



The Hon Michael McCormack MP

Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Leader of The Nationals
Federal Member for Riverina



The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Victorian Minister for Ports and Freight
State Member for Williamstown

The Hon Frank McGuire MP

State Member for Broadmeadows

MEDIA RELEASE

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MORE FREIGHT ON TRAINS IN MELBOURNE'S NORTH

The Australian and Victorian governments are making rail freight cheaper for businesses and taking trucks off suburban roads, thanks to a \$16.2 million investment in direct rail freight between the Port of Melbourne and Somerton.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said a new track connecting the main rail line with the Somerton-based Austrak freight hub will bust congestion in Melbourne's growing northern region.

"As the next step in Melbourne's Port Rail Shuttle Network, the new dual-gauge track will reduce truck trips on suburban Melbourne roads by as much as 20,000 annually," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

"The new track will deliver a direct rail route from the Somerton terminal to the docks, via the Port of Melbourne's \$125 million on-dock rail project.

"This builds on our announcement in August of a further joint investment for a \$28 million link between the main rail line and Dandenong South-based Salta Properties.

"It is another example of our Government's \$110 billion nationwide infrastructure plan investing in freight rail to support our economic recovery from the pandemic."

Victorian Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne said the link improves efficiency for major freight customers at the Somerton terminal and boosts conditions for motorists, too.

"This is a massive win for both motorists and industry, as we continue to reduce congestion and make it easier and cheaper for businesses to use rail freight," Ms Horne said.

The Hon Michael McCormack MP

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“Putting containers on rail will reduce truck movements around the port gate and cut the cost of the last mile, which disproportionately impacts rail freight customers.”

“We are backing this vital freight connection to unlock private sector investment and economic growth into the long-term.”

As well as the new dual-gauge track, the Austrak project will see existing tracks realigned and upgrades to rail infrastructure.

The investment will also enable sleeper replacement, installation of refrigerated container points across existing infrastructure and realignment of the existing northern rail access entrance.

The improved rail connection will unlock private sector co-investment, with Austrak set to upgrade its terminal facilities.

Austrak has also committed to handling tens of thousands of Twenty Foot Equivalent shipping containers per annum within five years.

The upgrade is part of the Victorian Government’s work to continue supporting the Port of Melbourne, which contributes \$6 billion to the Victorian economy each year and is a crucial part of the State’s supply chain.

Victorian Member for Broadmeadows Frank McGuire said the new rail connection would be welcomed by the local community.

“Construction and ongoing operation of the new terminal will create hundreds of jobs in the Northern suburbs,” Mr McGuire said.

“It will build on the strengths of this area as one of the best manufacturing hubs in Victoria.”

The project is expected to be completed and operational by mid-2022.

The Australian Government has committed \$10.6 million to the project and the Victorian Government is investing \$5.6 million.

The Australian Government has committed \$38 million to the \$58 million overall Port Rail Shuttle Network in partnership with the Victorian Government.

Ends.

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