

# Air-rights over rail – the last frontier in urban development?

Jim Dolkas<sup>1</sup>, Emma Demaine<sup>2</sup>, Anna Poulos<sup>3</sup>

**1 Jim Dolkas, Development Director, VicTrack**

2 Emma Demaine, Planning Manager, VicTrack

3 Anna Poulos, General Manager Communications & Engagement Group, VicTrack

VicTrack is the owner of the majority of Victoria's railway land and infrastructure. Created in 1997, VicTrack is a State-owned enterprise that plays a pivotal role in improving public transport, largely without government funding.

VicTrack improves how Victorians move and connect. We manage our network assets to bring people together in more liveable communities with safe and better transport. We continue to leverage our significant asset portfolio and look for opportunities that strengthen the future of VicTrack and its capacity to return more to public transport.

In our role as the land owner, we release under-utilised transport land to facilitate urban development and better public spaces. Working with the private sector, our development program looks at land uses that add value to Victorian communities. We want to bring places to life and help shape communities with more connected transport precincts, providing better commuter links, safer travel, greater community engagement and services that add to local streetscapes.

Our property development program has already delivered open community parkland, public bike trails, residential apartments and new shops and restaurants linked to transport hubs for greater convenience for commuters. Our station precinct developments transform stations from single stand alone uses to valuable community infrastructure. Locating jobs and houses closer to public transport.

Our recent success has been at Glen Waverley and Jewell Station. Hampton Station is next in the pipeline.

VicTrack is investigating opportunities for air-right developments over rail. Is this the answer to urban growth?

Our presentation will address growth and straddle many other of the Congress's key topics.

VicTrack is wanting to change the way we look and use our rail stations in Melbourne. We have strong planning policy to support higher density at and around train stations, yet why are there so little examples of true and successful transit oriented developments?

The presentation will examine:

- Barriers to air-right developments over rail (land economics, engineering costs, scale of development required, community engagement, planning policy)
- Benefits (transport upgrades, bringing people closer to transport, urban design benefits, diversity of housing choice etc)
- Engagement approaches/successes/learnings
- Comparison with other cities... why Melbourne lags in some respects to Sydney?
- What the future looks like for Melbourne?