

# Media Release

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



Thursday, 15 October 2020

## RAIL TRAINING PROGRAM TO BOOST INDIGENOUS JOBS

The Victorian Government is supporting indigenous and vulnerable people in the Loddon Mallee region to get hands-on training and a certified qualification with a new program on the region's heritage railway.

Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll today announced the new program, which will deliver training to up to 48 people, opening up pathways to further employment on the rail network and ongoing job security.

In its first six months, the pilot program will offer training towards a Certificate II in Rail Infrastructure qualification, with the hands-on component supporting Victorian Goldfields Railway – a tourist and heritage steam rail operator – to upgrade their rail infrastructure between Castlemaine and Maldon.

The pilot program has been made possible with a \$90,000 investment from the Victorian Government's *Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program*, which provides funding for local transport initiatives, services and infrastructure across regional Victoria.

The pilot project is a partnership arrangement with the Mount Alexander Shire Council, Victorian Goldfields Railway, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative and the Centre for Excellence in Rail Training.

The Victorian Goldfields Railway is contributing more than \$50,000 through the provision of tools, machinery, consumables and supply of track materials to support the training, with in-kind support from the other project partners to oversee this pilot.

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll**

*"We know how important that first step on the ladder to meaningful employment is – this training program will deliver strong job prospects to local jobseekers and boost Victoria's strong field of transport infrastructure talent."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams**

*"This program is a real pathway to future employment for local Indigenous people across the Loddon Mallee, with a qualification and important connections in the local transport and tourism industries."*

### **Quote attributable to Member for Bendigo West Maree Edwards**

*"We've supported the Victorian Goldfields Railway to deliver infrastructure improvements to their fantastic heritage tourism asset – and now we're proud to be providing the talent they need to build it."*

### **Quote from President of Victorian Goldfields Railway, Steve Strangward**

*"This exciting program further strengthens our partnership with the local community and helps build awareness of the work we are doing to preserve this important regional attraction. The program will accelerate completing a \$2 million major infrastructure and track upgrade currently underway."*