

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Transport Infrastructure

Minister for Suburban Rail Loop

Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery



Monday, 10 October 2022

MATTHEW GUY'S LIBERALS AND NATIONALS PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN DE-RAILS REGIONAL TRAVELLERS

Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan today called on Matthew Guy's Liberals and Nationals to come clean on why their public transport pledge abandons regional Victorians, ignoring them once again.

Yesterday Matthew Guy announced a plan to cap public transport costs at \$2-a-day but excluded all V-Line train services.

Country passengers are being shunted into second class, with the Liberal Nationals plan only covering public transport travel on buses in and around regional cities and towns.

This is the second time Matthew Guy's Liberals and Nationals have broken their promises for regional Victorians. Just a few months ago, the Liberal and National leaders were crowing about the \$8 billion they would spend on regional hospitals, with Mr Walsh stating:

"There was \$35 billion locked into one city project, but under a Liberal and Nationals Government \$8 billion of this will be redirected to our regional hospitals to address our health crisis."

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But it's been revealed they will break that promise, slashing \$5-6 billion from regional hospitals.

Matthew Guy's Liberals and Nationals' unfair transport plan completely ignores regional passengers travelling by train, pretending cost of living pressure does not exist in regional Victoria, with discounted fares only in the city.

V/Line schedules 2200 train services weekly, with trains running between Melbourne and Geelong, as well as to and from Warrnambool, Ballarat, Maryborough, Ararat, Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca, Seymour, Shepparton, Albury, Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale.

Increasing numbers of Victorians also live in regional Victoria, with many commuting to Melbourne by train for work. The Labor government has delivered a more than 50 per cent increase in regional rail services since 2015.

Nearly 18 million passenger journeys were made on V/Line services in the 12 months to June 2020.

Only a Labor Government can deliver modern VLocity trains, with the infrastructure upgrades to support them, backing rural and regional Victorians.

The Liberals have a history of cuts and closures. They privatised V-Line and it was only a Labor Government that brought it back. A Baillieu-Napthine Government cut \$100 million from V-Line and had a secret plan to sack 200 staff.

Jeff Kennett described regional Victoria as the "toenails of the state", shutting down train stations in Mildura, Bairnsdale, Dimboola, Leongatha, Cobram and Ararat in the 1990s. In doing this, Kennett closed train lines from Cobram-Numurkah, Ararat-Beaufort and Dimboola-Stawell.

If he gets the chance – Matthew Guy's Liberals will do exactly the same thing.

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Transport Infrastructure Jacinta Allan

“You can’t trust Matthew Guy’s Liberals when it comes to public transport - they cut train lines, closed train stations and then sold off public transport, sending ticket prices soaring.”

“Last time they slugged passengers with the largest fare increase in decades - and now they’re proposing to give billions of dollars as a gift to multi-national companies for something Victorians should still own.”

“Matthew Guy’s Liberals have already broken their promise to spend \$8 billion on regional hospitals and under this scheme country passengers are being treated as second best, with V-line missing too.”