

Media Release

The Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Major Projects



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FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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UNTANGLING FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL IN BALLARAT

The Andrews Labor Government has unveiled details of the \$130 million program to untangle the Ballarat rail network and provide faster and more reliable freight paths from the Murray Basin region to the ports.

The Freight-Passenger Rail Separation Project will deliver a number of track and signalling improvements which were not included in the original Murray Basin Rail Project, as well as providing the infrastructure to support future increases in passenger rail.

The project will:

- Untangle congested rail pathways through the Ballarat station precinct - separating broad-gauge passenger services from standard-gauge freight services
- Remove the Armstrong Street Bridge single track bottleneck, duplicating one kilometre of track between Ballarat Station and North Ballarat Junction and improve the track layout through the Ballarat rail corridor
- Ensure a minimum of 42 weekly return freight paths from the Murray Basin region through Ballarat, with the ability to increase to 65 if required via the Ararat and Maryborough loop
- Reduce the number of signalling systems on the Ballarat corridor and upgrade the 1970's Ballarat signalling system to fit for purpose
- Allow greater line speed for freight services within the Ballarat rail corridor by improving track geometry and the removal of congestion points
- Provide for the future uplift of passenger services including a fifth daily V/Line service to Ararat, pave the way for additional services to Maryborough and retain the dual-gauge connection between Maryborough and Dunolly to allow future passenger rail to Dunolly

Rail Projects Victoria will work with Transport for Victoria and V/Line to seek feedback from the freight industry as it finalises the project.

Stage two of the Murray Basin Rail Project is largely complete, with freight trains running between Yelta and Maryborough, and between Maryborough and Ararat on a standard gauge line, enabling freight trains to carry more produce to ports.

Speed restrictions on the Yelta to Maryborough line will be lifted by the end of June, enabling trains to run at up to 80 km/h, reducing train travel times by up to one hour.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan

"We're continuing our unprecedented investment in regional rail infrastructure and investing in works to remove a major bottleneck in the Ballarat area to improve efficiencies between rail passenger and freight train operations."

"The Freight-Passenger Rail Separation Project will ensure that we maximise the benefits of the Murray Basin Rail Project and the Ballarat Line Upgrade – that means more passenger services in the future and dedicated pathways for freight to the ports."

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