

Media release



FROM THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

DATE: Friday, June 20, 2008

MAJOR MILESTONE FOR MILDURA RAIL FREIGHT LINE

The Mildura rail freight upgrade achieved a major milestone this month with over one third of the 525km track upgrade between Geelong and Mildura completed as the project makes its way through Maryborough.

The \$73m upgrade is a jointly funded Federal and State government project, with \$53 million from the Brumby Government and \$20 million from the Commonwealth AusLink program.

Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said over 118,000 sleepers have been replaced and almost 43,000 tonnes of ballast discharged to date, marking the successful completion of more than one third of the track upgrade.

"We have been working hard to ensure the project moves forward with the project well on its way for completion in 2009," Ms Kosky said.

"Each day approximately 1,100 sleepers are replaced, that's one in almost every two sleepers along the track, helping to ensure a high-quality freight line for many years to come."

Ms Kosky said this important upgrade will increase freight train speeds between Mildura and Gheringhap, near Geelong, up to 80km/h and cut freight travel times between Mildura and Melbourne from 14 hours to less than ten, when completed.

"The project will ensure the line remains open and able to serve the freight trains needed to carry grain and primary produce like fruit and vegetables," Ms Kosky said.

"The Mildura line is one of the busiest freight corridors in Victoria and the upgrade will improve the reliability and efficiency of the line and give producers greater incentive to transport goods via rail freight."

Ms Kosky said the rail upgrade is being undertaken with gauge convertible sleepers and a third rail is being added at level crossings which will allow for standardisation in future.

John Holland Rail is completing the upgrade and has planned the following road closures:

- Ballarat-Maryborough Road level crossing , Talbot - 6am Sat 21 June to 6pm Sun 22 June;
- Inkerman Street level crossing, Maryborough - 6am Tue 24 June to 6pm Wed 25 June; and
- Denherts Road level crossing, Daisy Hill - 6am Tue 1 July to 6pm Wed 2 July.

Motorists are advised to watch out for work trains when approaching level crossings and follow directional traffic signage during these closures.