of growth areas will benefit from a continued focus on Movement and Place frameworks.

The Alliance also welcomes the focus on supporting safe movement freight. Again, improved integrated transport and land use planning will assist to increase safety and productivity.

Case Study - City of Wanneroo - Neerabup Strategic Link: Flynn Drive

Substantial investment has been made by State and Federal Governments in a range of new and improved roads running north to south of the City of Wanneroo. Currently Flynn Drive is a main east/west freight connector across the City.

Currently this main connector is only a single carriageway linking to the new dual and multi lane highways on either side. Flynn Drive is the main road for the 800 hectare Neerabup Industrial Area that is set to create thousands of local jobs.

If Flynn Drive is not upgraded, safety and congestion issues will remain. The absence of appropriate road infrastructure causes significant safety risks, freight movement issues and constraints on investment attraction and high quality early commercial development.

Having a better east/west road connector will enhance employment opportunities in surrounding regional economies such as Swan, Gingin, Chittering and Dandaragan. Currently nearly 2900 Wanneroo workers travel to the City of Swan. Nearly 6000 residents from the City of Swan travel to Wanneroo for work.

Improving travel safety and travel times will improve the ability of this cross regional flow of workers to be strengthened.

As freight volumes increase on the new Northlink route safety is an issue for commuters and workers travelling to the Neerabup Industrial Area.

Conclusion

The National Growth Areas Alliance looks forward to the implementation of the National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 and particularly the governance arrangements to ensure accountability for all levels of government.