

Media Release



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LONGER DISTANCE V/LINE TRAIN SERVICES - THE FACTS

Last Friday the Minister for Public Transport issued a Media Release claiming improvements being introduced for longer distance travellers on V/line Inter City trains serving Gippsland stations between Traralgon and Bairnsdale. This now includes the use of VLocity trains on all Bairnsdale services.

We at Rail Futures want to set the record straight.

The Victorian government is actually progressively downgrading the quality of Victorian longer distance Inter City train services. What are claimed as improvements to these services are in reality reductions in the quality of service being offered.

The more recent VLocity trains have hard seats which are most uncomfortable for other than short distance trips. Another twenty similar trains are still to be delivered. Albury line trains are a singular exception, being especially modified VLocity trains with comfortable seats and other facilities for longer distance travel.

The last loco hauled Inter City train with First Class reclining seats and on-board catering has now been withdrawn from the evening service to, and morning service from Bairnsdale. Pity the poor passengers arriving into Bairnsdale on V/Line long distance coaches from Canberra and the Sapphire Coast who are transferring to Melbourne bound trains at Bairnsdale. Nothing to eat or drink for another 4 hours! VLocity trains have limited space for luggage, the previous luggage check-in service has been abandoned and bicycles are now only allowed on board at the Conductor's discretion.

Additionally, instead of taking advantage of higher allowable train speeds for VLocity trains west of Traralgon (160 instead of 115 km/h) which would have shaved around 12 minutes off all trips for travellers beyond Traralgon, six extra stops are being added at smaller intermediate stations so that ALL Bairnsdale trains will now stop at all stations between Pakenham and Bairnsdale.

Longer distance V/Line Inter City services are thus being progressively downgraded, not improved as the Government claims! After Bairnsdale, the Warrnambool line is next to get similar treatment. All counter to the vision set out in our recently released Rail Futures publication "Growing Victoria's Regions – Rail the Catalyst for Regional Growth" - see Growing Victoria's Regions | (railfutures.org.au).

Longer distance Intercity travellers to Warrnambool, Swan Hill, Albury and Bairnsdale have a limited number of daily train services to select from and deserve much better.

ENDS.

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Rail Futures Institute Inc. is an independent non-partisan group formed to advocate cost effective rail and intermodal solutions for public transport and freight problems based on sound commercial, economic, environmental and social reasoning. Rail Futures members include experienced rail professionals, engineers, urban planners and economists.

