

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Ports and Freight
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Tuesday, 10 October 2023

RECORD BREAKING FREIGHT TRAIN DELIVERS THE GOODS

A record-breaking trial run for the longest intermodal freight train will pave the way for regular, more efficient services between Merbein and the Port of Melbourne, thanks to the Allan Labor Government.

The 1500 metre container train operated by Pacific National was hauled by three locomotives pulling 86 wagons. This longer, heavier train can haul approximately 4000 tonnes of freight without needing extra locomotives and train crews.

Longer trains will operate during peak seasons to move higher volumes of produce such as table grapes and citrus from the Sunraysia Region, taking more trucks off regional and urban roads.

The extra freight capacity will provide cost savings for farmers, producers and operators without the need to run an additional service.

Regional communities will benefit from the Labor Government's \$181 million investment in the Murray Basin Rail Project for critical maintenance on the regional rail network through the *2022/23 Victorian Budget*.

Each year the train known as the "Fruity" carries approximately \$450 million worth of horticultural produce on three return-services weekly from Merbein near Mildura to the Port of Melbourne.

Trains are also shifting export grain from Yelta, north-west of Mildura, for the first time in four years.

Major upgrades on the Mildura freight line, including upcoming works on a mobile refueling facility and signalling upgrades at Ouyen yard and an extension to the passing loop at Emu, are being delivered by Rail Projects Victoria as part of the Murray Basin Rail Project.

The project is delivering key benefits for primary producers and freight operators including increased capacity, improved network reliability and resilience, and reduced journey times.

The record-breaking service is thanks to a partnership between V/Line, freight operator Pacific National and freight forwarder Seaway Intermodal whose services are benefitting from a more resilient network with longer sidings, upgraded track and higher axle-loads.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"We're laying the groundwork now for this and other services to grow as part of our long-term strategy and commitment to move more freight by rail and reduce the number of trucks on roads."

"Our investments mean operators can capitalise on spare capacity from existing services and run longer, heavier intermodal and bulk grain services – that's great news for operators and producers."

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