

# 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



Wednesday, 12 May 2021

## WORKS UNDERWAY TO SUPPORT A KEY FREIGHT SERVICE

The Andrews Labor Government is helping to keep one of regional Victoria's busiest freight trains on the tracks, with more than \$3 million in improvement works set to start on an important Gippsland rail siding.

The extensive program of works will help ensure goods from Australian Paper's Gippsland mill continue to travel by rail for export and distribution across Australia.

The Maryvale mill opened in Gippsland in 1937 and has since grown to be one of the largest employers in the region, manufacturing close to 600,000 tonnes of paper and board annually.

The works will take place at a junction on the Gippsland line near Morwell where passenger and freight services share the network, and will include sleeper replacements, ballast renewal, track resurfacing and mud hole removal, as well as yard and drainage works.

This means improved track condition, ensuring the mill train can connect to the Gippsland line and run to Melbourne, with improved safety and reliability of the siding for freight services.

The works will also benefit passenger services by reducing the risk of delays due to track faults where freight trains enter the passenger network.

A crew of V/Line staff and contractors will complete the program of works in four blocks, with the first beginning this week. The works will be completed between train services and during upcoming planned works and coach replacements along the Gippsland line – minimising disruption to services. The works are expected to be completed by mid-June.

The works are funded as part of the Labor Government's \$83 million investment in regional rail maintenance under the *Building Works* stimulus package. In response to the coronavirus crisis, the Government is investing \$2.7 billion in economic stimulus – supporting communities that need it most by investing in critical projects, boosting the economy and supporting employment.

The work follows the installation last year of an automated signaling system in Morwell to better connect freight trains from the mill connect with the main Gippsland line, replacing manual processes.

### Quote attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

*"These important works will help ensure one of our highest-volume regional rail freight trains can continue to operate a frequent and reliable service now and into the future."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

*"We'll continue to invest in projects that not only upgrade our freight network – but support local communities to grow and prosper, while creating more jobs."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Jane Garrett

*"The Australian Paper Mill has a long and proud history and we are focused on supporting our freight industry to continue doing what they do best."*

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