

Rowville rail link essential: University of Melbourne transport research centre

A Rowville rail extension is urgently required, according to researchers at the University of Melbourne's new \$4.3 million Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT).

A study, funded by Knox Council last year, was undertaken by GAMUT co-director Professor Bill Russell. Results showed that not only was the link a necessity, but that it is feasible and affordable.

Experts from GAMUT, led by Professor Bill Russell and Professor Nick Low from the University's Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, said it takes an average of 80 minutes or more for Rowville residents to reach inner Melbourne using existing bus connections, which is longer than it takes to reach Melbourne from Ballarat using new fast trains.

"To compound woes, the completion of the Connect East freeway from Mitcham to Frankston will result in extra traffic congestion on the road and freeway system serving Rowville," Professor Russell said.

"Residents of Rowville, Scoresby and Mulgrave deserve an effective alternative to using these congested and costly roads."

The researchers said that with Rowville's large population of young people, independent travel to jobs, education, and leisure activities are a necessity.

"They deserve to have public transport as good as other outer localities, and this means a rail link," Professor Russell said.

According to Professor Russell there is strong local support for the project.

"Supporters packed a public meeting last year at the Rowville leisure centre, and they are now hoping to see the project included in the state government's new Sustainable Melbourne strategy, due for release in April."

The \$4.3 million International Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport, funded by the Volvo Research and Education Foundation, is a collaborative venture involving partners around Australia as well as in Japan, China and Singapore.

It connects Australia with ideas about urban transport emerging in the Asia-Pacific region, and develops policy and management ideas for Australia's transport governance.

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