



NORTH EAST RAIL LINE UPGRADE

Seymour Alternative Farming Expo, February 2019

IMPROVING RELIABILITY AND RIDE QUALITY FOR PASSENGERS ON NORTH EAST RAIL LINE SERVICES

We know improving the rail network and the performance of passenger train services is important to the communities of North East Victoria and ARTC is dedicated to making that happen.

In 2018 the Australian Government committed \$235 million to the North East Rail Line Upgrade project which will upgrade the rail line from Melbourne to Albury/Wodonga. These improvements will bring the existing corridor up to a Victorian Class 2 track performance standard, in line with other regional rail lines in Victoria.

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT WILL INCLUDE:



Improved passenger service reliability by upgrading track condition



Enhanced ride comfort and quality for passengers by reducing the bumps for a smoother ride



Reduced causes of major delays that can impact services such as signal failures due to signal wire theft.

ARTC is working closely with V/Line, Department of Transport, Rail Projects Victoria and Public Transport Victoria to deliver the project on behalf of the Australian Government in support of the \$1.75 billion Regional Rail Revival program, which is upgrading train lines across Victoria.

In early 2018, a technical working group and project steering committee were formed to oversee the scope and delivery of the project and support clear and consistent sharing of information with communities. The steering committee continues to meet monthly.

The Victoria transport agencies also collaborated to develop the scope of the project. This included engineering experts from V/Line, Public Transport Victoria, Transport for Victoria and Rail Projects Victoria and significant cross sharing of North East line track data and other engineering material. Some of the data analysed was sourced from V/Line's track recording car which was validated against ARTC's own track geometry readings.

Further collaboration continues in terms of sharing technical knowledge and expertise to support the successful delivery of new rolling stock.

The North East Rail Line Upgrade project team was finalised in January 2019, including the establishment of an engagement team to ensure the community and other important stakeholders are involved and informed of the progress of the project. We aim to ensure our communications and engagement is proactive, genuine, transparent, timely and provides opportunities for two-way conversations.

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to summarise the feedback received as part of the community engagement for the North East Rail Line Upgrade project between August 2018 and March 2019.

We are conscious of community concerns and aim to build trust and mutually beneficial relationships, by being active in the community and transparent about the project.

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES

Ongoing community engagement remains a key focus and is critical to ensuring our community has a clear understanding of the scope, purpose and intended outcomes of the project.

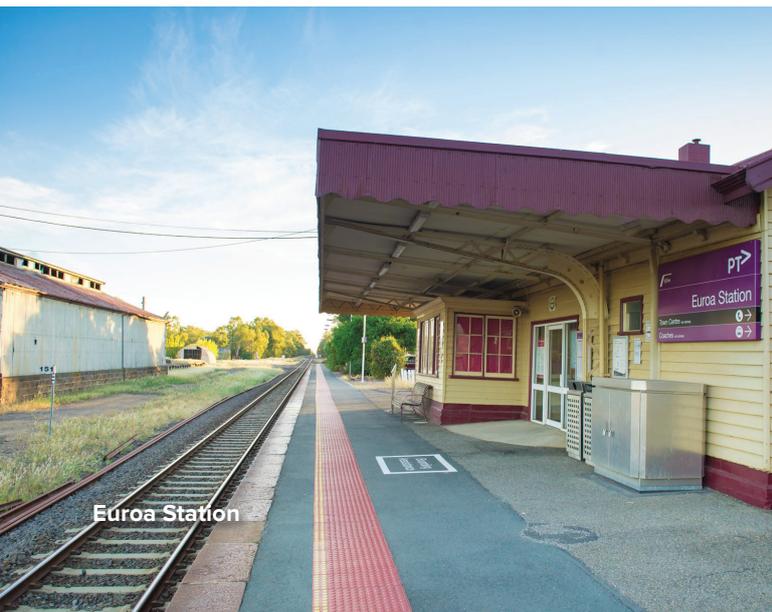
We are also working closely with the various Victorian transport agencies to ensure close alignment and coordination in all community engagement activities.

The following principles guide our engagement on the North East Rail Line Upgrade:

- Transparency
- Creating an educative insight into the works
- Maintaining a constructive dialogue with the community and key stakeholders
- Accessible and responsive approach.

WHO WE'VE TALKED TO

- Local and Federal MPs
- Local councils
- Local contractors, service providers and business owners
- Community and transport groups such as Hume Corridor Passenger Rail Collaboration, Ovens Valley Regional Partnership and Border Rail Action Group (BRAG)
- Over 1,200 individual community members across North East Victoria.



Euroa Station



Wangaratta Station pop-up, October 2018

HOW WE'VE ENGAGED

- Community events in the form of pop ups at train stations, town shows, community markets – joined by representatives from the Inland Rail project and Victorian transport agencies including V/Line specifically
- Provided opportunities to meet the project team, ask questions, pick up project fact sheets and leave feedback
- Meetings and briefings with councils and other interested groups
- MP briefings
- Project website
- eNews updates to share project information, details of upcoming community events
- Project newsletter distributed to 6,000 homes along the rail corridor providing an update on both the North East Rail Line Upgrade and Inland Rail projects.



Brock Street Euroa, February 2019

Engagement August 2018 – March 2019	Planned for early 2019	
Community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with an estimated 1,200 community members through station pop-ups and community events at Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Euroa, Seymour, Benalla and Kilmore Supported by media, newspaper advertising and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional community events, conversations and station pop-ups at Euroa and Wangaratta
Stakeholder meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with local Ministers, councils and officers Border Rail Action Group and Hume Corridor Passenger Rail Group meetings (May 2018, October 2018) V/line staff briefing. Joined by Department of Transport and Rail Projects Victoria 	<p>Further meetings with local Ministers, councils and officers and community groups including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Border Rail Action Group Ovens Valley Regional Partnership V/Line staff briefing, joined by Department of Transport and Rail Projects Victoria
Additional communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project newsletter to 6000 households within 100m of the rail corridor eNews – over 150 subscribers to date Website update with eNews sign-up Over 5,000 visits to project website Published summary of Monash Institute of Railway Technology report Works notifications, letterbox drops, email notifications and newspaper advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community displays in Mitchell Shire. eNews updates Works notifications around early project works Newspaper and static advertising (at train stations)



WE ARE LISTENING

We know that improving rail services is a key issue for the communities of North East Victoria. From our conversations to date and feedback collected here's some of what we've heard so far:

- When are the upgrade works starting and when will the project be finished?
- Project sounds good in theory, but I'll believe it when I see the improvements.
- Passenger services are not prioritised over freight trains.
- Why not replace the copper signal wires with other possibilities?
- How much of the work will be carried out at night, and what will be the noise impact?
- How will the construction impact passenger services and the broader community?
- What can you tell us about the new trains and VLocity design?

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT SO FAR

- Communities have ongoing concerns with the challenges faced around passenger service reliability and scepticism the project will deliver the outcomes they want.
- We need to continue to build trust and relationships with various community groups.
- Communities want to continue to receive regular updates about the North East Rail Line Upgrade project.
- Proactive engagement throughout planning and delivery of the project is a must.



Mud hole removal, south of Euroa

IT'S A BIG JOB!

To improve rail service reliability, reduce delays and deliver a smoother ride for passengers, here's just some of what we're doing:

- Removing over **500** existing mud holes. Mud holes form due to poor drainage and can result in temporary speed restrictions. Fewer mud holes means more reliable trains.
- Adding **200,000** tonnes of new ballast along the entire rail line, that's enough to fill 50 Olympic swimming pools! Ballast is the crushed rock around the track and all that new ballast will improve track stability and drainage, helping prevent mud holes from reforming.
- Installing **2** new sets of crossovers between Seymour and Benalla, significantly improving track access and operational flexibility.
- Upgrading over **120** bridges, including replacing **64** older timber top bridges with new concrete and ballast top bridges resulting in a smoother ride.
- Improving the track at over **110** level crossings, including **6** pedestrian crossings. This too will help smooth out the ride.
- Relocating overhead signal wires to underground to decrease the risk of signal failures due to trees falling on wires or line wire theft.
- Talking to community members about the project, listening to feedback and answering questions. Over **1,200** conversations so far at community events and pop-ups throughout North East Victoria.



Euroa Show, October 2018

DID YOU KNOW?

ARTC initiated an independent review of the scope of the North East Rail Line Upgrade project. The study was undertaken by Monash University's Institute of Railway Technology and confirmed the delivery plan will achieve the project's objective of achieving the required track performance standard.

A summary of the report can be found on our website.



The Hon Michael McCormack MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Leader of The Nationals
Federal Member for Riverina

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 11 October 2018

FEDS SIGN OFF ON \$235 MILLION NORTH EAST RAIL LINE FUNDING

Federal funding is set to flow to the North East Rail Line thanks to formal approval of its \$235 million commitment to flow to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to deliver the project, another key milestone toward getting the major upgrade up and running.

Deputy Prime Minister, Nationals' Leader and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Michael McCormack said the project will make V/Line services more reliable, journeys smoother for customers and help reduce the causes of major delays to passenger services.

"This investment is big news for the North East Victorian community as it will enable V/Line to introduce new, faster and more reliable 'VLOCITY' trains capable of speed of up to 130 kilometres per hour," Mr McCormack said.

"It will do this by upgrading the line to achieve Victorian Class 2 performance standard, which turn improve the reliability and ride quality of passenger services along the lines.

"Today's announcement is a key step in confirming the Australian Government's commitment to improve the reliability and ride quality of passenger services along the lines."

"This follows detailed review of the scope of works by the Institute of Railway Technology at Monash University, which has confirmed that it will deliver the track quality the community expect."

The scope of works will meet the Class 2 Performance Standard needed to deliver the new VLOCITY rolling stock.

"It is absolutely critical now the commitments to deliver on the rolling stock, which are the responsibility of the Victorian Government, are followed through with." Mr McCormack said.

Multiple review and endorsement processes were undertaken by agencies including Transport for Victoria, Rail Projects Victoria, Public Transport Victoria, V/Line, the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities as well as the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

"This project is an extremely important investment in better-connecting the region and directly tackles the various causes of cancellations and delays such as track condition, signalling faults, passenger delays and rolling stock maintenance."

The Hon Michael McCormack MP
Riverina | (02) 6277 7520 | minister.mccormack@infrastructure.gov.au
Wagga Wagga | 1800 952 952 | mack.mp@aph.gov.au

\$235m will fix mudhole problem

THE Australian Rail Track Corporation has been asked to promise that after \$1 billion of spending on the North East rail line, the upcoming works will be "it".

Chief executive John Fullerton faced questions from Senator Janet Rice at Senate Estimates this week.

"How can you assure the community that undertaking these works is actually going to be it in terms of addressing the problems, particularly the mudholes that have continued to be regenerated?"

Mr Fullerton said the ARTC had a specific plan on how to use \$235 million of federal funding to upgrade the track to a class-2 standard, including ensuring the rail ballast (the stones under the track) were deep enough to prevent issues.

"Mudholes occur from time to time on any track so it's a thing we deal with all

over the network," he said. "We're replacing a significant amount of ballast to give 200 millimetres of free-drain timber-deck bridges, we're replacing level crossings."

- SHANA MORGAN



SOLUTION: ARTC CEO
John Fullerton says trains will become more reliable.

Feedback is taken on board

STORIES and complaints of painful experiences on the North East train line featured in public consultation this week and the Australian Rail Track Corporation says that is "completely understandable".

Corporate affairs general manager Bas Bolyn was in Wagga yesterday to talk to people about plans for \$235 million worth of upgrades to the track and the inland rail project.

"(The complaints) won't change and people won't start using the train more until they know it's going to run reliably and on time," he said. "We've been working really, really closely with a lot of those transport agencies to make sure that where we do the work, how we do the work, is completely in line with what should be done."

Mr Bolyn said he understood people hate using replacement buses, so the ARTC will complete as much of the 60 to 70 hours of work for bridge upgrades and other major tasks during the annual North East track shutdown over a few days in March.

"There will be some disruptions, but we will try to minimise them as much as we can," he said.

"Crossovers" will also be installed on the dual tracks between Seymour and Benalla so trains can still run on one side of the tracks while work is completed on the other.

The ARTC plans to lower the track at Baranawatha so bigger, double-stacked trains can fit as part of the inland rail project, but was still consulting with Wagga Council over how to deal with two pedestrian bridges at the train station which will be too low.

- SHANA MORGAN

Our North East rail upgrade a hot topic

THE North East rail upgrade was the dominant topic of conversation for locals at the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) information sessions held at the Wagga Wagga Railway Station last week.

ARTC held six community sessions at Wagga Wagga, Benalla, Woodgrove and Epsom, speaking to more than 300 people in total, including 40 at Wagga Wagga.

The inland rail project, to double-track freight trains, was the other hot topic for discussions.

An ARTC spokesperson said there was interest in both projects at all sessions but primarily in the \$235 million North East upgrade project, which will start next year - and within two years see a more reliable, faster service.

"Questions included what the work will involve, the benefits and what it will mean for communities in terms of better services," the spokesperson said.

"There was some concern in terms of private service issues, but the main interest was really around using the passenger rail upgrades to deliver improved reliability."

More community feedback will be sought on both projects in the future.

"The solution to inland rail, we have had early

consultations with Wagga Wagga Council and other community members about the council's proposal," the spokesperson said.

"We have advised council that we believe there will be engineering, safety and heritage challenges around delivering an extended track knowing roads the heritage precinct, and it is also likely the Council Street footbridge would need strengthening to be compliant with today's standards, and that it does not meet current standards for disability access."

"We will continue to work with council and consider the range of community feedback we have received regarding the entire Wagga Wagga railway precinct."

Wagga Wagga resident Pat Hoffmann said the inland rail was a great idea for freight.

"It's important to get the freight off the road, and the increasing number of trucks," he said.

"It's progress and anyone who stands in the way of it is silly."

Jim Lewis said there was an understanding we can talk now about the rail and see if it's intended to end it will be incorporated in the work," he said.

"They should also understand the main use of Wagga Wagga is always rail. "The thing they could do is they should open the

stations for all train arrivals and departures."

Pat agreed. "It's more popular now than it was a few years ago," he said.

There is more information online about both projects. For the North East Line Upgrade you can find information at <http://www.artc.com.au/projects/north-east>.

Further information about inland rail in Victoria can be found at <http://inlandrail.vic.gov.au> and TRA.



CONSULTATION: Marco Dodds and son AJ Dodds, 1, with ARTC corporate affairs general manager Bas Bolyn at Junction Square yesterday. Photo: MARK JESSER

PROJECT TIMELINE



HERE'S HOW WE'RE TRACKING

We're getting on with the task of improving track conditions and targeting the causes of service delay.

Early works undertaken by our maintenance teams have commenced and include:

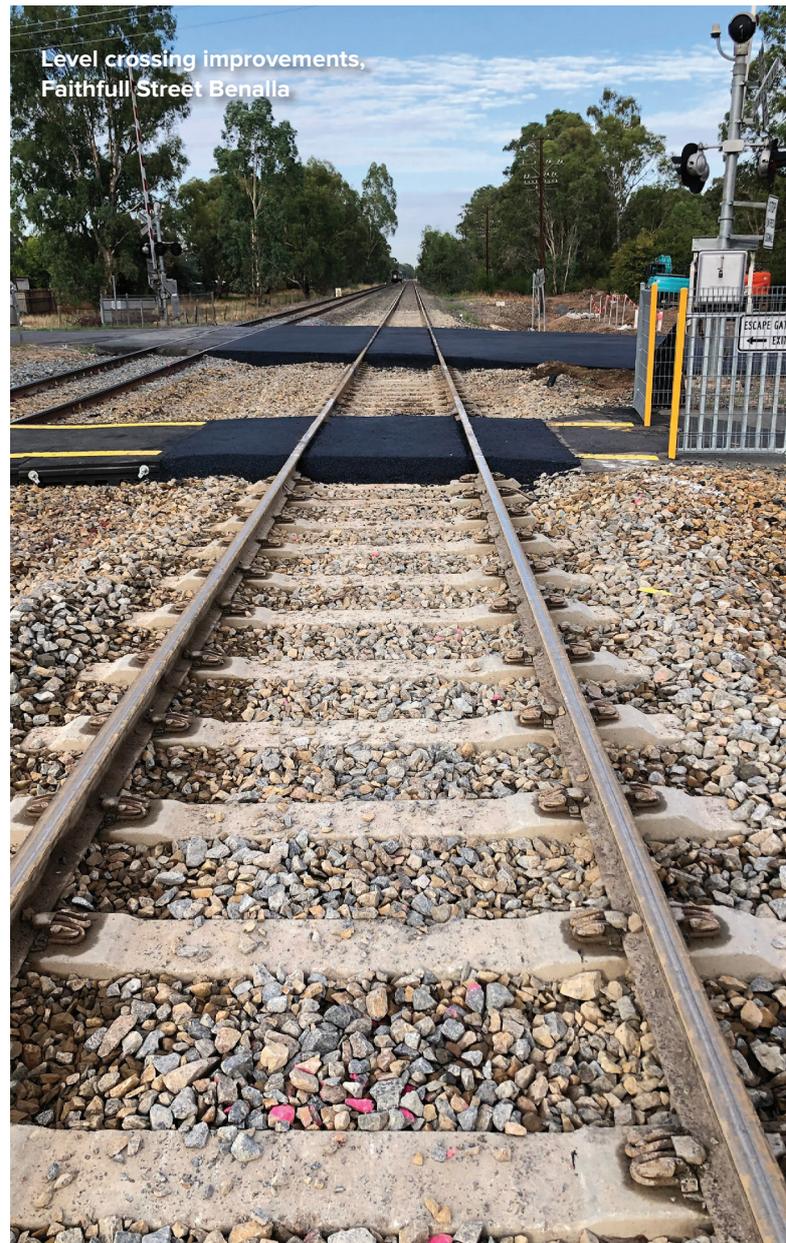
- Priority mudhole removal to reduce the need for speed restriction, meaning more reliable train timetable.
- Level crossing improvements at Faithfull St in Benalla and Gravel Pit Road, Wangaratta South.

WHAT'S NEXT

Community feedback has and will continue to play an important role in the planning and delivery of the North East Rail Line Upgrade project. We will continue to talk with, and more importantly listen to, the community members as the project progresses. In the meantime, we'd like to hear from you!

Over the coming months you can expect to see:

- More community events. Sign up for our email updates to receive details on when we'll be in your area.
- A continuation of early works along the rail corridor.
- Updates on the major works contract which will be awarded later this year.
- Incorporation of information and expectations from the community in the major works contractor's scope.
- Further resources to provide information and insights around the works being delivered.



KEEP IN TOUCH

We want to continue to know your thoughts and keep you up to date on the project.

You can register to receive email updates and find out more information about the project on our website or contact the project team anytime:

artc.com.au/projects/northeast
northeastline@artc.com.au
1300 550 402

ARTC

Current as at March 2019