



Hon Jacinta Allan MP

Deputy Premier
Minister for Transport Infrastructure
Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop
Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery

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Ref: CMIN-1-22-13385

Cr Kylie Zanker
Mayor
Yarriambiack Shire Council
34 Lyle Street
Warracknabeal Victoria 3393

25 / 07 / 2022

Dear Mayor

I refer to your letter of 11 May 2022 addressed to the Premier, the Hon Daniel Andrews MP, regarding Murray Basin Rail Project . As the matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, it has been referred to me for response. I apologise for the delay in responding.

In 2019, the Andrews Labor Government commissioned the Department of Transport and Rail Projects Victoria to undertake a Business Case Review for the Murray Basin Rail Project, backed by extensive industry consultation.

The Business Case Review highlighted the immense complexities involved with delivering the project and demonstrated that the same benefits could be achieved through enhancements to the existing broad and standard-gauge network rather than standardisation.

Work is well underway on these revised works, which will increase speeds, improve reliability, and boost freight capacity to encourage more freight to go to port by rail. As you may also be aware, these works are jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments.

The revised works address key operational issues that have been identified by industry. Moreover, the works will create a greater number of freight paths on the Murray Basin network, with works expected to enable 49 train paths up from the current 28 paths.

Early works are now complete on upgrades to the Ouyen to Murrayville Line, enabling speed increases from 25km/h to 40 km/h for the majority of the line, helping reduce freight transport times. Heat restrictions that currently close the line when temperatures reach 33 degrees have also been removed.

Significant work has been undertaken between Maryborough and Ararat allowing the freight line to be reopened after 15 years. Further track upgrades on the line are now underway and are expected to be completed by the end of 2022. These will increase load capacity for wagons with small wheels and improve travel times by an hour in each direction.

Work is also underway on the addition of a 300-metre siding at Donald Yard to provide additional options for freight trains and wagons to be stored when not in use.

We are also undertaking design work and procurement on further upgrades, including new crossing loops and sidings, improvements to Maryborough and Dunolly junctions and signalling upgrades, which will be delivered as part of the revised scope of the project.

The Murray Basin Rail Project will support 1,000 direct and indirect jobs during delivery, and provide a major boost to the transport industry, agricultural sector and regional communities.

Please be assured that the Murray Basin Rail Project is a key priority for the Victorian Government. If you require further information, please contact Alison Saunders, Manager – Communications & Stakeholder Relations from Rail Projects Victoria on 0487 033 532.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely



Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Member for Bendigo East
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