

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



Thursday, 15 July 2021

A BETTER FREIGHT FUTURE FOR THE CENTRAL MURRAY

The Andrews Labor Government is making further investments into the freight network for farmers and businesses in the Central Murray with a new plan to improve freight connections, boost safety and efficiency, and cut costs in the supply chain.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne said a \$75,000 road freight study would identify infrastructure constraints on the local road network and develop a plan to enhance access for High Productivity Freight Vehicles (HPFVs).

The Department of Transport will work with Swan Hill Rural City Council and Gannawarra Shire Council, with the Labor Government contributing \$50,000 to the project.

The study is an essential first step to improving the freight network for local farmers and industry and will provide strong evidence for further investments required to expand HPFV access restricted by load limits.

Freight Victoria will provide specialist advice as part of this project, with National Heavy Vehicle Regulator data to inform the study alongside local freight industry knowledge.

Road and rail will continue to play vital roles in the efficient movement of freight across the state, with this study to complement significant rail freight investments.

Rail freight stimulus works on the Sea Lake and Dimboola lines have replaced more than 120,000 sleepers, removing more than 80 kilometres of speed restrictions funded under the \$83 million *Building Works* Freight package.

The Labor Government is also continuing to invest in the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS), with \$3.55 million allocated in the 2021/2022 Victorian State Budget to continue the program of freight corridors across the state.

Efficient freight is key to keeping Victoria moving. This project analyses the changes needed on council-owned roads and structures to allow better access for efficient and modern HPFVs – safer, more modern heavy vehicles that reduce the number of trips required on the network and lessen the environmental impact of travel.

This investment complements the 3,000 kilometres of arterial roads added to Victoria's pre-approved High Productivity Freight Vehicle Network earlier in June.

This project is funded by the Labor Government's *Flexible Local Transport Solutions Program*, which provides grants to local government and community organisations for small-scale, high local impact transport projects.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"We'll work with the local Councils to establish a stronger and safer High Productivity Freight Vehicle network by identifying works that need doing across the Swan Hill and Gannawarra region."

"Road freight plays a vital role in transporting Victorian exports such as fruit, grain and other agricultural products, and this work will cut costs for farmers and freight operators, delivering better outcomes to local communities."