

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**  
Minister for Ports and Freight  
Minister for Public Transport



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## SLEEPER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM SUPPORTS LOCAL JOBS

Passengers on the Warrnambool line can look forward to a more comfortable and reliable service thanks to the installation of 27,000 new concrete sleepers.

The Andrews Labor Government is funding the \$8.1 million sleeper replacement, which has been brought forward to 9 June to keep track workers, suppliers and contractors working during the coronavirus pandemic.

Austrak's Avalon factory will complete the order of custom-designed, long-lifespan concrete sleepers, which will then be delivered to locations along the Warrnambool line for installation.

More than 50 V/Line staff and contractors will then work through the night in 10-day blocks to replace existing timber sleepers with concrete between Colac and Waurin Ponds. This follows an \$18 million program of sleeper replacements on the Warrnambool line in late 2018 and early 2019, which focused on the section of track between Warrnambool and Colac.

To help minimise the disruption to passenger services, work will commence after the last train each night and wrap-up before first service the next morning. The works are expected to be completed in late 2020.

Sleeper replacement works improve the track surface, providing a more comfortable ride for passengers and reducing the risk of delays caused by track faults.

Trains will need to run at slower than normal speeds along certain sections of the line following the works, to allow the concrete sleepers time to bed down. Four weekday Waurin Ponds services will be replaced by buses between Waurin Ponds and Geelong to minimise delays.

Warrnambool services will be scheduled to arrive at their destination between six and 11 minutes later than normal while the works take place. Freight services will be scheduled around the works and connecting coach services will operate as normal.

Passengers needing to make essential travel are asked to check the V/Line website for detailed service change information.

These works come off the back of a \$16.1 million sleeper replacement program on the Bendigo line. Austrak's Avalon factory produced more than 48,000 concrete sleepers to complete that project.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Public Transport Melissa Horne**

*"These works help to ensure V/Line can continue to offer a safe, reliable and comfortable experience for passengers who rely on the service."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Gayle Tierney**

*"This project is not only going to benefit south-western Victorian public transport users but is supporting local business to get the job done."*