

Bus company aims for longer routes to service clients

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RESERVOIR Bus Company has outlined an ambitious plan to extend routes out to the northern suburbs.

Suburbs including North Epping and the Aurora estate have boosted the population in recent years but residents have complained of a lack of bus services.

The company's proposal will be considered by the Department of Transport after it is presented in the next few days.

Industry body BusVic has called for the government to support northern bus services, where growing demand has outstripped supply.

Reservoir Bus Company director Russell Ward said his staff had investigated short, medium and long-term ways the company could better meet demand. The company ideally hopes to introduce short-term changes to better connect areas serviced by train stations, such as Thomastown and Epping, with Epping North.

Mr Ward said the main challenge was keeping up with the speed of growth.

"The growth is so quick, we're constantly

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changing plans," he said. "The new estates go up that quickly, what we thought was needed six months ago has already changed."

Last year's Coalition win, lack of state government investment in buses this year and changes to train services have also weighed in on the bus company's plans and proposal.

Department of Transport spokeswoman Jo Davie said the department was evaluating options presented in bus review reports and future upgrades would be subject to funding.

Ms Davie said bus 575 ran services into Epping North and Aurora Estate until 9pm, seven days a week.

BusVic transport planning and policy manager Chris Loader said Epping North was one of many fringe areas where public transport was not keeping up with urban growth.

"Significant areas of Epping North are beyond reasonable walking distance of existing bus routes," he said.