

ONE-TRACK MIND

Strategically placed train lines are linking growth areas and giving commuters greater lifestyle options



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It was *A Room with a View* author E.M. Forster who remarked that “Railway termini are our gates to the glorious and the unknown”, and he wasn’t far wrong.

Channelling the spirit of adventure, urban planners are expanding the city’s northern boundaries via rail and venturing into new-growth areas to create convenient lifestyles for the next generation to effortlessly link their work, school and leisure.

The Victorian Planning Authority says its aims when creating a new suburb ensure each community has its own town centre to cater for everyday shopping, employment and an integrated network of parks linked by pedestrian and cycle paths.

The walkable suburbs include land reserved for future schools, community centres, sports precincts and transport services, “so future residents live in

lively suburbs with world-class services and infrastructure”.

One only has to think of the effect that Craigieburn and Donnybrook train stations have had to service the rapidly expanding population over the past 20 years and into the future.

In more recent times, the Mernda rail extension has earned plaudits for its capacity to connect residents.

The 8km of new track in the Mernda project alone created the Mernda, Hawkstowe and Middle Gorge train stations — together with secure bicycle storage facilities, about 2000 car spaces across the three stations, walking and cycling paths to connect them and even a skate park.

MAIN and INSET
It’s all aboard as new stations on the Mernda rail extension open for business.

And it seems there's much more public transport infrastructure in the works, with land set aside for the future extension of the Epping Rail Corridor and a future train station in the heart of Wollert.

Ditto for Beveridge Central and the planned Lockerbie station, the Metro Tunnel Project under way to increase capacity across all lines, talk of the Airport rail link finally getting the green light, and election promises already focusing on doubling train services to Cranbourne.

And for good reason. Designed to overcome the reliance on cars and perceived tyranny of distance in outer metropolitan areas, the proximity to train lines reinforces the "location, location" mantra more than ever.

The Real Estate Institute of Victoria (REIV) annually analyses median house price data, which shows buyers can save significant sums by buying in the next suburb along the train line.

"Access to public transport is a key factor for many buyers, and can increase the value of a property," REIV president Richard Simpson said.

"But homebuyers willing to commute for a few extra minutes each day are able to consider a greater number of suburbs, including new-growth areas which may not have peaked in terms of price growth."



FULL STEAM AHEAD

It's official. The South Morang Line is now the Mernda Line. The 8km Mernda rail extension opened in August, with three stations — Hawkestone, Middle Gorge and Mernda — added to service the fast-growing northern suburbs.

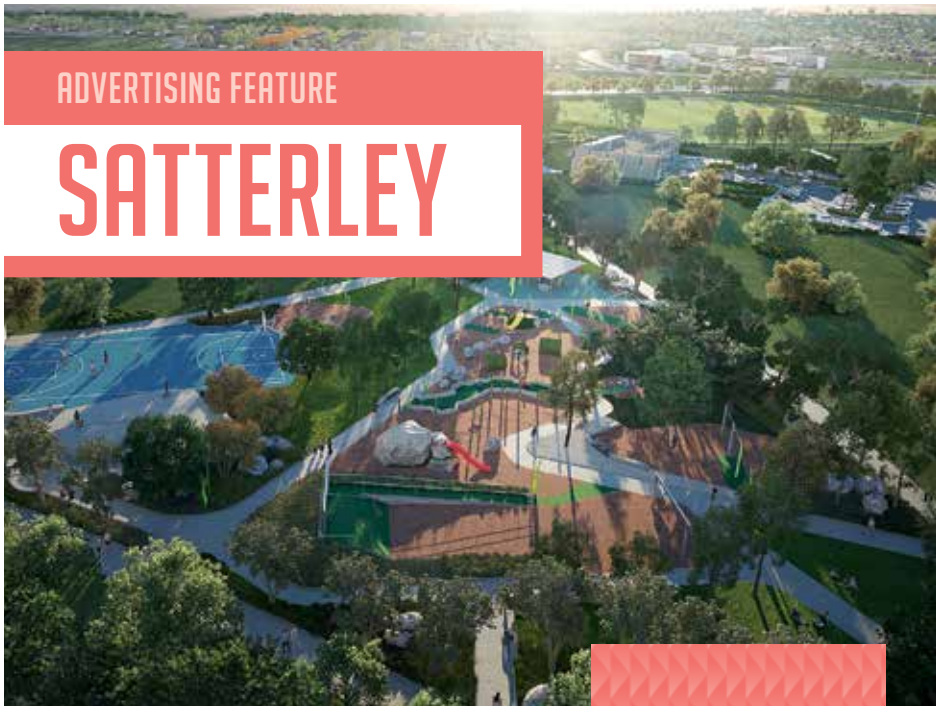
Mernda Station will give passengers access to 982 services to the city every week, catering for up to 8000 commuters a day, with the three new stations connected via two new and seven realigned bus routes.

Completed almost six months ahead of schedule, the opening of the new line is the result of almost 18 months of works along the rail corridor.

Three new community spaces have been built at Hawkestone Station, The Parkway and Mernda Station.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

SATTERLEY



By Erin Miller

Families and first-home buyers are spoilt for choice with the premium lifestyle offerings at Satterley's northern communities True North, in Greenvale, and Botanical, in Mickleham.

Satterley general manager for Victoria and Queensland Jack Hoffmann said the unique location had shaped the roll-out of True North, which will offer residents more than 23ha of open space, including an impressive

MAIN True North includes a 10ha sporting precinct, and **(INSET)** wetlands, gardens and playground await at Botanical Park.

10ha multi-million-dollar sporting precinct as well as parks and playgrounds.

"True North offers a premium family lifestyle," Mr Hoffmann said.

"Residents will enjoy being a five-minute drive from established schools, child care, shops, entertainment and transport options. Every home will be walking distance to a park."

Existing facilities close to True North include Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park railway stations, Craigieburn Central and Greenvale Shopping Centre as well as schools such as Kolbe Catholic College, Roxburgh Park Primary School, Craigieburn Secondary College and Greenvale Primary School.

True North also offers elevated land, with "potential city views, plus expansive views across the Greenvale Reservoir".

"It's not often buyers come across land with a view in Melbourne's growth corridors, but residents of True North estate can enjoy a city or water backdrop in the new Greenvale neighbourhood," Mr Hoffmann said.

Botanical is also offering a premium master-planned community, which an estimated 6500 people will eventually call home.

Since its launch a year ago, Mr Hoffmann said Botanical had been extremely popular with first-home buyers who are drawn to the estate's location, affordability and 30ha of planned open space and parklands, including the landscaped central Botanical Park.

In addition to existing primary schools, a further four new primary schools are planned for the area.

Botanical is a 10-minute drive to the Donnybrook and Craigieburn railway stations, and the community also features a planned 2.5ha local shopping village, as well as a proposed cafe and convenience store.

"Creating a community that encourages residents to enjoy the parks and open active spaces is central to everything we're building at Botanical," Mr Hoffmann said.

True North will feature 1350 lots. Current lot sizes range from 411sq m to 590sq m and prices start from \$385,000. Botanical will have 2400 lots. Current lot sizes range from 256sq m to 512sq m, prices start from \$210,000.

satterley.com.au/true-north
satterley.com.au/botanical

