Focus on Melbourne

Princes Gate Railway Station; Gas and Fuel Corporation Building, 1969.
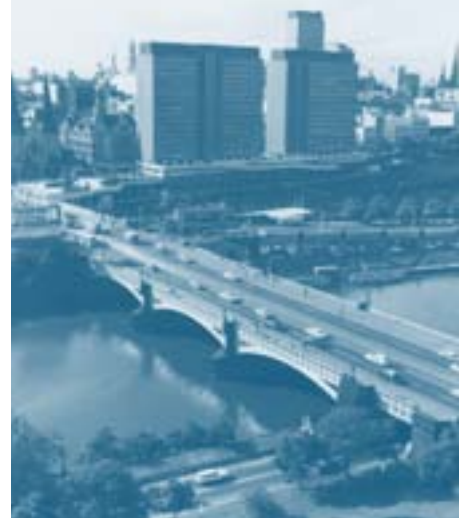
How we were

Surprising change can take place in the short time span of 30 years. In metropolitan Melbourne in 1972, many of the areas now under investigation for *Melbourne 2030* were quite different:

- **housing** – someone wanting to live on the city fringe could buy a house on one of the new estates in Doncaster or Glen Waverley, where long-established orchards were being cleared and their land subdivided; the Housing Commission still planned what it called slum clearance in many areas that today are renovated as

desirable parts of the cities of Yarra, Port Phillip and Melbourne; cattle were sold in the Newmarket saleyards, now an upmarket housing estate

- **transport** – public transport was fragmented and in decline – people travelled on 'red rattler' trains and trams built prior to the First World War, and the Underground Loop was still just a plan; the roads division of the MMBW (and, later, the Country Roads Board) had plans for 494 kilometres of freeways criss-crossing metropolitan Melbourne – to date, 225 kilometres have been built

- **health and education** – all metropolitan Melbourne's major hospitals were in Central Melbourne or close to it; the ring of inner-suburban Victorian-era primary schools (many now sold for development) was still educating thousands of children

- **environment** – the first of the MMBW's metropolitan parks was being established and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) was set up, but more than a decade would pass before the *Age's* 'Give the Yarra a Go' campaign led to a new approach for urban waterways

- **recreation** – of the 12 teams in the Victorian Football League, only Geelong played at a ground that was more than a few kilometres from Central Melbourne; exotic food was a pizza in Lygon Street, Carlton – the cultural centre of metropolitan Melbourne – or a cappuccino in the Paris End of Collins Street.
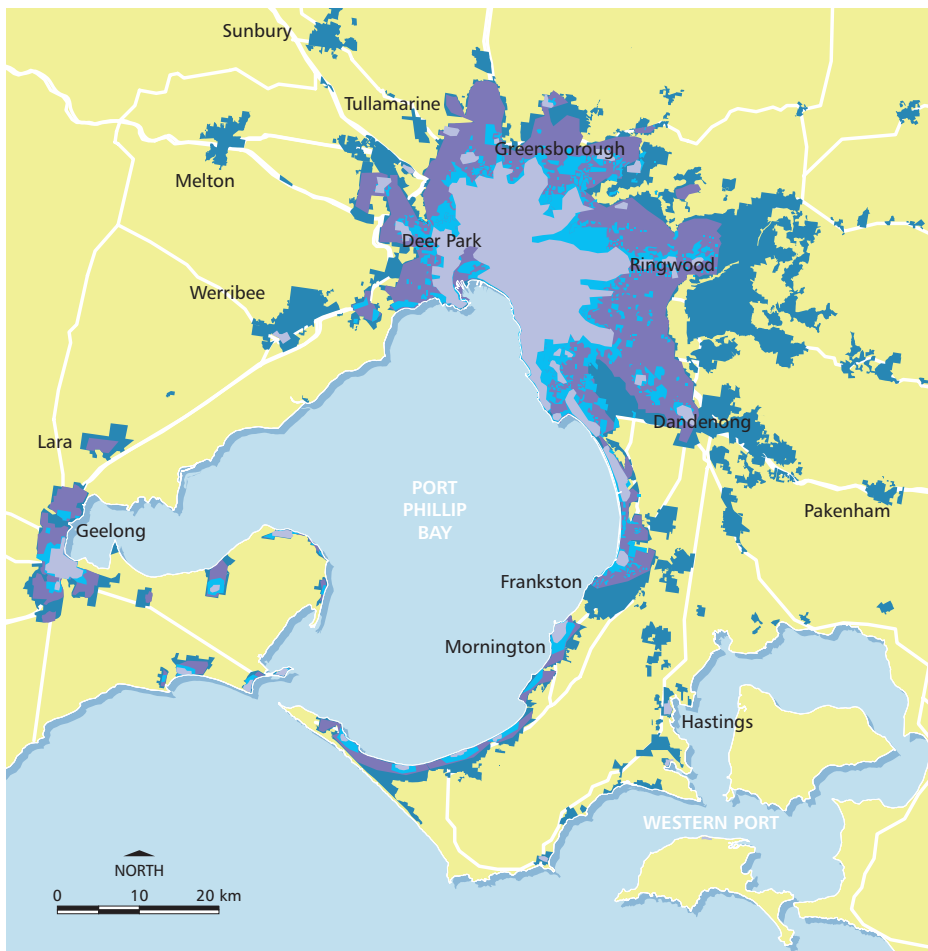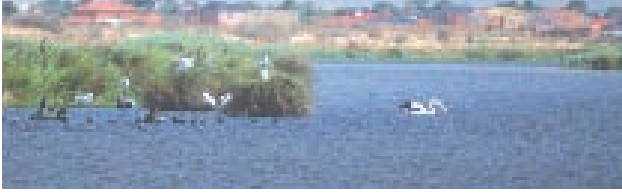

Figure 11. Urban growth, 1928–96

1928 Population 1.1 million	**1971** Population 2.6 million
1951 Population 1.5 million	**1996** Population 3.5 million

Source: Department of Infrastructure, 2001   Urban areas diagrammatic

Lonsdale Street, Dandenong, 1971.

How we are

Metropolitan Melbourne at the beginning of the twenty-first century is at a crossroads. We have come a long way since 1972, and the city has great strengths, but we also face significant challenges.

Our strengths include:

- **economic competitiveness** – we have an efficient freight system, a strong business hub and extensive urban infrastructure including state-of-the-art telecommunications; we lead Australia in research and development; our long-established manufacturing strength now has a strong technological base; our nearby agricultural industries are flourishing

- **liveability** – metropolitan Melbourne overflows with sporting, cultural and recreational opportunity; the public transport system makes the city generally easy to traverse; health and safety standards are high, as is environmental quality; metropolitan Melbourne and the surrounding region has outstanding natural landscapes and coastlines

- **diverse people** – being home to people from some 200 countries, our exciting cultural diversity puts the whole world on our streets and into our workplaces; our work-force is skilled and creative

- **an attractive urban environment** – the city is generously laid out with plenty of parks and open space, including corridors and trails along our major rivers and streams, and leafy city boulevards; heritage places including buildings, gardens and trees are valued and well displayed; distinctive lifestyle choices abound

The challenges lie in these broad areas:

- **economic opportunity** – competition for markets on every level (especially in Asia) is intensifying; we need to encourage business and creativity and spend more money on creating and applying knowledge; we must maintain and improve freight infrastructure; it is vital that all Victorians benefit from metropolitan Melbourne's growth

- **development pressures** – the growth in population and households, coupled with the greying of our population, brings a need for more and different housing in different locations and configurations, and underlines the requirement for good design in public and private spheres

- **increasing inequality** – changes in the labour and housing markets have created opportunity for some, disadvantage for others; many people cannot afford a place to live that is close to transport, employment, education and other services; emerging pockets of social disadvantage have the potential to weaken the fabric of our community
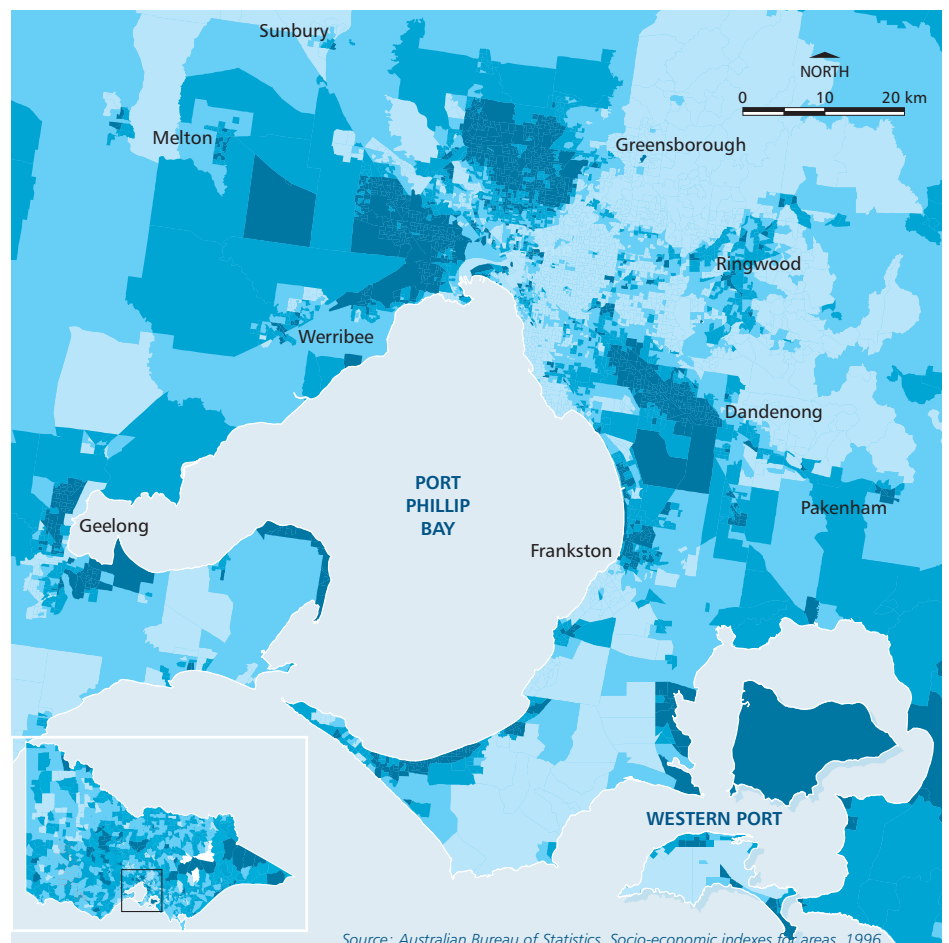

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Socio-economic indexes for areas, 1996

Figure 12. Areas of relative disadvantage, 1996

Highest disadvantage ⬅️ ➡️ Lowest disadvantage

- **transport choice** – the car will continue to dominate but we must offer viable alternatives for travellers; public transport and freight management systems must be improved if metropolitan Melbourne is to remain an attractive place to live, work in and visit
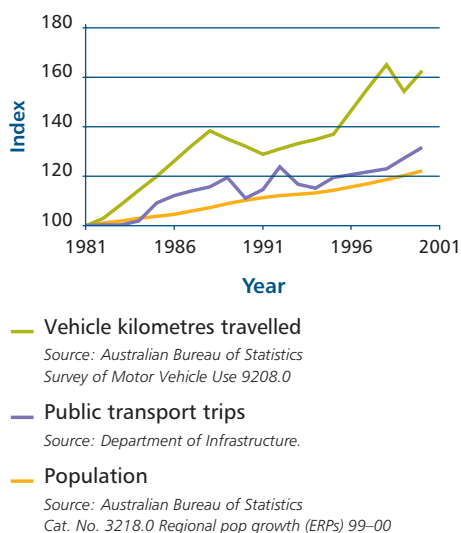

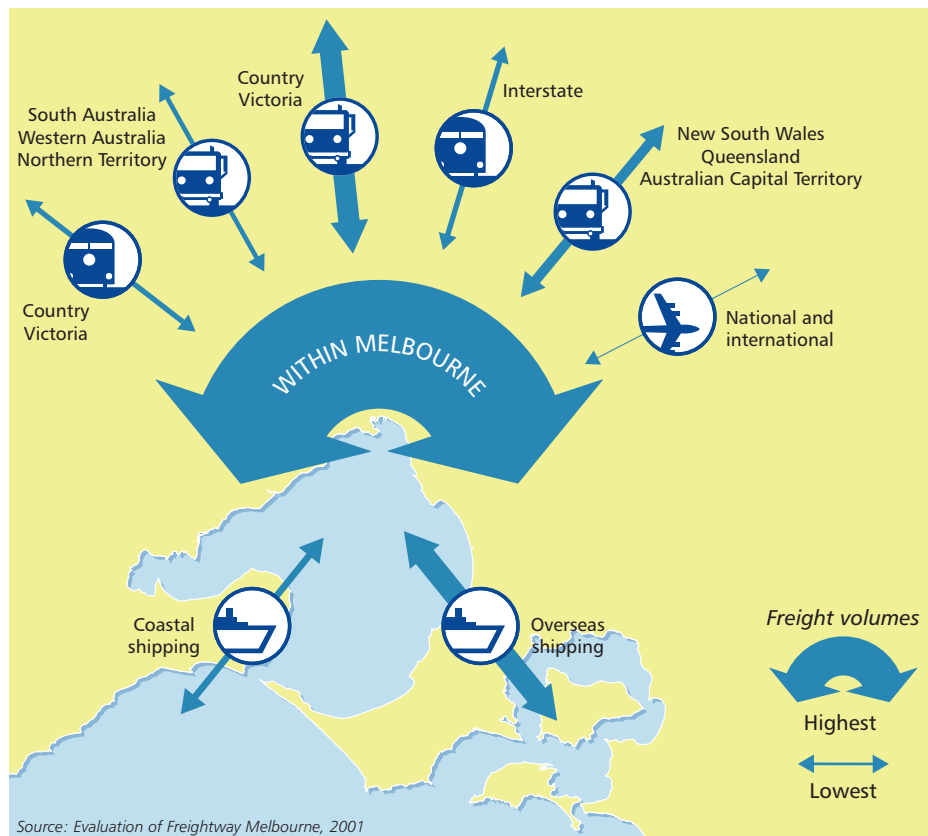*Figure 13. Increases in population, car travel and public transport trips*

Vehicle kilometres travelled
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Motor Vehicle Use 9208.0

Public transport trips
Source: Department of Infrastructure.

Population
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat. No. 3218.0 Regional pop growth (ERPs) 99–00

Source: Evaluation of Freightway Melbourne, 2001

Figure 14. Freight movements (2000 estimates)

Access by car

Access by public transport

Less than 3%
3% to 25%
More than 25%

Source: Department of Infrastructure and Australian Bureau of Statistics, Journey to Work, 1996
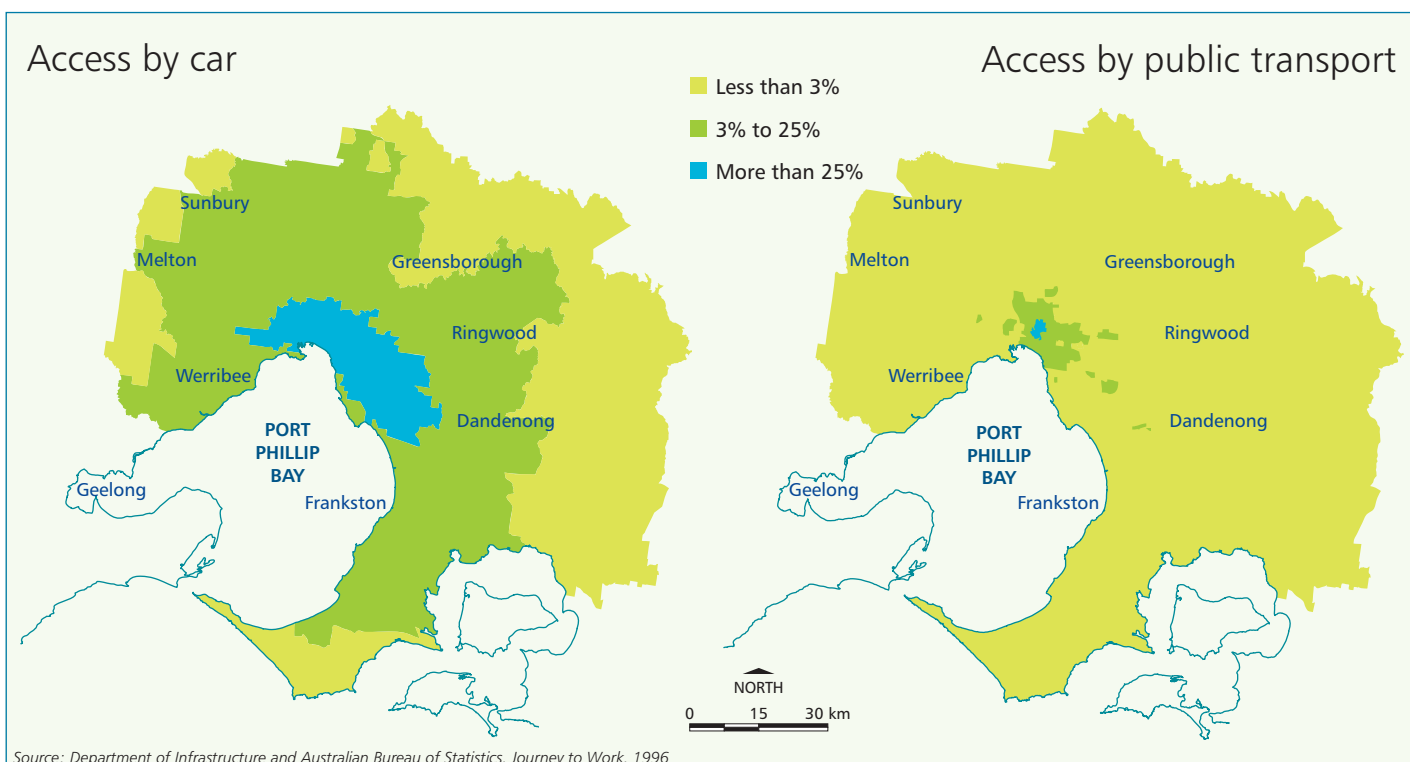
Figure 15. Percentage of jobs accessible within 40 minutes travel (by car and by public transport)

- **environmental damage** – population and economic growth threaten habitats and biodiversity; water resources must be husbanded and greenhouse gas emissions reduced; public awareness of environmental problems needs to be increased.
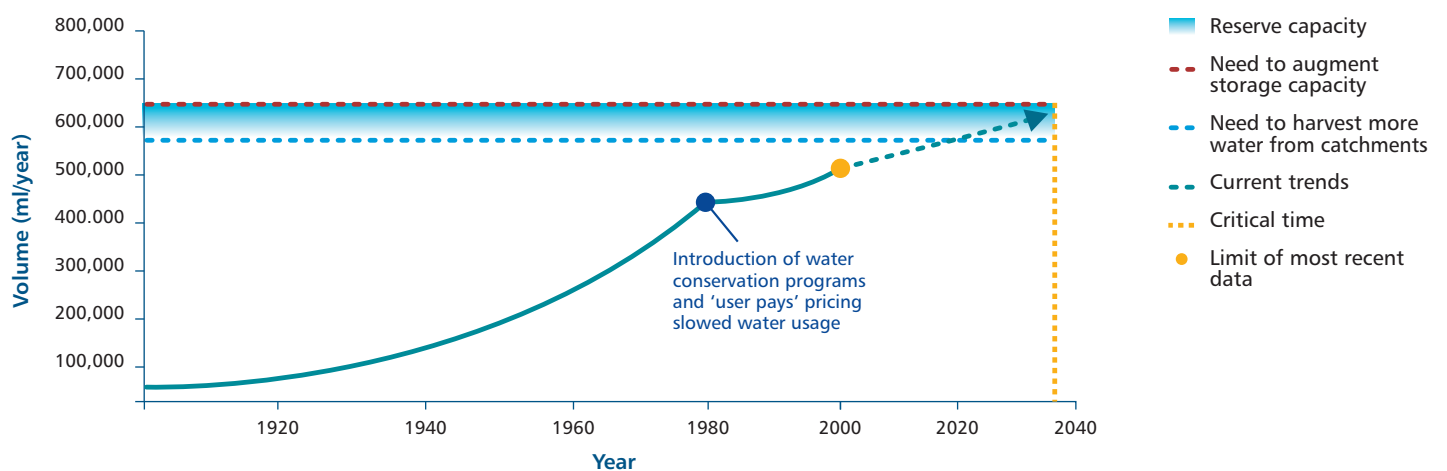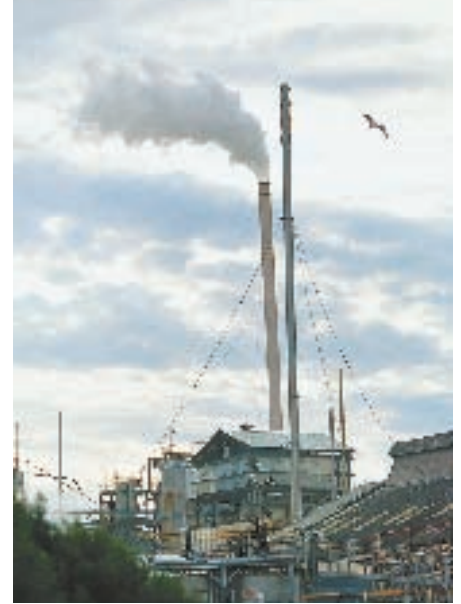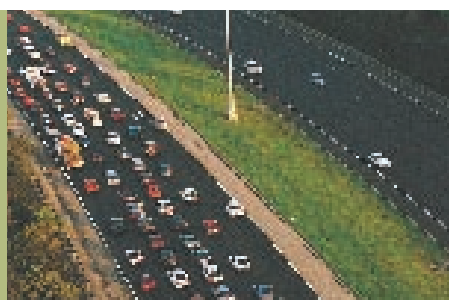

Figure 16. Water demand for metropolitan Melbourne
Source: Discussion Starter, Melbourne Water, 2001

How we might be

No crystal ball is available to predict how metropolitan Melbourne will be in 2030. However, *Melbourne 2030* gives us a chance to put in place planning and land-use policies to maintain our prosperity and share its benefits around the State. These will create a better living and working environment while ensuring that metropolitan Melbourne remains:

- **accessible** – with more people enjoying the benefits of flourishing activity centres where shops, jobs, services and recreation are within walking distance of their homes; with fast and reliable travel to and from regional cities and towns; with a comprehensive, efficient and networked public transport system and a usable web of bicycle tracks and pedestrian routes; with access to the mountains, open country and beaches

- **attractive** – with well-preserved heritage buildings and streetscapes and new development of the highest design quality; with altered skylines but a form that is still recognisably 'Melbourne'; with fitting emphasis on the specialised areas that create the tapestry of the city and on the different communities from all over the world that give it depth and vitality

- **welcoming** – with health care, educational and recreational facilities, housing, community and emergency services that everyone can find, use and afford in all parts of the city; with world-class tourist facilities, services and experiences that make Melbourne a desirable international destination in its own right

- **thriving** – with industry, commerce, research and development that flourishes because it is competitive, viable, well-located and can use properly designed networks for transport and communications

- **sustainable** – where 'green' is no longer a colour but a way of life reflecting an environment that is valued, meaningful amounts of open space that can be enjoyed by all, and resources that are carefully deployed.