

Media release



FROM THE MINISTER FOR ROADS AND PORTS

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PORT OF GEELONG RAIL UPGRADE ONE STEP CLOSER

Works to improve rail freight movement in and around the Port of Geelong moved a step closer with the awarding of a \$10.4 million contract for track and civil works to John Holland, Minister for Roads and Ports, Tim Pallas announced today.

Mr Pallas said the contract was an important milestone in the Brumby Government's program of improving rail links to Victoria's ports.

"The Geelong Rail Upgrade project will significantly increase standard gauge rail access to the Port of Geelong, as well as providing extra sidings and storage facilities," Mr Pallas said.

"These rail access improvements will reduce transport costs and generate savings for local and regional businesses.

"The port is important to the region's economic growth, handling around \$5.6 billion worth of trade each year and generating more than 4,700 jobs."

The contract works is for the design and construction of a range of track and civil improvements, including new dual gauge lines, improved storage facilities, a new rail bridge and three new sidings.

Mr Pallas said the project supports the Government's policy of increasing the use of rail freight.

"The Government is investing in Victoria's rail freight network through the Geelong Rail Upgrade, the Dynon Port Rail Link at the Port of Melbourne and the Mildura to Geelong rail freight upgrade," Mr Pallas said.

"The Government is currently reviewing a report by the Hon Tim Fischer AC, into Victoria's rail freight network, which provides recommendations for improving rail road hubbing and setting investment priorities.

“We are taking action to build a sustainable rail freight network which can take up an increasing share of the state’s freight task.”

Mr Pallas said the Geelong Rail Upgrade would deliver benefits not just to port users but to the surrounding community, by reducing the number of truck movements in and around the port.

“This is in addition to the Geelong Ring Road project, which will enable freight and vehicle traffic to be moved easily around Geelong,” he said.

“The Brumby Government is taking action now to meet the challenges of the future and make Victoria the best place to live, work and raise a family.

“The Government is taking action to build a sustainable and efficient transport network for Victoria’s second largest city.”

Preliminary works on the Geelong Rail Upgrade project will begin later this month and the project is scheduled for completion in 2009.