

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



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FUNDING BOOST TO IMPROVE FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL

Regional Victoria can look forward to better freight and passenger rail services thanks to a \$126 million rail investment from the Victorian Government, as part of the economic response to the coronavirus crisis.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne and Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll said the upgrades will be vital to support regional communities, create jobs and boost economic activity in regional Victoria.

An \$83 million freight improvement package will focus on replacing sleepers, repairing ballasts and renewing level crossing equipment along almost 400 kilometres of critical freight-only rail lines.

The works will provide regional growers and exporters with more viable freight options as the shift from road to rail continues, helping farmers access key domestic and international markets.

The Government is also investing \$36 million to maintain the V/Line Classic Fleet, with works to be done by Bombardier - supporting local jobs in both Bendigo and Melbourne.

More than 20 new workers will be hired in V/Line fleet maintenance roles as engineers, repair workers and cleaners.

A further \$7.5 million will be spent improving tracks across the regional passenger network – delivering more reliable services from Deer Park Junction to Ballarat, Ballarat to Ararat, Donnybrook to Seymour, Corio to Waurn Ponds and the Bendigo East Track.

The maintenance blitz is a key part of the government's \$328 million investment in freight, public transport and roads upgrades, which will create and support more than 600 jobs during the coronavirus crisis.

The Government is investing more than \$2.7 billion in economic stimulus as part of the *Building Works* package, to kickstart the economy and support workers through the pandemic.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"These investments in our rail freight network are part of our ongoing commitment to boost our export power and support regional jobs."

"The upgrades will mean produce can be transported from farm to port much more quickly, opening up key markets to Victorian farmers."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"We're building on our unprecedented investment in regional rail, and this maintenance blitz will be a boost for local jobs and keep Victoria moving as we recover from the coronavirus crisis."

"This investment will help to improve our regional rail network and ensure we provide services passengers can rely on."