

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Ports and Freight



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

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NEW TRAIN DRIVERS TO INCREASE REGIONAL RELIABILITY

V/Line will soon have more drivers than ever before thanks to a 20 per cent increase in drivers by the end of next year, helping deliver more reliable services across the entire regional network.

As part of an intense period of recruitment and training, around 30 fully qualified drivers have come on board across the network in the past year, and more than 120 trainees are currently completing an intensive driver training course thanks to the Andrews Labor Government.

At the end of next year, there will be more than 500 fully qualified drivers across the V/Line network, helping improve reliability, reduce cancellations and prepare the network for future growth.

Each trainee driver must complete several stages of training before they are qualified to drive V/Line trains, including class room work, on-the-job practical training and practice in V/Line's state-of-the-art driving simulators.

Several trainees are currently undertaking on-the-job training alongside a qualified instructor on Seymour, Shepparton and Albury services as part of the final phase of their course. Trainees rotate through each region to become familiar with the track across the network.

The safety of motorists and train passengers in Victoria's North East has also recently been boosted, with the Labor Government upgrading level crossings at Avenel and Barnawartha.

Works to install new boom gates, bells and flashing lights at the Ewings Road level crossing at Avenel and the High Street level crossing at Barnawartha were carried out by V/Line between March and April, helping prevent serious collisions between motorists and trains on the Albury rail line.

Seymour and Shepparton line passengers will also benefit from a multimillion-dollar track maintenance investment delivered by the Labor Government this year, with more than 55,000 life-expired sleepers on the two tracks between Donnybrook and Seymour to be replaced in 2019.

The \$7.2 million first stage which recently began involves replacing sleepers on the Seymour-bound track until 26 June. A similar amount will be invested in replacing timber sleepers as part of the second stage on the Melbourne-bound track from 9 July to 19 December.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Melissa Horne

"We're providing a massive boost to driver numbers by the end of next year, which will mean more reliable services, less cancellations, and more local jobs."

"As our regional cities continue to grow – we're investing in the people and infrastructure to help keep our regional network moving and get you where you need to go safely and quickly."

Quotes attributable to Member for Northern Victoria Jaclyn Symes

"It's great to see a fresh crop of new drivers coming in that will not only help improve reliability in the short term, but also support the network for years to come."

"We started work on the \$7.2 million first stage of the Seymour sleeper replacement program recently, which is another example of our commitment to building a safe and reliable regional rail network."

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