

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Suburban Development



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## HIGHER AXLE LOADS BOOSTING OUR RAIL FREIGHT CAPACITY

The Andrews Labor Government is boosting capacity across critical freight-only broad-gauge rail lines, making it safer, easier and quicker for freight operators and farmers to transport their produce to port.

Freight operators on the Shepparton-Tocumwal corridor can now benefit from upgrades completed by V/Line – from increasing the depth of crushed rock supporting tracks, to assessing and upgrading culverts and bridges on high-use corridors –making it possible to carry heavier loads.

Works completed by V/Line have now delivered higher tonnage capacity at four grain terminals on the broad-gauge freight network from 19 to 20 tonne axle-load (TAL) with more soon to follow.

Across Victoria and southern New South Wales, one-million tonnes of grain valued at \$600 million was moved to port from 29 active grain sites, including Tocumwal, by more than 530 bulk grain trains on the V/Line freight rail network from July 2021 to April this year.

A typical 650-metre long loaded train carries more than \$1.3 million worth of grain and is the equivalent to 50 loaded semi-trailers. The increase from 19 to 20 TAL means suitable grain trains can carry an additional 160 tonnes of grain, which is the equivalent of around 3.5 B-Double truckloads of extra grain in each train.

The Victorian Budget 2022/23 will deliver a further \$181 million for critical maintenance works on the regional rail freight network, to improve its competitiveness and support the growing freight task that is vital to regional economies and our supply chains.

In addition, a further \$3.5 million has been funded to extend the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS). The MSIS supports more than 170 freight industry jobs at intermodal terminals in regional Victoria and removes the equivalent of 28,000 truck trips from our roads every year.

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

*“We’re investing heavily in new track, new sleepers and new ballast on lines in north and north-west Victoria, particularly those that handle grain and will benefit most from higher axle loads.”*

*“Our freight network contributes \$21 billion to our economy each year and employs 260,000 Victorians, connecting our farmers and producers to the rest of Australia and the world.”*

### Quotes attributable to Pacific National CEO and Managing Director Mr Paul Scurrah:

*“The Shepparton-Tocumwal rail line is a vital link in Victoria’s supply chain and investment to boost capacity. It ensures Pacific National can continue to move large grain volumes by trains to the Port of Melbourne. Hauling more bulk grain by trains means fewer trucks on country roads, improving safety and reducing emissions in regional transport networks.”*

*“As the largest hauler of grain and agricultural products, regional exports, and bulk goods on the eastern seaboard, Pacific National delivers what matters for our customers and has moved more than 200,000 tonnes of grain on this line over the past 12-months which is equivalent to removing more than 3,700 trucks off Victoria’s road network.”*

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