

MANNINGHAM

Leaders at odds over rail link

Andrew Rogers

MAYOR BLASTS STATE FOR SNUBBING KEY INFRASTRUCTURE IN STRATEGY

YOUR ratepayer and tax payer dollars are at loggerheads over the proposed Doncaster Rail.

Manningham Council sees it as key, but a rail link has been snubbed by Infrastructure Victoria, an advisory body set up by the State Government last year.

The advisory body has released its strategy, entitled All Things Considered, to meet the state's needs over the next three decades.

But clearly what has not been considered are plans for a railway along the Eastern Freeway median strip, connecting the city and Doncaster Hill.

The report sidelines this, saying it won't attract enough passengers.

Released last month and open for public submissions, the paper said "few people will change to public transport if a heavy rail service

were available compared to the existing bus service".

But Manningham Mayor Paul McLeish said the advisory body had ignored the "most important transport infrastructure proposal for Melbourne's east".

"The communities that border the Eastern Freeway corridor have every reason to be disappointed with a report that outlines a 30-year strategy for Victoria but

completely ignores the needs of thousands of commuters," he said.

"Council considers that it is vital the freeway median strip is reserved for a future public transport corridor, along with additional reservations for station infrastructure and an alignment east of Bulleen Rd."

And extending and improving bus and tram options should not be offered

as "a trade-off" for not considering the rail link, Cr McLeish said.

Independent candidate for Menzies Stephen Mayne said he supported a rail link to Doncaster.

But he said the project should not be delivered before Metro Rail.

"Doncaster Rail should be sequenced to be delivered, along with the East West Link, in the back half of the

2020s once Metro Rail is up and running," he said.

The State Government did not return Leader's calls.

Consultation on the strategy will run until Friday, June 17. Visit yoursay.infrastructurevictoria.com.au

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