

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Monday, 12 October 2020

ARARAT SLEEPER REPLACEMENT MARKS MAJOR MILESTONE

Crews have replaced more than 100,000 sleepers on the regional rail network this year, following the completion of works on the Ararat line last week.

Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll said the \$9.5 million program to replace 34,000 sleepers on the track between Ararat and Wendouree was completed in just over two months and came off the back of sleeper replacement programs on the Bendigo and Warrnambool lines.

Works included replacing every sleeper on the 22-kilometre section between Buangor and Dobie and crews also renewed the track beneath the road at the Warrayatkin Road level crossing in Dobie.

As a safety precaution, trains on the Ararat line have been running at slower speeds in some areas following the works to allow the newly-installed sleepers time to bed down. A temporary timetable is in place for passengers.

Trains will resume operating at normal speeds along the Ararat line from Thursday, 22 October when the permanent timetable will come into effect.

The majority of the 100,000 new sleepers installed this year were long-lifespan concrete sleepers produced by manufacturer Austrak at their Avalon factory, near Geelong.

More than 50 people have worked through the night in 10-day blocks on each of the programs, with works starting after the last train each night and finishing before first service the next morning, to minimise disruptions to passenger services.

V/Line has been following the Department of Health and Human Services guidelines on work sites to ensure this important project could progress.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"We've taken extra steps to allow projects like this to continue safely and help keep track workers, suppliers and contractors working during the coronavirus pandemic."

"To install 100,000 sleepers on the regional rail network this year is a fantastic effort from crews and shows that we are continuing work on important infrastructure projects during these extraordinary times."

Quote attributable to Member for Western Victoria Jaala Pulford

"These works are vitally important for the ongoing upkeep of the line, to ensure passengers can continue to have a safe, reliable and comfortable experience on services to Ararat."