

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 16 October 2018

A REAL PLAN FOR FAST REGIONAL RAIL AND METRO RAIL FOR THE WEST

Only a re-elected Andrews Labor Government will overhaul our rail network to deliver fast rail to the regions and more metro services to our growing suburbs.

We said we'd repair the damage from successive Liberal Governments taking the axe to regional rail, and we are. We're building new modern trains, and our Regional Rail Revival is fixing the unreliability on our regional lines, and providing the more frequent services people deserve.

But the growth of Melbourne's western suburbs, and the popularity of Geelong and Ballarat as commuter hubs, means our network needs more than just an upgrade: it needs re-drawing.

We started work to deliver fast regional rail with \$50 million in the Victorian Budget 2018/19 and committed \$5 billion to Airport Rail Link via Sunshine to unlock the west of the state – but there's more to do.

That work has identified the projects we need to make fast rail to Geelong and Ballarat a reality – and a re-elected Labor Government will invest an extra \$100 million to complete all the planning we need to get it done.

Only Labor's \$150 million plan includes the complete overhaul of our public transport network, integrating the Metro Tunnel, Suburban Rail Loop, and Airport Rail Link, and three new interdependent projects needed for fast rail.

The new *Western Rail Plan* includes planning for the full separation of regional and metro services on the Geelong and Ballarat lines – the first step in delivering fast rail to these cities – meaning fewer stops, faster trips and less crowded trains. Labor will complete the full business case and technical work required to deliver:

- Two new electrified metro lines to Melton and Wyndham Vale with possible new stations, with the Wyndham Vale line potentially becoming the western section of the Suburban Rail Loop.
- Additional tracks between Sunshine and the CBD to run extra services, most likely through a new rail tunnel which would also be utilised by Airport-bound trains and integrated with the Airport Rail Link.
- A major overhaul to the express-Geelong and Ballarat lines to run fast trains, including the potential full electrification of these lines with new electric regional rolling stock.

Work on the full business case for this overhaul will begin in 2019 in conjunction with the business cases for the Suburban Rail Loop and Airport Rail Link, which only Labor will deliver. The separation of regional and metro services has to occur before fast trains can be delivered, and the full plan is expected to take around a decade to complete.

Our regional cities will be a vital part of delivering this work. To ensure this overhaul is done in partnership, the Andrews Labor Government will sign an agreement with the City of Greater Geelong, and seek a similar agreement with other regional cities, to work together in delivering fast rail.

The *Western Rail Plan* builds on Labor's other commitments – including new stations in and around Bendigo and planning for more track capacity between Kyneton and Bendigo, and the Waurn Ponds duplication which is vital for fast rail to Geelong.

This is a realistic, evidence-based plan – building on work already underway, and delivered in collaboration with our regional cities.

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Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

“This plan will deliver the transformation that our state needs – electrification of rail lines out to the west, and fast rail to Geelong and Ballarat, returning country trains to country communities.”

“Only Labor can be trusted to build the regional public transport we need for the future – taking cars off the road, reducing travel times and getting you home safer and sooner.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan

“Whether it’s axing regional train services or slashing \$120 million from V/Line, the Liberals simply can’t be trusted on regional rail.”

“It was only a Labor Government that saved our rail lines from Liberal cuts and closures, and it’s only Labor that will get on and deliver true fast rail to our regional centres and create thousands of new jobs in the process.”

Quote attributable to Member for Geelong Christine Couzens

“Whether it’s Doncaster or Rowville rail, the Liberals always promise big when it comes to public transport but always fail to deliver. Only Labor will deliver fast rail to Geelong.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville

“It’s only Labor that has delivered hundreds of extra Geelong services thanks to the Regional Rail Link but we know there’s more to do. We’ve already started the work to deliver fast rail and it’s only Labor that will get it done.”

Quote attributable to Member for Lara John Eren

“Unlike Matthew Guy’s desperate attempt to hoodwink the Geelong community, Labor’s plan will deliver the dedicated fast rail to Geelong that our community needs to grow and prosper.”