

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



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STIMULUS WORKS SUPPORT A KEY GIPPSLAND FREIGHT SERVICE

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Latrobe Valley paper will continue to be sent by rail for export and distribution for years to come, following significant improvement works to the Maryvale freight siding.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne said the \$3 million program had enhanced the reliability of the freight service, supporting one of the region's biggest employers, the Opal Australian Paper Maryvale Mill.

Part of a broader \$83 million investment into regional rail maintenance, the upgrade links the mill to the main Gippsland rail line, including sleeper replacements, ballast renewal, track resurfacing and mud hole removal, and yard and drainage work.

Improved track conditions will help ensure the daily trains can run from the mill before connecting to the Gippsland line and continuing to Melbourne.

The works will also assist with the ongoing upkeep of the line and improve the safety and reliability of the siding for freight services.

The Maryvale mill opened in Gippsland in 1937 and has since grown to employ 850 people, manufacturing close to 600,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard annually, with over half transported by train.

The work follows the installation of an automated signalling system in Morwell last year to help freight trains from the mill connect with the main Gippsland line, replacing manual processes and assisting trains to better integrate with the rest of the network.

With this maintenance program nearing completion across regional Victoria, the stimulus works have seen more than 120,000 sleepers replaced on the rail tracks between Sea Lake and Dunolly, making it faster and easier for freight operators to transport goods.

The program's final project will see a \$7.3 million investment to improve level crossing safety by replacing rail infrastructure and equipment at six-level crossings across the state, including installing state-of-art axle counters and computer-based interlocking equipment.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"These important works will help ensure one of Victoria's busiest regional rail freight trains can continue to operate a frequent and reliable service now and into the future."

"We have already delivered more than \$75 million in vital regional rail upgrades under this package, improving freight connectivity and bolstering support for regional producers."

Quotes attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

"The Maryvale mill supports hundreds of direct jobs across the Latrobe Valley, and this investment to improve its operations, freight, and connectivity to the Gippsland line will improve efficiencies for years to come."

"From our smallest primary producers to our largest exporters, rail freight plays a vital role in the industries that are central to productivity, prosperity, and economic growth across the region."

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