RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE INC

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

RF PLATFORM

11 WINTER 2026

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RF PLATFORM

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ABOUT THE RAIL FUTURES INSTITUTE (INC)

Was registered on 25th August 2013, in compliance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012, Victoria, as:

The Rail Futures Institute Inc No. A0059839B, was registered by the Australian Charities and Not-for Profits Commission as a non - fund raising entity on 28 August 2013 – ABN 77 808 559 618

Our Committee and members include experienced rail professionals, engineers, urban planners, and economists.

PICTURE of The QUARTER.



Pictured above the new Metro train type that will be deployed on the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) Metro Railway.

Image courtesy - Sydney Trains

PRESIDENT'S WORDS

MOMENTOUS TIMES FOR THE WORLD, MELBOURNE, and PUBLIC TRANSPORT

This year is proving rather momentous – globally with on-going major conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, the latter with massive impacts on most country's economies, Australia included. High fuel costs coupled with free or low fares have provided a boost to public transport patronage, especially in regional Victoria.

We also have an unusually volatile political situation currently in Victoria with a State Election to be held on Saturday, 28 November with the outcome completely unpredictable at this time. There are also many changes occurring in rail, with even more anticipated once the forthcoming election is over.

Potential change is even closer to home within Rail Futures as we are soon to release the results of two years' work in the development of our **Melbourne Public Transport Plan (MPTP) 2030 - 2060**. This has been a considerable effort for a voluntary organization doing what properly should be the role of Government.

We anticipate having a public launch of our MPTP in coming weeks, after which it will also be available on our Rail Futures website. In the context of Melbourne's projected population growth to around 9 million within 30 years, the MPTP asks how all these people will move around the city? Melbourne's future depends on this.

Over several decades, Melbourne's population has been growing faster than the capacity of our transport system.

Comparably sized world cities rely much more on public transport with typical public transport shares of all travel being between three and five times that of Melbourne's current 10% public transport share. In Sydney, public transport's travel share is 17% or 70% greater than Melbourne. Over the last decade or so Melbourne has become an extremely car-centric city. This is progressively becoming un-sustainable.



The MPTP provides both a medium and longer term vision and a policy framework for progressing toward a more liveable city, including a far larger role for public transport in future. Melbourne will have better access to jobs, education and major health services with reduced travel times coupled with lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The centrepiece of our MPTP is to progressively transition to a fully integrated multi-modal public transport network featuring much improved coverage, connectivity and frequent all-day services.

As an overall public transport plan for Melbourne the MPTP covers Heavy Rail upgraded to modern Metro standards, proposed new Light Metro routes, an enhanced and extended tram network and a major upgrading of Melbourne's bus network and services.

The aim is for Melbourne's public transport to be fully accessible and within walking distance for most people, offering frequent, safe, reliable and comfortable services at all hours across a network of connecting transport modes.

This will enable easy interchange wherever needed between train, tram and bus services. Further, as the network develops public transport will increasingly become a real alternative to continued car usage for residents and visitors.

The MPTP shows how all of this can be planned, advocated for, and progressively brought to reality over the next 30 years for the benefit of all Melbournians and Victoria .

John Hearsch OAM President

OF TELSTRA 4G COMMS & V/LINE Passenger Operations

On the morning of Wednesday July 08 were no messages from V/Line advising of trains with shortened consists, no short terminations, no train faults, no track faults, no animal strikes and no trains delayed by earlier delays. In fact, there were no trains operating at all !!! A national Telstra outage had brought V/Line, and quite a few other rail operators including NSW Trains and the ARTC, to a standstill. Telstra essentially a sub-contractor to these organizations had just about shut down the national rail network. To some degree this is what you get when you silo the industry and outsource the key components - the 'risk' elements and their mitigations get lost somewhere between organizations and their sub-contractors.

Many moons ago, when the rail industry was mostly State based, the rule books of each not only set out how the safe-working systems worked, but the method of working when these failed. These failure recovery rules actually took up a major part of the rule books. Failure of the safe-working system, failure of trains, failure or blockage of track and similar all had a place in the rule book. In the event of some sort of failure everyone knew what had to be done and how to do it. The whole system in those days was largely decentralised, so recovery was localised to a large extent. A significant factor in any recovery in those far off days was people - experienced locals who knew the area and could be called in if required at short notice to facilitate resumption of normal services. A corresponding issue was that the infrastructure to support the railway was all part of the one railway.

Modernisation of the railways (quite apart from the rather flawed response to competition policy) progressively centralised the safe-working systems and at the same time largely removed the requirement for experienced people spread across the system (in fact rather removed the requirement for experience at any level of the organisation). In the new world vast swathes of the rail network were largely 'unattended' with no station staff, no local track gangs and a very limited number of train staff who were competent and experienced in the working of the various limbs of the modern rail network. So now we have, for instance, three control centres controlling all the train activity on the ARTC network between Kalgoorlie (WA) and Acacia Ridge (Qld), whilst all of Victoria outside the Melbourne suburban area is managed from a control room in central Melbourne.

NSW are a bit different in that their centralised control centre is at Orange 300 km from Sydney, but just as remote from the centres of action as in the other examples. Part of this centralization is the bundling of large components of the remote area technology into huge packages supplied and/or supported by outside specialist contractors. These techno-packages are obviously supported by their proprietors but, as we have seen, that is not completely bomb proof.

Even more disturbingly the railway, which has most to lose from a failure across a network-wide system, does not seem to have any recovery rules or strategy to deal with the low probability but catastrophic events that inevitably will occur at some stage. In the most recent case with Telstra, it seems that the loss of 'sighting' of trains via train radio was a major factor requiring the shut-down. Despite the availability of alternative telco suppliers and/or systems there doesn't seem to have been any contingency plan to cover for such an event.

One of the key themes elsewhere in the industry is resilience - the ability to withstand shock and disruption without having to shut up shop. The current definition of resilience seems to be restricted to flood proofing and preservation of the physical rail track, which is entirely justified. But as Telstra has so ably demonstrated there are other more subtle risks to resilience that haven't yet been brought into the fold.

A key issue for railways is reliability - doing what they said they would do - in a way that serves the customer's (voyageur or dispatcher of freight) best interests. There are a multitude of things that can erode reliability (as is so often delivered by V/Line) but these are mostly at a localized level (i.e. a Waurn Ponds trains being turned back at Geelong is really only of concern to passengers travelling to South Geelong, Marshall or Waurn Ponds; and even then only if the following train is nowhere in sight when they get to Geelong.). What seems to be lacking is any overt strategy to deal with such macro-disruptions as the July Telstra example.

The probability of such an event is small, but the outcome if and when it happens is catastrophic (in terms of service delivery.) Maybe an issue is the overemphasis on safety (of people) to the exclusion of operational, reputational and financial issues (non-people safety issues). Any organization that obsesses on one aspect to the exclusion of the rest is doomed to make something of a mess of their service delivery.

Stepping back to mid article one issue that is most apparent is that the replacement of experienced people in the field with machines and technology has not been done on a holistic basis. We have very successfully replaced a multitude of labour intensive manual systems with remote systems but without understanding that failure recovery needs to have some replacement for the *experience in the field* side of things to complement the parallel technological changes. We have never realistically dealt with the issue of how to replicate experienced people in the field in large scale failure situations.

When things are working well, we can cheerfully communicate with and manipulate the railway up to 2000 km away. But when things go badly awry (network wide stuff) there is no system of recovery to keep the trains running. The newly formed ARISO (Rail Standards Organisation) has a remit to standardize systems and processes across the multitude of railway entities across Australia.

I wonder if that might extend to the issue of macro-failure, as highlighted recently by Telstra, and possible solutions, not the least of which has to be a broadening of the concept of risk to embrace the *safety* of the organization and industry as well as the people in or who interact with it.

There is of course another issue here - with a multitude of siloed entities now evident in the rail industry how do we deal with industry wide issues. As capably shown by the various silos, when there is an issue, it is dealt with in terms of that organization rather than at an industry level. My reputation rather than the industry reputation; my operational robustness rather than rail industry robustness. Once again, it is to be hoped that ARISO can have an impact here, because without it we are doomed to stagnate. I rather fear that Telstra has inadvertently opened a Pandora's box to reveal a significant void within the rail industry and for which the industry is currently relatively ill-equipped to deal with. - ***Max Michell OAM***



Southern Cross Country Platforms on 08/07/26 NO Trains

NEW AMTRAK TRAIN TYPE

Amtrak recently announced a revised long-distance fleet replacement strategy prioritizing fleet standardization, broadening competition among potential train builders, reducing program risk, and accelerating replacement of its aging passenger fleet.

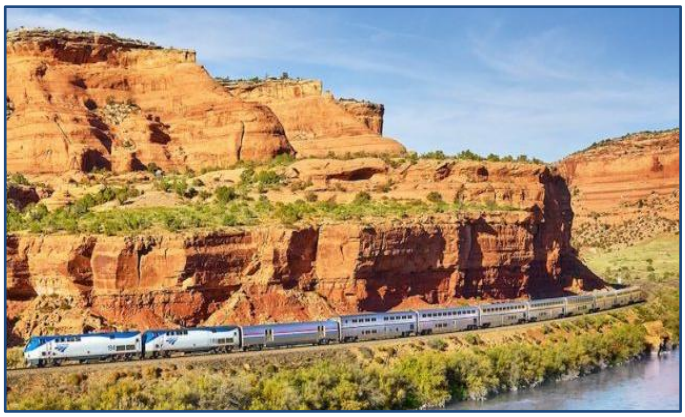
Amtrak intend to transition all long-distance routes progressively to a "universal single-level fleet," replacing the current mix of bi-level and single-level passenger cars.

Amtrak will shortly issue a formal request for suppliers to bid on the new long-distance fleet replacement contract, and cancel the previous request for bi-level cars. Once a train builder is selected, the delivery schedule to replace the existing s aged long-distance passenger fleet will be agreed.

Many of Amtrak's current long-distance carriages were delivered more than 40 years ago. The new approach will deliver a more consistent and accessible passenger experience across the Amtrak US passenger network whilst still maintaining the commitment to introduce the first new long-distance passenger rollingstock in the early 2030s.

Amtrak says its new strategy represents one piece of its broader systemwide fleet modernization program. It continues to receive new Siemens ALC-42 locomotives for long-distance service, with 79 of 125 units delivered to date.

The new NextGen Acela trains from Alstom launched in Autumn, and the new Airo fleet from Siemens Mobility will begin service on *Amtrak Cascades* operating between Vancouver and Seatle this year, followed by the *Northeast Regional* and other short- and mid-distance routes progressively in coming years.



Existing Amtrak "Californian Zephyr" train. *Image - Amtrak*

VICTORIAN 2026 / 2027 TRANSPORT INITIATIVES

1. ***The Victorian Budget 2026/2027*** **invests $637.6 million to deliver an additional 25 new X'Trapolis 2.0 trains. In total, 50 X'Trapolis 2.0 trains have now been ordered, with the first sets to enter service before 30/06/2027.** ***The budget also invests $77.5m in delivering extra Metro and V/Line train services statewide.***

2. ***Additional Metro and V/Line train services introduced from 23/08/2026 include:***

- **Werribee Line: Weekdays - am peak 3 extra Up trips, PM peak 2 extra Down trips.**
- **Sandringham Line: Weekdays trains run every 10 minutes between the peak periods. Sundays am - frequency improved to 20 mins**
- **Craigieburn line: trains run at minimum 20 minute frequencies, including late at night and on Weekends**
- **Upfield Line: trains run at minimum 20 minute frequencies, including late at night and on Weekends**
- **Mernda & Hurstbridge lines: Sunday am frequency improved to every 20 minutes**
- **Ringwood Line: One extra Down evening trip added on both Friday and Saturday nights**
- **Seymour Lines Weekends - train frequency increased to hourly.**
- **Shepparton Line: Weekdays - service frequency increased to 10 return services. (9 trains each way, plus 1 train coach trip via Seymour each way). Weekends - service frequency increased to 7 return trips (5 return trains each way plus 2 train coach trips via Seymour each way.)**

3. Service frequencies are expected to further improve in the second half of the 2026/2027 Financial Year :

(Continued in right hand column >>>)

Belgrave & Lilydale Lines: Trains will run every 20 minutes on average to both Belgrave and Lilydale on Weekday evenings (currently every 30 minutes)'

Glen Waverley & Alamein Lines: Trains will run every 20 minutes Weekday evenings (currently 30 minutes).

Mernda and Hurstbridge Lines: Trains will run every 20 minutes to Mernda and Eltham all Weekend, (currently every 30 minutes in evenings .)







COBBLEBANK TRAIN STABLING TAKING SHAPE

Construction is progressing apace at Cobblebank in Melbourne's west in building a new train stabling yard, to accommodate nine-car VLocity trains to be used from 2027 on the Melton Line.

The new stabling yard is part of works to increase peak period passenger capacity on the Melton Line by 50 percent. Located east of Melton Station, the new stabling yard will allow trains to originate at Melton each morning, and terminate there at night. The project is being delivered in stages, and is being future-proofed to allow for ultimate stabling of electric trains when the Melton Line is electrified.

Stage 1 when completed, will be powered by a 46 kilowatt solar system made up of 110 solar panels and fully landscaped with native trees and shrubs.
The Melton Line Upgrade, jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments also includes platform extensions at Cobblebank, Rockbank, Caroline Springs and Deer Park stations to accommodate longer nine-car trains from 2027.

At the same time works are progressing to remove three level crossings at Coburns, Exford, and Ferris Roads in Melton and building a new Melton Station, to open later in 2026. The new Melton station will feature four platforms, to accommodate both through trains to Bacchus Marsh / Ballarat, and local trains terminating at Melton.

The new Hopkins Road bridge in Truganina opened in May, and the new Ferris Road bridge in Melton was expected to open to road traffic in July, 2026.



New train stabling yard at Cobblebank. *Image – Victorian Govt*

INLAND RAIL - MISSING LINK ILLABO to STOCKINBINGAL

Details have been released, of the planned Illabo to Stockinbingal section in New South Wales (NSW) of the Inland Rail project.

On initial completion this project will enhance the national freight network and supply chain by connecting Melbourne to Parkes then East to Sydney, West to Adelaide, Perth and Darwin, and North to northern NSW.

The recently released, fly-through video of the new alignment shows the construction of 39 kilometres of new track from just east of Illabo to Stockinbingal.

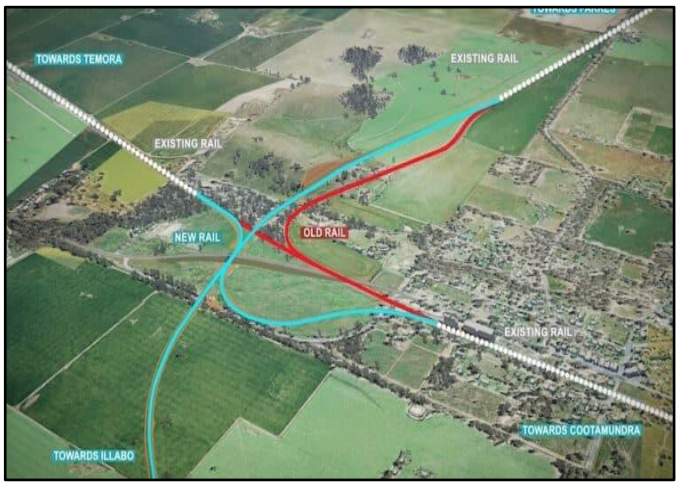
This new alignment will provide a direct route from Illabo to Stockinbingal through to the existing Forbes line. The route will by-pass Cootamundra and Bethungra and the existing steeply graded ang tight curvature encountered on the Bethungra Spiral on the NSW Main South line – delivering more efficient freight pathways through the region.

The proposed new line shows the alignment travelling northward and showcases major features of the project, including bridges across waterways and roads, a re-alignment at Burley Griffin Way, a crossing loop and siding, level crossings and more.

Over coming months, the project will take shape with earthworks and bridge works. Works will also commence at Stockinbingal, including construction of a new Burley Griffin Way road bridge.

The new line will allow for operation of double stacked container freight trains

.



Showing proposed junction arrangements, at Stockinbingal
Image – Courtesy Inland Rail

INLAND RAIL - BENALLA

Inland Rail has made progress in Benalla, demolishing the access road and bridge into the railway station, following the removal of the old standard gauge East track and dive (circa 1960). The station is being transformed with a new pedestrian underpass, lifts, ramps and stairs to improve connections between the station and Benalla city centre.

The former station underpass is being demolished, enabling construction of a new station forecourt, open public spaces, improved car parking, a passenger drop-off zone and train / bus interchange. New East and West train tracks have recently been commissioned at the station and a new platform is currently being constructed to serve the West track.



Current works at Benalla. *Image - courtesy Inland Rail.*

VLP COMMS DE-RAILED

Date NOT Recorded:

The 13:50 Southern Cross - South Geelong service will end early at Marshall and no longer run to South Geelong.

BUT South Geelong station is BEFORE Marshall ?

W/C Sunday 15/03/2026 Bendigo – Swan Hill.

8 of 14 scheduled Swan Hill trains did NOT run.

Swan Hill trains were cancelled between Bendigo and Swan Hill : Mon am and Mon PM (2 trains)
Tues am and Tues PM (2 trains)
Swan Hill trains were cancelled between Swan Hill & Bendigo : Mon am, Monday midday (2 trains)
Tuesday am, Tuesday (1 train)
Thursday am (1 train)

Seymour Line – Minor Delay 10/04/2026

The 1727 Albury – Southern Cross Service is delayed by 98 minutes !!!

If V/Line regard 98 minutes as a minor delay, then Albury Line travellers wonder what V/Line regards as a major delay ?

NZR - COPPER WIRE THEFT

Signals, cables and overhead lines have all been stolen recently, disrupting freight and passenger rail services. During April, services on the Hutt Valley Line had to be cancelled six times, and more than 50 trains were delayed as a result of stolen rail equipment.

Five (5) kilometres of copper cable has been stolen from the Wairarapa Line alone in the past six months. Whilst the scrap metal value is low, replacing the stolen cables costs Kiwi Rail hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The Wellington Metro Network says that equipment being stolen is crucial in maintaining running of passenger services safely. Theft of this nature typically leads to serious disruption of services to passengers whilst re-instatement and testing of signalling equipment takes place.

The local Police reported that anyone interfering with live railway cabling is putting themselves at serious risk of electrocution. Railway cabling is typically targeted due to the copper content and the increasing scrap value of copper.

Police have asked the public to report any suspicious activity observed around stations and along railway lines in New Zealand.



Image - Kiwi Rail

BRUNSWICK TRAM DEPOT UPGRADE PROGRESSING

Yarra Trams' Brunswick Depotis nearing completion of a major revamp. Established in 1936 the depot is being upgraded to provide increased tram stabling capacity. Works nearing completion include:

- a new electrical sub-station of increased capacity replacing a life expired sub-station
- upgrading / extension works providing expanded tram maintenance capacity and accompanying staff facilities.
- additional tram stabling within the Depot including a new direct track connection allowing trams to access Route – 19 in Sydney Road, and additional tram stabling sidings on Cameron Street for a new terminus.

NEW G - CLASS ARTICULATED TRAMS ENTER SERVICE

- The first of 100 new G Class trams have progressively entered public service from late July,2026 initially on Routes 57, 59 and 82.
- As deliveries progress over four years the new G Class trams will also appear on Routes 12, 48 and 58.
- The arrival of the initial 100 G Class trims will allow for a start on the progressive retirement of 180 low capacity high floor trams of the aged A and Z classes.



New G Class low floor articulated tram. (DDA compliant.)

Image - Victorian Govt

CANBERRA LIGHT RAIL PROGRESSES TO STAGE – 2

Canberra's light rail fleet has received upgrades to enable the vehicles to travel without wires.

Fourteen (14) existing vehicles have been retrofitted with on-board energy storage systems (OESS), as part of the Light Rail Procurement, Retrofit and Depot Expansion (LPRDE) Project.

Five new vehicles have also been added to the fleet, which are already equipped with the new technology. Under Light Rail Stage 2A – an extension to the light rail network which is currently under construction – vehicles will travel wire-free between the Alinga Street and Commonwealth Park stops.

The new OESS technology removes the need for lineside poles and wires, reducing impacts on sensitive national areas and maintaining city views.

Each OESS contains batteries, control electronics and a thermal management system that helps maintain optimum battery temperature in different weather conditions.

The OESS charges when the vehicles operate on wired sections of track, then uses that energy to power the vehicle on wire-free sections. Energy is also created through regenerative braking.

Each of the existing 14 light rail vehicles was taken out of service, fitted with batteries, and tested before returning to operations. Light Rail Stage 2A is targeting completion in early 2028.



Canberra light rail vehicle on track with no overhead wires

Image – courtesy ACT Government

NEW AUSTRALIND TRAINS

The first of four new Australind trains has entered passenger service, restoring the passenger rail connection between Perth and Bunbury which had been suspended since 2023. The three-car Alstom train, named Marley made its first official journey on June 29, 2026. It travelled from Perth to Bunbury in two-and-a-half hours, with the trip ending with a community celebration at Bunbury.

The new Australind trains have been locally built by Alstom at its Bellevue site. They have a modern design with greater accessibility, including spaces for wheelchairs and fully accessible toilets.

Each Australind train can carry158 seated passengers and six wheelchairs, and has on- board space for 14 bicycles.



Interior of new Australind train type. *Image: Alstom*

Enhancements include contemporary interiors, Wi-Fi, luggage storage, and in-seat USB charging ports.

The trains feature Aboriginal artwork to reflect the distinctive identity of South Western, West Australia.

The other three train sets are to be named Kwilena, Koombana and Linda will enter service progressively.



Exterior new Australind train type. *Image: Alstom*

GOLD COAST LIGHT RAIL EXTENSION for 2032 GAMES

The Queensland Government has announced an extension of the existing Gold Coast light rail network, which will be extended to connect Harbour Town in Biggera Waters to the Gold Coast University Hospital; running along Olsen Avenue and Oxley Drive whilst delivering three new stations at Musgrave Avenue, Labrador and Biggera Waters.

To support the delivery of the extended light rail network running at higher service frequencies, additional light rail vehicles are being acquired, and an additional stabling depot will be constructed.

This further extension to the already highly successful Gold Coast Light Rail network will further add to public transport options in the corridor, reducing congestion and providing enhanced public transport supporting the Northern Gold Coast's growing population and approaching 2032 Olympic Games.

The project is planned for delivery in time for the 2032 Olympic / Paralympic Games, and will future-proof Queensland's second largest city for decades to come.



Existing Gold Coast Light Rail. *Image – Queensland Govt.*

VICTORIAN REGIONAL PASSENGER TRAVELS

The following article by RFI member Mike Vale will be published in two (2) parts over the Winter and Spring editions of RF Newspost.

PART – 1:

My first train departed from Ballan at 1220 via Ballarat with a scheduled arrival at Ararat at 1340. En-route I booked a table, optimistically at 1345 for lunch at the Ararat RSL. Train arrival at Ararat was on-time. I was in the front car waiting for a quick exit from the train and once I was off and walking along the platform it was apparent there were many others following me. My estimate was around 50 pax.

However, people were still alighting when I disappeared around the corner. The RSL was reached right on time and I had around 1¾ hours for a leisurely lunch before joining my 1521 road coach departure to Ouyen. The Ouyen bound coach (which had originated from Ballarat arrived at Ararat on-time and it was well patronized with around 40 on board. Fifteen passengers alighted at Ararat, with another eight off at Stawell as we travelled along, dropping a few off here and there, but stopping briefly at every V/Line bus stop as the driver had obviously been instructed to do.

A compulsory, 40 min rest break for the driver at Warracknabeal allowed for another fermented liquor or whatever takes one's fancy. I headed to the IGA for something sweet and a screw top drink as the RSL had been lacking in desserts. Warracknabeal is the headquarters for the Shire of Yarriambiack which is odd to be named after a shallow and dry creek bed which sees only occasional flows of water. But I digress. The local Council has done a good street scaping job with street art and informational advisory signs. Old 'Warrack deserves a longer visit.

With the coach driver now suitably refreshed for the remainder of the journey, at 1750 all six remaining passengers we were on our way with clear skies and aeroplane contrails overhead and a brilliant sunset.

Silo art was passed on the way. I missed Beulah and Lascelles due to being asleep and only vaguely recall stopping at the other towns where the legendary 'Vinelander' train used to pass through, like Turriff, Speed, and Tempy and before long we were arriving at the Ouyen Community bus stop on time at 1935.



Silo art en-route. *Photo – Mike Vale*

On arrival at Ouyen I asked the driver if patronage was up due to the absence of fares. No, not really as us three remaining pax alighted, and that 6 is the highest number he recalled ever arriving at Ouyen.

Overnight was spent at the un-remarkable Ouyen Motel and next morning it was an early 0540 start to join the PTV listed Ouyen to Pinnaroo four passenger car service with trailer, arriving around at Pinaroo at 0830. This service would in the past have been a mixed goods or a single 102 hp Walker rail car. We stopped at every town, dropping off parcels, light freight, mail, newspapers but otherwise no passenger activity .



Ouyen / Pinnaroo road motor. *Photo – Mike Vale*

The driver, advised he had been operating the Ouyen to Pinnaroo run for almost three years and it was a job he loved doing. He also advised he would sometimes pick up at Murrayville to take passengers to Pinnaroo for appointments or shopping (with an hour at Pinaroo).

For their return from Pinaroo passengers had a choice of either the return service to Ouyen, or returning on the larger 'Speedlink' coach (from Adelaide) late morning.

For me time for a delicious breakfast at a little cafe in Pinaroo, and within an hour we were on our way back to Ouyen. Notwithstanding the Stobie poles, the South Australian architecture becomes apparent the moment one crosses the border. The driver was not what one would call the shy and retiring type, and as a former V/Line employee he had a bit to say about the scant train operations on the Ouyen - Murrayville line. Only 3 trains have operated in eight years, one of which was a grain train, and the other two being charter pax trains.

On arrival at Ouyen I was somewhat parched, so it was off to the Victoria for an ale to quell one's thirst.

PART – 2: *Will be published in the Spring 2026 edition of RF PLATFORM .*

FIRST WESTERN SYDNEY AIRPORT TRAIN ARRIVES

The first of 12 new trains for the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport Line has arrived in Sydney. The next-generation trains are being manufactured by Siemens Mobility at its plant in Vienna, Austria. Each train is built as three separate carriages and is being transported to Australia by a special cargo ship, with the journey taking between 45 and 60days.

The first train arrived recently at Port Kembla from Vienna (Austria). The carriages were then transported individually by road to Sydney Metro's new Stabling and Maintenance Facility at Orchard Hills.

The trains will facilitate high-volume movement of passengers and luggage travelling to and from the new Nancy Bird Walton airport at Western Sydney.

The trains especially cater to travellers with disabilities, with centre aisles that are approximately 30 centimetres wider than those on M1 Line trains, as well as room for luggage storage below seats.

Additionally high resolution on-train PIDS displays will show real-time flight information updated via a direct feed from the Western Sydney Airport. Each carriage will offer multiple seating choices, including front and rear facing seats for groups, as well as traditional sideways seating, designated wheelchair spaces and full DDA accessible areas. Each train will also have four bicycle storage spaces.



First picture of the new Metro train type that will be deployed on the Western Sydney Airport (WSA) Metro Railway.

Image courtesy - Sydney Trains

MARIYUNG TRAINS NOW ON NSW SOUTH COAST LINE

The new Mariyung Inter-urban trains are now in service on the South Coast Line in New South Wales, being the final line to welcome the trains, following the Blue Mountains and Central Coast lines. The "state-of-the-art" Mariyung trains feature upgraded amenities, and new safety features including:

- 2 × 2 passenger seating, with tray tables, and high seat backs, charging ports for devices.
- Dedicated pram, luggage and bicycle space.
- Improved accessibility for disabled passengers including wheelchair access, accessible toilets.
- Modern CCTV systems, emergency help points and sensing doors that close when safe to do so.

Sydney Metro has added an extra 166 weekly services on the M1 Line, boosting capacity at peak travel times and on Weekends.

An additional 12 Weekday services have been added to help manage the morning and afternoon peaks, with services running every four minutes during those periods.. Following the 2026 Easter school holidays, additional services have been added , with even more peak period trains running.

Trains on the M1 Line will run every seven minutes instead of every 10 on Weekends, delivering an extra 58 services on Saturdays and 48 on Sunday, increasing Weekend capacity by around 40 per cent across the metro network.

The Bankstown extension will later connect with the existing M1 Line, ahead of the opening of the full Sydney Metro Southwest Line later in 2026.



Image - Sydney Trains

NEW STATION FOR EUROA PROGRESSING QUICKLY

Train services through Euroa station now operate over new duplicated tracks, allowing for the removal of the old Eastern track and platform, enabling work to start on a new station forecourt, car park and improved station access for both motorists and pedestrians.

Construction of a rail bridge over the future Anderson Street underpass has allowed for the installation of new Eastern and Western tracks at the station.

Excavation works to create a new Anderson Street road underpass are now progressing, with around 40,000 cubic metres of spoil – equivalent to 16 Olympic-sized swimming pools – to be removed.

Concurrently the old Eastern track and platform (circa 1962), are being removed allowing the new station to directly access the Euroa town centre.

The completed project at Euroa will by late 2026 create a new passenger station with twin platforms, allowing for operation of double stacked freight trains; and incorporating improved station access for passengers, with more direct cross town access for both road traffic and pedestrians.



Euroa Station works as at April, 2026. *Image – Inland Rail*



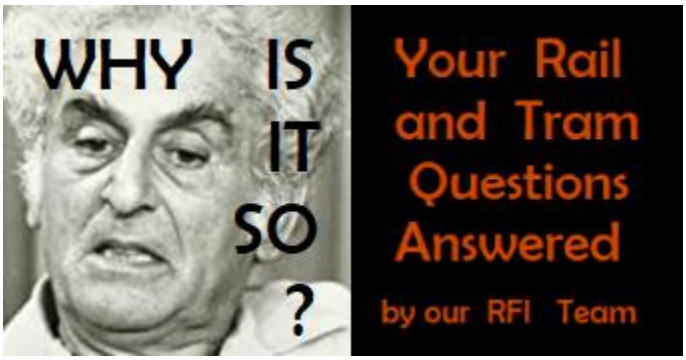
Letter to the Editor

I am a weekly traveller to Halls Gap and use the excellent road coach connection from the train at Ararat station to Warrnambool that serves Halls Gap in both directions. Unfortunately this Ararat – Warrnambool via Hamilton coach service only runs three days a week each way.

Observing the passenger interchange at Ararat station a daily rail passenger service could be re-instated relatively easily to serve Horsham (pop. 20,000) stopping at Stawell (pop. 6,000) using a standard gauge Vlocity train originating from Horsham and connecting at Ararat cross platform to the south side platform where the broad gauge Vlocity trains depart to and arrive from Ballarat/Melbourne.

Surely that would have to be a better option than the current Horsham coach services. Waiting for gauge conversion between Ararat and Ballarat is not necessary. - Peter Gillieron

INTRODUCING WHY IS IT SO ?



Professor Julius Sumner Miller (1909 – 1987) was a visiting American physicist who lectured at Sydney University between 1963 and 1985. At home in California he hosted a novel public TV program "Why is it So ?" explaining to Americans how things work.

Australia's ABC cottoned onto the US TV program and had the good professor present an Australian version of "Why is it So ?" which ran nationally on ABC TV between 1963 and 1986. See page 14 as an RFI member asks "Why is It So ?" for the very first time.

NAMBOUR RAIL NEWS UPDATE

Details of the first stage of the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade in Queensland have been released recently by the Queensland Government.

The existing rail line between Beerburrum and Glass House Mountains will be re-aligned, and, three level crossings removed. At the same time expanded park 'n' ride facilities will be provided at Beerburrum, Nambour and Landsborough stations.

The B2N Upgrade forms part of this total infrastructure project including a heavy passenger rail line from Beerwah to Birtinya, which will ultimately provide a Metro-style rail passenger service, allowing journeys to the Sunshine Coast Airport via Mountain Creek and Maroochydore CBD. The upgrade will also complete the missing section of duplicated track between Beerburrum and Beerwah.

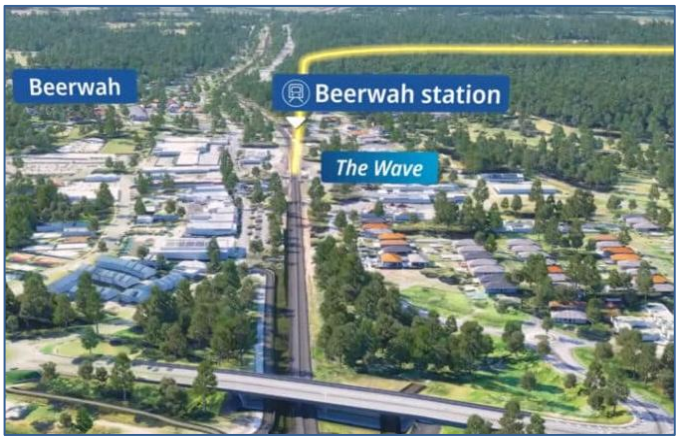


Image – Queensland Government.

Construction works on the rail duplication commenced in late 2025, with crews building new road and rail infrastructure in the corridor.

The Stage – 1 works are being jointly funded by the Federal and Queensland Governments at a total expected cost of $ 1 billion.

The upgrade works will significantly improve both passenger capacity and reliability on the North Coast Rail Line, supporting more efficient passenger services, from Brisbane through to Kawana and on to Maroochydore Airport.

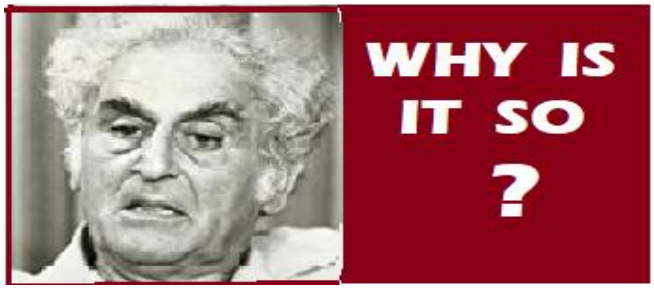
NEW MORDIALLOC STATION OPENS

The new Mordialloc station is now open with Frankston Line trains now using the new elevated platforms in both directions.

- As part of the Mordialloc station works new rail over road bridges at Mc Donald Street (Mordialloc), and Station Street (Aspendale) have eliminated two level crossings
- Additionally a third level crossing at Bear Street (Mordialloc) is also in the process of being eliminated



Above: New elevated station at Mordialloc on the Frankston line. *Image – Victorian Government*



RFI Member Bernard Shepherd asks why there is such a large difference in the cost of constructing similar underground Metro railway lines in Melbourne compared to Europe.

For example in Australian dollars ($ AU) comparing the current projected construction cost for Melbourne's Suburban Rail Loop East is $ 1.35 billion per kilometre.

Whilst in France the new Paris Express Metro line is currently costing $ 330 million per kilometre !!!

That's a staggering four times more expensive per kilometre in Melbourne !!!!

JOHN WATSFORD - OAM

John Watsford of New South Wales was awarded an Order of Australia in the most recent June, 2026 Kings Birthday honours.

John joins the growing ranks of Rail Futures members who have been awarded honours recently for service to the Rail Industry, Town Planning or The Law.
RFI members recently awarded include John Hearsch, Phillip Laird, Jackie Fristacky, Clyde Croft and Max Michell.

V/LINE SERVICE DELIVERY - JULY 2026

Inter – Urban – Commuter Services

	Geelong South Geelong Waurn Ponds	Bacchus Marsh Ballarat Wendouree	Kyneton Bendigo Eaglehawk/Epsom	Seymour	Traralgon
Reliability	91.0 %	92.5 %	92.1 %	92.8 %	93.9 %
Punctuality	89.3 %	85.3 %	84.3 %	92.4 %	86.6 %

Reliability – Measured as 96 % of scheduled services to run
(NB: Measured as services run, even if operated by road coaxh !!!!)
Punctuality - 92 % of services to arrive at terminal station within 6 minutes of schedule
(NB: Includes trains terminating/originating SHORT of timetabled terminal/origin !!!)

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Inter – City - Long Distance Services

	Warrnambool	Ararat & Maryborough	Swan Hill & Echuca	Shepparton	Albury / Wodonga	Bairnsdale
Reliability	94.8 %	95.5 %	94.2 %	95.3 %	82.5 %	96.2 %
Punctuality	88.1 %	88.6 %	77.7 %	93.5 %	83.7 %	90.8 %

Reliability – Measured as 96 % of scheduled services to run .
(NB: Measured as services run, even if operated by road coaxh !!!!)
Punctuality - 92 % of services to arrive at terminal station within 11 minutes of schedule
(NB: Includes trains terminating/originating SHORT of timetabled terminal/origin !!!)

NOTES:

1. *Services are counted as having operated when run by train or even when substituted by bus !!!!*

2. *Services are counted as having operated to the scheduled public timetable, including when services are terminated short of, or originate short of the timetabled destination / origin station.*

3. *Train services counted as having run even if the train runs as a reduced number of cars.*

Information Source : V/LINE Corporate Website

V/LINE IMPROVEMENTS V. ACTUAL DELIVERY

	GOVERNMENT / DoT COMMITMENT				DELIVERY STATUS - AUGUST 2026	
INTER URBAN SERVICES						
1	Waurn Ponds 20 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays	By 08/24		1	NOT DELIVERED	Still HALF Weekday Off Peak trains terminate at SOUTH GEELONG
2	Waurn Ponds 20 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekends			2		DELIVERED
3	Wendouree 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays			3		DELIVERED
4	Wendouree 40 minute Weekend frequency			4		DELIVERED
5	Bendigo 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays	By 11/26		5	NOT DELIVERED	
6	Bendigo – Additional Evening Trains Saturdays & Sundays			6		DELIVERED
7	Shepparton 9 return train trips on Weekdays, 5 return train trips on Weekends	By 07/25		7	From Sunday 23/08/2026	DELIVERED
8	Additional Seymour Weekday am Up/PM Down peak service			8		DELIVERED
9	Seymour 60 minute frequency on Saturdays & Sundays	???		9	From Sunday 23/08/2026	DELIVERED
10	Traralgon 40 minute Off Peak frequency on Weekdays			10		DELIVERED
11	Traralgon – 40 minute Weekend frequency			11		DELIVERED
INTER CITY SERVICES						
12	Warrnambool 5 return services 7 days a week.			12		DELIVERED
13	Ararat 5 return services 7 days a week.			13		DELIVERED
14	Echuca 5 return servicers on Weekdays	By 07/25		14	NOT DELIVERED	
15	Echuca 3 return services on Weekends			15		DELIVERED
16	Albury 5 return V/LINE services on Weekdays	???		16	NOT DELIVERED	
17	Albury fourth Weekend return trip over Sat / Sunday			17		DELIVERED
18	SALE - Existing V/locity Weekend trips extended to BAIRNSDALE.			18		DELIVERED
19	Upgrade to Class-2M track allowing 130 km/h to Albury, Warrnambool, and Seymour – Mangalore – Mooroopna	???		19	**NOT DELIVERED :** Warrnambool Line, and Murch East – Mooroopna	**DELIVERED :** Mangalore – Murchison East., and Albury Line.
20	Upgrade to Class-2 track allowing 115 km/h Traralgon to Sale	???		20	NOT DELIVERED	

PICTURES FROM AROUND THE TRACKS



V/locity train with the new elevated Melton station taking shape in the background. *Image – Jonathan Scutt*



Above: New four (4) platform elevated station taking shape at Melton. *Image – Victorian Government.*

PICTURES FROM AROUND THE TRACKS



Above: Original candy livery XPT train seen above at Broadmeadows (Victoria). *Image - Jonathan Scutt*



Above: Second platform on the right taking shape at Benalla opposite the original East side platform. *Image – Inland Rail.*

PICTURES FROM AROUND THE TRACKS



An empty Metro 1 test train running on the next section of the Sydney Metro 1 line between Sydenham and Bankstown which will open to extended public services shortly, *Image - Sydney Trains*



Above: Gold Coast G - Link Light Rail at Burleigh Heads station on the recently opened extension from Broadbeach South.
Image – Queensland Govt.

PICTURES FROM AROUND THE TRACKS

Two photos taken recently at the same location (Seaholme on the Altona line). *Both inages - Doug Spike*

TOP : The wooden bodied Heritage Tait train. BELOW: As currently used on Altona/Laverton public services a SIEMENS train.





PICTURES FROM AROUND THE TRACKS



Above: A Steel train seen here at Toorak, en-route to Long Island. *Image – Doug Spike*



Above: New elevated station at Mordialloc on the Frankston line. *Image – Victorian Government.*