

# NEWS POST

RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC - QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

## IN THIS EDITION

NEW Chairman for A.R.A.	1
Picture of the Quarter	1
Presidential Words	2
Perth – New Ellenbrook Line Opens	3
ARTC – Releases Concepts for Euroa	4
Air Quality at Southern Cross Station	5
Melton Station Upgrade Details	6
New Station for Tarneit West	7
Getting More Victorian Freight on Rail	7
South Aus Railways to 2050 – Part 2	9
Brisbane Rail Plans for 2032 Olympics	10
Victorian Rail Freight News Update	11
A Tale of TWO Maryborough’s	12
The NEW V/Line Timetable Decoded	13
Latest Newspix around the Tracks	14

## CONTRIBUTING TO RFI NEWSPOST

Members are invited to submit news articles and opinion pieces, plus reports of construction activities on transport projects. Submissions should be no more than 800 words. Members photos of current rail / tram activities are also welcome in jpeg or png format. Contributions may be edited to fit the available space. RFI reserves the right to edit / decline articles it considers not appropriate. Please forward all submissions to: [secretary@railfutures.org.au](mailto:secretary@railfutures.org.au)

*Opinions expressed in RFI Newspost are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Rail Futures Institute (Inc) . (RFI)*

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Publisher - David Hardy

## PICTURE OF THE QUARTER



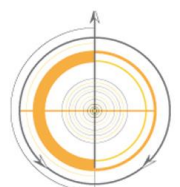
Final placement of new beams by ARTC at the Seymour = Avenel road overbridge between Seymour and Mangalore to provide double stacked container clearance for Inland Rail freight trains (Stage – 1) travelling between Melbourne – Albury – Wagga – Junee – Illabo – Stockingbal and Parkes.  
Photo – ARTC

## NEW CHAIRMAN FOR A.R.A.

Following an extensive national recruitment process, the ARA Board has endorsed Lucio Di Bartolomeo as the new Chair. Mr Di Bartolomeo comes to the ARA with past experience as a Non Executive Director (NED) from organizations including Australia Post, Australian Naval Infrastructure, and Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). Mr Di Bartolomeo is a qualified civil engineer and holds a Master’s Degree in engineering science.



Lucio Di Bartolomeo – Chair Australian Railways Association



**PRESIDENTS WORDS -****IMPLEMENTATION OF LONG AWAITED  
MELBOURNE PORT RAIL SHUTTLES**

I thought it timely to have something to say about the ongoing delays in introduction of the Port/Rail Shuttle project in Melbourne. It's now 20 years since I was first involved in development of this concept. The intent of creating a PRSN (Port-Rail Shuttle Network) hasn't changed in that time. It's to reduce the very heavy truck traffic around inner Melbourne by establishing hub terminals, initially in the northern, western and south-eastern suburbs, served by regular shuttle trains from and to a dedicated terminal or terminals at the Port. Such shuttles have been successfully operating in Sydney for years (currently with a 19 % market share) and also in Perth.

It was always going to be a challenging project in Melbourne with broad and standard rail gauges, three separate rail infrastructure managers (MTM, V/Line and ARTC), three potential Port terminals, several possible rail operators and three separate hub terminal operators. In my view, the Government, through DTP (Department of Transport and Planning), has never succeeded in getting its mind around the processes and systems necessary to make PRSN work in this complex environment. Despite all the obvious challenges, there was also a fanciful belief that these shuttles could operate commercially without a subsidy or an offsetting impost on road transport which currently operates between the Port and these parts of Melbourne.

Funding for PRSN first appeared in the 2014 State Budget with a part contribution from the Commonwealth which supported detailed planning within the then DoT. Ten years on, it seems that, despite having so far spent some \$200 million to get part of the required infrastructure built at the Port together with connections into the rail network at Altona and Dandenong South, we may not be much closer to the PRS system making serious headway.

The Government has hyped that the PRSN will take many thousands of truck trips off Melbourne roads which it is theoretically capable of doing. But the long journey toward this objective will only start rolling once the operational issues are firmly nailed down and bedded in.

This will take serious and sustained leadership from someone with authority, a detailed understanding of how the rail network and port interfaces work day by day and who has the necessary support while leading the disparate parties towards common goals.



Multiple issues must be resolved including how, and by whom, the critical coordination needed 24/7 at the Port end will be managed. To achieve this, essential train paths, especially for broad gauge shuttles through the metro area, must be established and guaranteed. This will require operating precision and a high level of reliability.

Rail operators need to provide reliable locomotives and suitable wagons to make up 600 metre dedicated shuttle trains. The hub terminal operators need suitable infrastructure and be willing to dovetail their operations with constraints at the Port and on the rail corridors involved. And more.

Although rail can be efficient on suitable short hauls, the impediments to be overcome for PRSN in Melbourne are such that financial support negotiated by way of specific subsidies (or other offsets as mentioned above) will be unavoidable, at least for the early years. With only one of Melbourne's three port stevedores having a dedicated PRS terminal and the one at Webb Dock without a rail facility at all, suggestions of a potential rail market share of 30% of containerized imports is also fanciful. (To put that into context, this would involve at least 20 fully loaded shuttle trains departing the Port each day). An initial target of perhaps 10 % within 5 years, requiring daily operation of six or seven full train loads of imported containers, might be more realistic.

Sydney makes their PRSN work because their road congestion is horrific and they have dedicated freight-only lines including to Port Botany. Perth's PRS to and from Fremantle has achieved a substantial market share because of strong government facilitation and a subsidy.

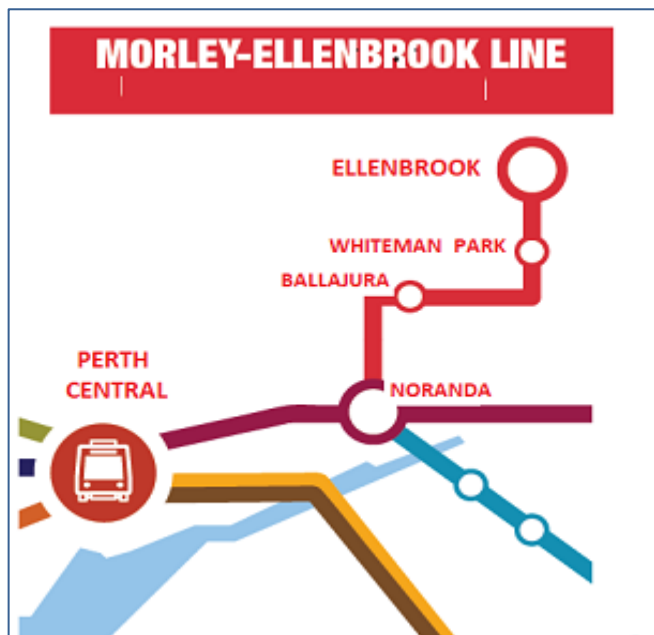
Some of us have waiting patiently to see if Melbourne's PRSN ever happens, let alone meet its full potential. We are still waiting!"

**FOOTNOTE:** As RF Newstopost went to press Jeroen Weimar has been announced as Victoria's new Secretary of the Department of Transport and Planning from 27/01/2025. With wide actual transport experience Overseas and here in Melbourne Jeroen is an excellent appointee to take on this key role at this time.

- John Hearsch



## PERTH METRONET ELLENBROOK LINE OPENS



**Ellenbrook Station**

The first train to Ellenbrook hit the tracks in late-August, 2024 marking the beginning of a four-week program of rigorous testing and commissioning. The program was undertaken to ensure all infrastructure and systems are operating efficiently and trains will run safely and smoothly.

Following this stage of testing and commissioning train driver familiarisation will occur before the line opens to passenger traffic in December 2024

Jointly funded by the Federal and Western Australian Governments, the \$1.65 billion Morley - Ellenbrook Line will be the largest public transport project delivered in Perth in more than 16 years.

Starting at Bayswater Station on the Midland Line, the new 21km line traverses the median of the Tonkin Highway, through land north of Marshall Road, along the western side of Drumpellier Drive and ends in Ellenbrook, south of The Parkway.

Ellenbrook is one of Perth's fastest growing regions, with annual population growth forecast to be more than 6.5%. Owing to the current lack of rail services, the corridor between Morley and Ellenbrook has the highest car usage of any other Perth corridors.

On completion the METRONET Ellenbrook Line will create a more interconnected city with better transport, housing and employment options. The line will dramatically reduce car commuting in the North east by up to 50% by slashing travel times with a 30-minute train journey between Ellenbrook and the CBD. It will also provide direct links to Midland and Perth Airport, as well as better connections to Whiteman Park and the Swan Valley.

### Supporting Growth

New stations in the suburbs of Morley, Noranda, Ballajura, Whiteman Park and Ellenbrook will serve these growing communities. Additionally, the New Bayswater Station will create connections to improve connectivity with the Midland, Airport and Ellenbrook lines.

### Re-cycled Crushed Concrete Trial

Crushed recycled concrete (CRC) is being trialled for the base asphalt layer in the Ballajura and Noranda station car parks. CRC is made of concrete debris from construction and demolition sites. The use of CRC reduces materials going to landfill and also reduces carbon emissions.

### Hollow Core Noise Walls

The volume of concrete used is being reduced through adoption of a hollow core noise wall system which contains 30% less embodied carbon than conventional noise wall panels.

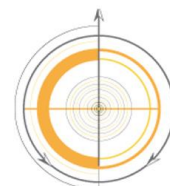
### The NEW Stations :

#### Morley Station

Morley Station is located within the Tonkin Highway Median. A concept master plan for the Morley Station Precinct sets the long-term vision for the station area over the next 30 years.

#### Noranda Station

Noranda Station is located at Benara Road and the Tonkin Highway. Future planning for the precinct around Noranda Station will be managed by the City of Bayswater.





## Ballajura Station

Ballajura Station, (formerly Malaga Station), is located north-east of the junction of Marshall Road and the Tonkin Highway. A new footbridge will be built across the Tonkin Highway in Ballajura, providing convenient access to Ballajura Station and Whiteman Park.

## Whiteman Park Station

Whiteman Park Station is located alongside Drumpellier Drive, just south of Whiteman Park.

The station will service communities at Henley Brook, Dayton, West Swan and Brabham, including new links to two of Perth's most popular tourism destinations, Whiteman Park and the Swan Valley.

## Ellenbrook Station

Ellenbrook Station is located in the town centre, south of the Parkway and west of Civic Terrace. The station will serve the 46,000 residents in Ellenbrook and the surrounding areas. Station facilities have been designed to handle anticipate future population growth.

## Bennett Springs East – Potential Future Station

Precinct structure planning allows for a future additional station at Bennet Springs, to cater for expected population growth in that area.

## Co-ordinated Metronet Bus Services

Will be provided to serve surrounding areas as appropriate along the new line.

## ROLLINGSTOCK :

Nine x 3 car Metronet B series electric trains will operate services initially on the Ellenbrook Line.



## ELLENBROOK LINE OPENING: .

The Ellenbrook Line has opened with regular passenger services operating since Monday 9 December 2024. The original cost of \$ 800m blew out to \$ 1.6 bn funded jointly by the Commonwealth and Western Australia.

## ARTC REVEALS CONCEPT FOR NEW EUROA STATION

Inland Rail has released designs for the Euroa railway station precinct ahead of construction commencing in 2025..

The design concept envisages a modern railway station precinct surrounded by landscaped gardens and open spaces, serviced by additional parking and featuring improved pedestrian and cyclist access.

Station modifications include two new DDA accessible railway platforms, an additional pedestrian underpass with lifts, ramps and stairs and an open forecourt area for community use.

The new Anderson Street road vehicle underpass will connect with existing roads and interface with the new station precinct.

Inland Rail, and construction partner John Holland will undertake a month-long community engagement process to gather feedback on the landscaping, urban design finishes, colour palettes and heritage interpretation options.



Concept station design for Euroa station precinct. *Inland Rail.*

## EXTRA V/LINE TRAIN SERVICES PERMANENT FROM 01/12/2024:

### BACCHUS MARSH LINE:

Up: 1035 Saturday & Sunday

### BENDIGO LINE:

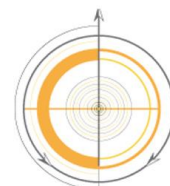
Up: 0944 Saturday & Sunday

### ALBURY / WODONGA LINE:

Down: 1433 Train Sunday

Up: 0755 Train Saturday (TFN)

*(See also page - (13)*





## URGENT ACTION REQUIRED TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY at SOUTHERN CROSS STATION

Southern Cross Station (SXS), is Melbourne's second-busiest rail station in being the terminus for Victorian regional V/Line trains and interstate trains to Sydney and Adelaide. Separate SXS platforms also serve the entire electrified Metropolitan rail network via Flinders Street Station and four City Loop platforms.

When SXS was redeveloped in 2006 the roof was deliberately designed with its distinctive wave shape so as to deliver natural ventilation, without needing the added assistance of extractor fans. The expectation was that prevailing winds would naturally extract diesel emissions from regional trains through design gaps in the upper levels of the wave form roof structure.

However in reality the increasing experience has been that SXS has recorded alarming air quality levels with nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) emission levels from V/Line diesel trains posing increasingly serious public health risks.



ocity trains at Southern Cross Station. Photo – V/LINE.

Following ongoing complaints about air quality, in 2011 a commitment was made to install extractor fans and the Department of Transport even allocated \$ 25,000 for this purpose. However, installation of these exhaust fans has still not occurred albeit 13 years later. It has been consistently maintained that the station's unique roof design naturally vents diesel fumes through the roof to acceptable levels, and that emission levels comply to Safe Work Australia (SWA) Standards of 3,000 parts per billion of NO<sub>2</sub>, and diesel particulate matter (DPM) levels fall within the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists' guidelines of 0.1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> over an 8-hour period. However, the above levels are significantly higher than both World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and Australian outdoor standards.

One of the fundamental issues complicating air quality management at SXS has been the absence of enforceable workplace standards for DPM in Australia. New insights into DPM carcinogenic properties has led to a much stricter exposure limit of 0.01 mg/m<sup>3</sup> being set to come into effect from December 1, 2026

Had this limit been in place from the beginning, SXS would have frequently been in breach for the majority of the time up to 2022 when its building management system was upgraded to improve airflow including in the bus terminal.

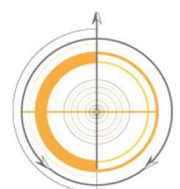
After a 9-month Freedom of Information battle, the Department of Transport and Planning released to the ABC, some 12 years of SXS pollution data up to 2022. This included EPA findings that diesel fume levels could reach as high as 100 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, thus exceeding WHO guidelines by more than 90 times in some areas of the station – and that NO<sub>2</sub> levels near train platforms and in the adjoining SXS bus station often hovered around the "extremely poor" classification.

In releasing this data, the Department of Transport & Planning nevertheless withheld key reports. Omitted were two V/Line documents: *Risks Associated with Diesel Exhaust Emissions at Southern Cross Station*; and a *PTV Emissions Report*, deemed "not in the public interest" to release. Air quality experts regard this as out of line with the need for transparency of data directly impacting public health and safety.

It should be expected that part of regular scheduled station cleaning would include cleaning of contaminated upper surfaces of the supporting steel roof framework to remove toxic dust, other diesel emission residues, and bird droppings.

This ongoing situation at SXS underscores a classic clash: health and safety versus convenience and cost. As research continues to highlight the dangers of prolonged diesel exposure, the cost of inaction appears increasingly high. The updated emission standards to apply from late 2026 mean that Government can no longer delay specific actions to reduce diesel emissions at the station. This applies particularly to air quality within the bus terminal and at regional train platform faces under the overhead waveform roof between Collins and Bourke Streets

Increasingly the core of V/Line's train fleet is the VLocity Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train, the first of which entered service in 2005. Each trainset consists of three cars, with each car having two underfloor diesel power plants: a 19-litre, 6-cylinder, 559 kW (750 hp) engine for traction and a 5.9-litre, 6-cylinder, 85 kW (115 hp) APU (Auxiliary Power Unit) supplying auxiliary power primarily for train air-conditioning and lighting.





A 9-car VLocity train may well stand at SXS platforms for protracted time periods with all 18 diesel engines running. After 15 minutes, the main traction engines will automatically shut down, but the APUs will continue to run at high (and noisy) revolutions.

The ongoing delivery of further new VLocity train sets is scheduled to continue through to 2026, at which time no fewer than 141 train sets (totaling 423 cars) will be in service with only relatively minor changes having been made to the original engine technology since 2005.



**Distinctive wave form roof spanning platforms 1 to 15 between Collins & Bourke Street at Southern Cross station.**

*Image – Courtesy Infra Nexus*

To combat current adverse air quality at stations, the accelerated transition from diesel to electric or alternative sustainable fuel sources is imperative for the health and safety of the travelling public and workers. However pending achievement of a shift to zero emission transport a multi-faceted approach will be required at SXS including:

1. Upgrading of ventilation and other air flow measures in the station precinct and coach terminal
2. Regular measurement of, and public reporting of air quality at defined station precincts at SXS
3. Implementation of measures to reduce and minimize diesel train idling times at platform faces under the wave form roof
4. Early electrification of outer Metro train services to Wyndham Vale, Melton and Wallan currently served by V/Line diesel trains.
5. Requiring future enhancements at SXS to include public health and well-being considerations
6. A detailed implementation plan to transition V/Line regional trains to zero emissions.

With the impending 12/2026 tightening of DPM exposure limits, the issue of air quality and diesel emissions face a critical timeline.

The new limits represent a shift toward prioritizing passenger and worker health over convenience. To meet the upcoming 2026 standard, the Victorian Government will need to overhaul and attach much greater priority to air quality at SXS as outlined above.

The immediate task is to improve air quality at the station in line with modern health standards and ensure that Melbourne’s rail transport network is safe for the long term. This same challenge applies equally at all key regional rail stations.

**- Fergus Moffat**

## Plans Revealed for NEW MELTON STATION

Plans have been released for the re-building of Melton station to provide four platforms, two for through Ballarat services, and two for terminating outer metro services.

New elevated rail bridges will take trains over Coburns and Exford roads, and new road bridges will be built over Ferris Road in Melton and Hopkins Road in Truganina, making the entire Melton line level crossing free in by the end of 2026.

Community consultation during the design phase revealed that the community was keen for better bike access, bath paths and cycle facilities at the new station



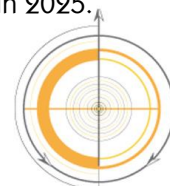
*Image – courtesy Bicycle Victoria*

Both the road over rail bridges at Ferris and Hopkins roads will have dedicated shared-use cycle paths.

The new station will be accessible from both the northern and southern sides of the rail line. There will be expansive pedestrian walkways, pick-up and drop-off zones and each elevated platform will be accessible via two lifts and stairs.

The station will also include an air-conditioned waiting room and staffed ticket office, along with lighting and security cameras.

Contracts for the works were recently awarded and site establishment works will be set up shortly ahead of major construction works commencing early in 2025.





## NEW STATION FOR TARNEIT WEST

The Victorian Government has released early designs for a new station at Tarneit West, with construction set to commence in 2025.

The new station will be located near Davis and Leakes Roads with two platforms linked by an accessible pedestrian underpass.

The new station will feature a four-bay bus interchange, and a new access road will be built from Leakes Road – providing access to a station car park accommodating 400 car parking spaces.

Separated pedestrian and cycling paths will also be built as part of the precinct – along with full landscaping and secure bicycle storage.

Construction is set to commence in 2025 – with the new station expected to open to passengers in 2026.

Station names being considered include West Tarneit, Tarneit Rise, Sunray, Davis Creek and Melaleuca, with local residents views being sought.

A planning study is also underway for a further new station at Truganina to serve recent housing developments in that area along the line between Deer Park and Black Forest Road.

Also in Melbourne’s west, work is about to start on the removal of four level crossings on the Melton Line and the building a new Melton Station by 2026.



Artists impression new station concept at Tarneit West.

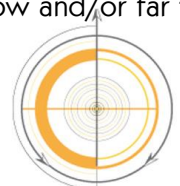
## GETTING MORE VICTORIAN FREIGHT ON RAIL

There are more fragments to the modern disaggregated railway than might be evident at first glance. Starting with the more obvious parts - Infrastructure Owners and Rail Operators. In Victoria alone you can find at least six of the former and nine of the latter without even trying. Clearly getting matters sorted for some rail freight activity is rather overburdened with interfaces between the various players. Take for instance the Sunshine area. Stand at Sunshine station looking toward Albion and what do you see ? Several tracks of two gauges ? Well, not quite. When you get a bit forensic you find you are looking at the property of three Infrastructure managers - MTM, V/Line and ARTC, all side by side. Even more confusingly around the corner at Albion we find two more - VicTrack and McConnell Dowell. A broad gauge train departing McConnell Dowell to Brooklyn or Tottenham will need to have access arrangements with McConnell Dowell, VicTrack, ARTC, MTM and V/Line in the first two km of its journey. It is roughly the same as requiring a separate registration for your car for every suburb you pass through.

The task of preliminary compliance required to even contemplate such a journey with its overload of bureaucracy is a significant blocker to efficient rail transport activity. Add in the multitude of operators and you can immediately see how the mass of interfaces that apply to rail is a major hindrance to efficiency compared to road where little more than a licence and vehicle registration is required.

But it gets worse. From practical experience it is evident that at least some of the major players in the rail industry are as fragmented internally as the industry is as a whole. The various activities within a single organisation are as removed from each other as the different entities are. I could get diverted with the detail but the objective is not to allocate blame (a quick way to distract from the main game) but to try to point out how the whole rail freight industry might be much more internally efficient if these somewhat artificial barriers didn't exist.

The current system was largely created (in Victoria at least) by a combination of the impulsive privatisation of the late 1990's and the separate National Rail Safety Law and its Regulator, which largely goes into micro-detail of how to do things rather than an holistic (whole of transport) view of what needs to be achieved. The unaddressed issue in all this is that there still is no comparability of regulation for rail and road - rail is intrinsically far safer than road, but there are too many instances where freight has gone on road because the compliance issues for rail were too slow and/or far too intrusive.





Even with passenger we cancel trains for 'safety' issues (such as bad weather or broken boom barriers) and send passengers by bus where their safety is significantly impaired by comparison.

Internal co-ordination within the rail industry is partly a product of the structure and regulation as we know them but it is also the product of internal fragmentation within a single organisation, where the theory says it should be well co-ordinated. So is there a model that the industry could look to which would perhaps point to a process of manageable co-ordination, which might then allow refinement of the regulatory system to be more holistically efficient? In my view there are precedents for intra-industry co-operation and co-ordination that point the way to an alternative without actually defining how it might work.

The Hunter Valley coal business is huge - something like 160 million tonnes p.a. through the Newcastle ports (three separate ports - Kooragang, NCI and Port Waratah / Carrington with something like 9 loading berths). Four rail operators (PN, Aurizon, Magnetic and SSR) deliver coal to the port from around 20 mines. Trains typically deliver 9000 tonnes of coal at a time indicating an average of around 48 trains per day (one train every half hour year round, roughly equal to suburban train frequency 24/7/52 in modern vernacular). Taking a systems overview, we have many mines using a number of rail operators over a single rail network to a port where the product is stockpiled in shiploads at three ports for loading into a multitude of ships for a large number of overseas destinations.

Think about the chaos that would ensue if this was run in the typical disconnected way that we endure here in Victoria. It would simply fail.

The various industry players in the Hunter got together and set up the Hunter Valley Co-ordinating Committee (HVCC) to oversee and manage the flow of coal through the rather complex system. Effectively the shipping program (which is understood to be largely sequential - an orderly queuing system) drives the call for coal for specific ships at specific ports and berths which in turn controls the building of 'shipload' stockpiles at the terminals which drives the allocation of train paths to specific coal producers and by definition rail operators.

The rate of turnover at the terminals is such that each shipload stockpile (which are understood to average 80,000 to 100,000 tonnes) have a life of about a week from start to despatch..

With the average daily throughput of the port being over 400,000 tonnes it is obvious there is little capacity for slow or inefficient handling of coal, a real life example of just in time by necessity!

The HVCC model does not have any direct relevance to the siloed rail society in which we live down here in Victoria, but the win-win that can ensue from all working to a common goal is the critical outcome that eludes us at present. Creating a co-ordination group which has the authority to allocate paths over the various rail properties free from the 'my track; my trains' stuff that currently applies would be a good start.

We then might get a worthwhile deal for freight and regional passenger through the suburbs. In a somewhat different aspect (but definitely related) the 'upgrading' projects that currently plague the regional network would be 'directed' to allow for a degree of spare track capacity so that additional trains (of any sort) could run at reasonable intervals, while also providing some seriously lacking resilience to the network (as the denizens of Warrnambool have learnt over the last 10 years and Warrnambool are still learning).

We really have two reasonable choices - revert to monopolies of old (modernized in a number of respects) or to come up with a contemporary model that allows for competition and privatisation policy but with equal or better overall performance (than any alternative) in the land transport game. At present we have neither holistically efficient management of the rail network nor the overall efficiency that is academically postulated to come from the latter day policies.

Consequently we have less than optimal rail efficiency from structural and managerial failings rather than inherent system failings. If rail freight especially is to be an efficient part of the future of this State (with more than a passing glance at climate policy) then something must be done to remove the burden of self imposed blockers to efficiency as a precursor to changing the structural and political blockers that have been cast at our feet.

- *Max Michell*

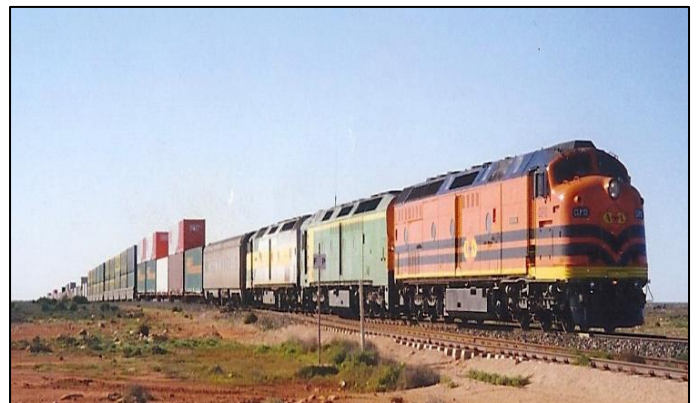
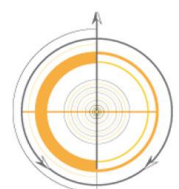


Image – Fergus Moffat







## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS to 2050

### Part - 2 Interstate Services

Mark Williams

January, 2025 marks the 30th anniversary of standardization of the Melbourne - Adelaide rail line.

One track from Adelaide to Belair was converted to standard gauge, then the single track from Belair via Serviceton to Ararat. Then from Ararat a pre-existing broad gauge freight line was converted to standard gauge via Maroona to Gheringhap (near Geelong), Single dual broad and standard gauge track was installed between Gheringhap and North Geelong. From North Geelong to Newport a new standard gauge line was built with crossing loops. Between Newport and Tottenham one of the two pre-existing broad gauge goods lines was converted to dual gauge. This allowed standard gauge passenger trains to access Spencer Street (Southern Cross) and freight trains (Dynon) using the already existent dual gauge twin track pair under Footscray station.

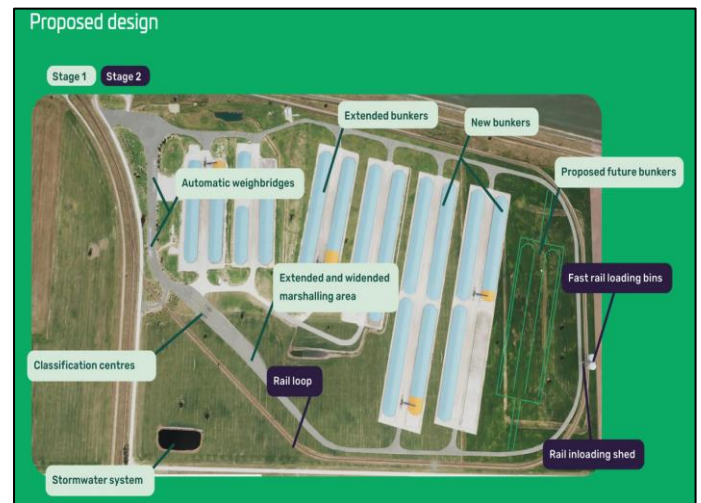
At the same time the Victorian freight lines between Maroona and Portland and Ararat and Maryborough were converted to standard gauge, and dual gauge track installed between Maryborough and Dunolly.

This left the broad gauge line between Wolseley, Mt Gambier and Heywood (Victoria) isolated from the national standard gauge network, with all previous rail traffic being forced onto road.

Since then significant investments have been made in the Interstate standard gauge network between Melbourne and Adelaide

- Selective re-railing with heavier CWR track
- Installation of additional crossing loops, and most recently selective extension of some crossing loops to 1800 metres.
- New intermodal terminals at Doon (Victoria) and Wolseley (SA), and a triangular junction at Ararat. (towards Maryborough).
- Duplication of the North Geelong to Moorabool section to provide for one dual gauge track and one standard gauge track.
- Commitment by the ARTC to upgrade track between Maroona and Portland to allow for increased axle loads and higher train speeds.

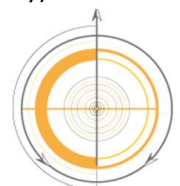
Announced upgrades to South Australia's rail network include; Viterra developing a new 400,000 tonne grain storage facility and fast train loader at Wolseley and the ARTC continuing the rerailing program on the Trans Australia line from Tarcoola towards Kalgoorlie.



Viterra's proposal Intermodal Terminal at Wolseley

The problems facing a substantial increase and expansion of Interstate passenger and rail freight services over the next 25 years are well known and have been discussed over several decades:-

- Rail freight growth between Adelaide and Melbourne is predicted to grow by 66% from 4.4 million to 7.3 million net tonnes a year by 2050 and unless managed so that rail can retain or grow its relative market share it would result in additional Heavy Road Vehicle movements on the South Eastern Freeway, Cross, Portrush and Glen Osmond Roads in South Australia.
- Adelaide Central Station is a terminal station, with current limited platform capacity to accommodate Interstate passenger services and is located on the edge of the CBD with long access times to other CBD locations.
- The extent of the rail freight network to handle more trains, accessing more locations and not achieving optimal freight efficiencies in the Adelaide - Melbourne corridor limits rails support for the logistics chain nationally, and within both South Australia and Victoria.
- The ARTC mainline between Adelaide and Tailem Bend is a winding, single track with continuous gradients featuring on-going curvature limiting train speeds and unable to currently accommodate double stack container trains.
- The ARTC network is standard gauge whilst the Adelaide suburban Metro network is broad gauge not allowing inter-operability between the two networks
- There are gaps in the network of Regional Intermodal terminals including Olympic Dam and Mount Gambier with dormant isolated rail links between Tailem Bend (SA) and Murrayville (Victoria), and between Wolseley, Mt Gambier (SA) and Heywood (Victoria).





The South Australian and Australian Governments have released a series of key strategic planning documents emphasizing the importance of a long-term vision for transport including a future rail network to support both freight and passenger movements.

The South Australian Government will be progressing over the next couple of years several planning investigations like replacement trains and network extensions

Using these strategic planning documents, public feedback, media comments and the authors opinions several future rail service visions can be distilled:

- Extension of rail passenger services from Belair to Murray Bridge, and daily to Melbourne operating out of Adelaide Central Station
- Productivity improvements on the Interstate mainline between Adelaide and Melbourne to reduce operating costs and transit times, improving rail mode share and reducing community impacts, including the use of battery electric locomotives
- Enhanced and additional South Australian regional Intermodal rail freight terminals, reinstatement of rail connections to Victoria from Tailm Bend via Pinnaroo and resumption of grain trains operations on the Eyre Peninsula network.
- Standardization of the existing dormant broad gauge line between Glenburnie (SA) and Heywood (Victoria) restoring rail freight operations between Mt Gambier and Melbourne / Portland via the ARTC standard gauge junction at Heywood (Victoria).

Another challenge will be a new rail line through the Adelaide Hills that has been a vision since the 1960's providing a more direct, less curvituos line offering double stacked and lower gradient railway between Adelaide and Tailm Bend delivering nationally significant benefits to logistics & passenger transport

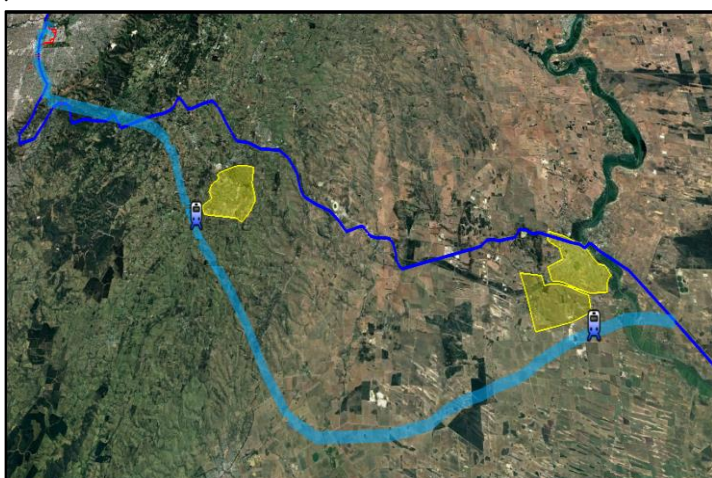


Figure 1 – Mark Williams

## BRISBANE PLANS METRO EXPANSION FOR 2032 OLYMPICS

The Queensland Government has revealed plans to expand Brisbane Metro ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

A partnership with Brisbane City Council and Council of Mayors plans to deliver fully-electric, high frequency, high-capacity reliable public transport to an increased number of destinations across Brisbane.

The vision includes 22 new stations and stops in the North, South, East and Brisbane airport.

A detailed business case will determine the feasibility of expanding the Metro south to Springwood, east to Capalaba, north to Carseldine and connecting to DFO and the Brisbane airport.

The Queensland Premier and Brisbane Lord Mayor have jointly written to the Federal Government seeking support for the Metro Expansion with an ongoing partnership between all levels of government essential in delivering the expanded network in time for the 2032 Olympic Games.

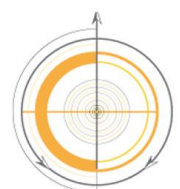
Brisbane has grown faster than any other Australian capital city over the last decade, with another 1.55 million people expected to move to Brisbane by 2041. Regions around the South East like Logan, Redland and Moreton Bay are also experiencing significant growth pressures with the South East to be home to 6 million people by the mid 2040's.

All stakeholders want to see more of the new growth suburbs connected to the public transport network, and in turn taking more cars off local roads.



Cross River Rail Project, Brisbane signal testing.

Image: Cross River Rail Project – Qld Government





## VICTORIAN RAIL FREIGHT - NEWS UPDATE

SSR has undertaken delivery of the first new broad gauge grain wagons delivered in 16 years. The rake made their first revenue run to Piangil in mid August 2024. These new wagons are classified BGUY.

It took less than a week for our ever present spray can clowns to tag what is an attractive dark blue SSR livery. Hopefully SSR might now apply some translucent protective coating to make removal of such graffiti much easier.

A picture of the first run is shown on the right, note the VLP locos on interim hire to SSR have had their V/Line logos painted out in purple.

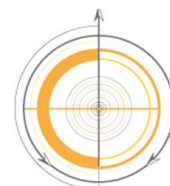
This latest development comes on top of the Ultima Intermodal train returning to two return trips weekly, with the ability to run a third trip as required. Work is progressing on the re-activation of the Balranald line for a short distance from the junction at Barnes to a re-activated rail grain loading site.

On the standard gauge freight front good news too with the recent commissioning of Wiltshire Loop, between Maryborough and Ararat; and the commissioning of an extended 1200m crossing loop at Emu on the Mildura line.

A number of culverts nearing end of life on the key standard gauge rail freight link between Maryborough and Ararat have been identified for replacement or upgrading and it understood that around ten locations have identified as priority for early attention. These works support earlier works to upgrade the Maryborough – Ararat line to 21 tonne axle loads at 65 k/mh line speed.

Works completed to date include re-railing with heavier new CWR rail, and commissioning of a trailable crossing loop at Wiltshire. Further works include commissioning of full signalling on the crosslink at Ararat linking the Maryborough line at Ararat towards both Maroona and Adelaide.

75,000 additional concrete sleepers are to be inserted into the Mildura line north of Dunolly in 2024 / 2025, and the additional work will be undertaken between Korongvale and Manangatang to increase axle loads and line speed.





## TRAIN MANUFACTURE AT THE OTHER MARYBOROUGH

Queensland's Maryborough doesn't have as grand a station as its Victorian namesake – few places outside capital cities do really – but the Fraser Coast city does have a significant presence in the rail industry as a centre for train manufacturing.

That legacy is now set to continue. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Maryborough in the Sunshine State was an industrial powerhouse and factories there produced naval ships, railway locomotives and rolling stock, and equipment for the sugar industry. But like many manufacturing centres, globalization has seen local industry decline over the 20<sup>th</sup> century as factories closed and jobs and skills went offshore.

Perhaps taking a leaf out of the Victorian example, the Queensland Government has affirmed the importance of manufacturing in the regional city by awarding Downer a contract under its Queensland Train Manufacturing Program to design and build a fleet of 65 six-car train sets (not tilt trains) at a new plant at Torbanlea, 25 km from Downer's existing plant in Maryborough, with access to both the Bruce Highway and north-south mainline.

Downer has contracted John Holland to build the greenfields plant and construction is starting. A new stabling and maintenance facility for the trains, located between Brisbane and the Gold Coast, is also planned.

The new trains will support south-east Queensland's population and economic growth and should come into operation in time to service the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games. They will also service the Cross River Rail project in Brisbane. Also mirroring a Victorian initiative, the Queensland Government recently announced massive cuts to transport fares – did I hear 50 cent fares ? Manufacturing of the new trains is set to commence in late 2025.

*- John Galt*

## A TALE OF TWO MARYBOROUGHS

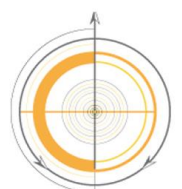


Above : Former station at Maryborough , Queensland.

*NOTE: The original Maryborough Queensland station no longer serves as a train terminal and is used now only as a ticket office and coach terminal servicing a new parkway station on the mainline at Maryborough West, about 10 km from the town's CBD.*



Above: The somewhat grander station at Maryborough, Victoria.





**The communication of recent service changes included in NEW V/LINE passenger timetables effective from 01/12/2024 leaves a LOT to be desired. Examples are shown below:**

## DOT / V/LINE

### Warrnambool Line Train Services:

A new weekend Warrnambool service will be added providing four return services a day on Weekends. Velocity trains will replace most older trains on the Warrnambool line.

### Ballarat Line Train Services:

Three (3) Weekday services that end at Melton station will be extended to Bacchus Marsh.

### Ballarat Coach Changes:

The 5.19pm and 7.04pm coach services between Ararat and Ballarat will be removed due to duplication with train services.

On Weekends the Ararat to Ballarat service will be extended to start in Horsham, becoming the Horsham to Ballarat coach. This service departs at 7.34am on Saturdays and 8.34am on Sundays.

On Saturdays the 11.56 am Ballarat to Ararat service will also be extended to start in Horsham, becoming the 11.53am Ballarat to Horsham coach.

The Saturday Ararat to Ballarat service will be extended to start in Horsham becoming the 12.28pm Horsham to Ballarat service.

## THE REALITY IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Fourth return Warrnambool service Sats & Suns  
Dep Southern Cross 1003 Warrnambool Arr 1345  
Dep Warrnambool 1510 Southern Cross Arr 1843  
Catering is ONLY provided now (if you are lucky !!!) on the following services :Weekdays Warrnambool to Melbourne 0610 and 0924 Melbourne to Warrnambool 1706 and 1915 Weekends Warrnambool to Melbourne 0745 Melbourne to Warrnambool 1902

**UNTRUE.** OLD Timetable Weekday PM Peak services to Bacchus Marsh were at 1619 1641 1721 1804 and 1821 (Five (5) Bacchus Marsh trains in total.)  
In the NEW timetable Weekday PM Peak services to Bacchus Marsh are at 1620 1642 1721 1742 and 1825  
**(Still five (5) Bacchus Marsh trains in total.)**

### Ballarat–Ararat–Horsham Coach Changes:

The 1719 Weekdays coach from Ararat to Ballarat will no longer operate. Passengers should use the 1717 Ararat – Ballarat – Southern Cross train.

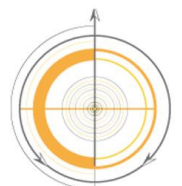
The 1904 Weekdays coach from Ballarat to Ararat will no longer operate. Passengers should use the 1937 Ballarat – Ararat train. (1818 ex Southern Cross)

Saturdays – NEW 0734 Coach service from Horsham – Ararat (0851) – Ballarat arrive 1008 Connecting Train Ballarat dep 1023 Southern Cross arr 1154

Sundays – NEW 0834 Coach service from Horsham – Ararat (0951) – Ballarat arrive 1108 Connecting Train Ballarat dep 1123 Southern Cross arr 1251

Saturdays - The 1156 Coach service Ballarat to Ararat will be extended to arrive Horsham at 1427. (Connects at Ballarat with the 1017 train from Southern Cross arriving Ballarat at 1146)

Saturdays – The 1348 Coach from Ararat to Ballarat will originate from Horsham at 1234 - Ararat (1351)- Ballarat arrive 1508. Connecting Train Ballarat dep 1523 Southern Cross at 1651.





## NEWS PICS AROUND THE TRACKS



CLP - 9 and SSR Grain Train at Port of Melbourne – *Doug Spike*



K - 153 & Vintage Tait Train at Croydon – *Jonathan Scutt*



Xtropolis – Mk 2 train deliveries are to about start from the Ballarat Workshops. *Photo – Bicycle Victoria*

**APOLOGY :** In the last Autumn edition of RF – Newpost an incorrect photo of the Domain Road tram turnback was attributed to Geoff Mann. The correct photo from Geoff is published in this edition on this page – 14 top right hand corner.



New twin platform tram turnback in Domain Road at ANZAC Station. – *Image Geoff Mann*



RFI members enjoying their Christmas lunch at the Goulburn Valley Hotel – Friday 06/12/2024. – *Photo John Cleverdon*



The 0612 Up Warrnambool seen here at Little River in fast declining days of loco hauled operations on the Warrnambool Line.

*Photo Doug Spike*

