

Media Release

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



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HELPING V/LINE DELIVER BETTER REGIONAL SERVICES

The Victorian Government is taking action to ensure V/Line is set up to deliver better services for fast growing regional communities.

V/Line is Australia's fastest growing regional railway operator, with a 77 per cent increase in annual passenger numbers from 13 million in 2014 to 23 million before the pandemic in 2019.

The Government has responded to this growth through record investment – adding 700 additional weekly services since 2014, investing \$1.2 billion in new regional trains and supporting an upgrade of every regional rail line.

This funding boost continues through the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*, with a further investment of \$613 million over four years in major periodic and routine maintenance on V/Line's passenger and freight lines.

As we continue our record investment in the regional rail network and more people catch V/Line than ever before, the Government wants to ensure we maximise the performance of V/Line.

From 1 July, V/Line will transition from a State-Owned Enterprise to a Statutory Authority. This will bring V/Line more directly into the centre of our public transport system, improving oversight and delivery of regional public transport services. An Advisory Board will be established to provide advice and support to the CEO.

As a result of the change, the CEO of V/Line will report to the Secretary of the Department of Transport. This is another step since the creation of the new, integrated Department that will better align V/Line with transport planning, Big Build project delivery, and decision making.

Matt Carrick will be appointed V/Line CEO for 12 months to oversee the implementation of this reform. Mr Carrick has a background in both the private sector and senior levels of government and is currently CEO at State Trustees, where he has overseen an organisational restructure and program of reform to improve outcomes for clients.

As this is a structural change for the leadership of V/Line there will be no job losses, and existing services and rail safety arrangements remain in place.

Over the past six years the Victorian Government has invested more than \$13.1 billion to deliver the upgrades and transport services in regional Victoria to connect people to jobs, health services and education.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"We're putting more money than ever before into ensuring regional Victoria has better connections through our public transport system – and we want to ensure that we have a strong V/Line to match that investment."

"We're not only ensuring V/Line has the best structure for the future – we're investing more than \$600 million in vital maintenance to deliver more reliable services."

"I want to thank the V/Line board for their service, and I look forward to getting to work with Matt Carrick to deliver the best outcomes for regional Victorians."