

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



Wednesday, 10 April 2024

MORE GRAIN BY TRAIN THANKS TO FREIGHT INVESTMENT

The Allan Labor Government's investment in Victoria's regional rail-freight network has given the state's \$4.4 billion grain industry the confidence it needs to shift more grain by rail freight for both domestic and export markets.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne today visited GrainCorp's Geelong export terminal to see firsthand how more than \$181 million in Labor Government investments have made rail freight more efficient and attractive across the industry.

Grain volumes moved by rail in Victoria increased by 95 per cent between July and December 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 and by 57 per cent between July 2023 to March 2024 compared to the previous year.

This has resulted in an extra 500,000 tonnes of grain transported across the state by rail – with one standard 3,000-tonne grain train carrying about \$1.2 million worth of produce being the equivalent of removing 70 B-Double trucks from regional roads.

The Labor Government's investment in the regional freight network has allowed heavier trains to discharge at Geelong Port through increasing axle-load capability at key grain handling sites as well as through recommissioning the Gheringhap loop near Geelong.

V/Line has already delivered axle-load capability upgrades across Piangil, Woorinen, Tocumwal, Murchison East, Elmore, Mitiamo, Charlton, and Wycheproof, with more upgrades in the pipeline.

GrainCorp has since invested in rail improvements at several of its up-country sites in Victoria, to handle larger and more modern wagons, including extending railway sidings at some terminals in partnership with V/Line to accommodate longer, heavier trains.

Further confidence in the rail network was demonstrated by operator Southern Shorthaul Railroad's recent purchase of 22 new broad-gauge grain wagons – the first order for new broad-gauge grain wagons in 16 years.

In October 2022 V/Line, bulk grain handling companies, and rail freight operator Pacific National formed the Grain Rail Improvement Plan Working Group – formalising their commitment to optimise the rail freight network.

Quote attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"Our targeted investments in our regional freight network have given our grain industry the confidence to put more of their grain on trains more often – helping to take more trucks off our roads."

Quote attributable to Minister for Agriculture Ros Spence

"We are proudly supporting the livelihood of Victorian farmers when we invest in how they get their produce from farm to market in a safe and secure manner."

Quote attributable to GrainCorp COO Klaus Pamminger

"GrainCorp is working closely with the Victorian Government and industry stakeholders to improve rail infrastructure in Victoria, to facilitate quicker and more efficient movement of grain from our sites to end users in domestic and export markets."

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