



SHEPPARTON TO MELBOURNE PASSENGER RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Background

Shepparton’s passenger rail services have long been recognised by the Greater Shepparton community as insufficient for its needs as a regional centre and poor when compared to other regional cities across Victoria. In campaigning to improve the frequency, standard and timetabling of rail services to and from Shepparton, a working group comprising Suzanna Sheed - Member for Shepparton District, Greater Shepparton City Council, SheppartonRAILS and Committee for Greater Shepparton with support from the broader community, was convened to co-ordinate advocacy efforts.

All Aboard Shepparton continues to collectively lobby for improved and increased passenger rail services between Shepparton and Melbourne, with the current priority of securing a sustainable service with eight return trains every day and a journey time close to two hours.

The recent announcement of \$33m in the 2017/18 State Budget to deliver a new passing loop and stabling at Shepparton is a very welcome step in developing the required infrastructure.

Costs

However, in order to deliver the aim, including modern VLocity rolling stock and infrastructure upgrades to allow them to run, investment is required:

- An additional \$71.5 million for track upgrades, including upgrading of 32 level crossings and improved signalling;
- \$85 million for VLocity rolling stock; and
- \$5.7 million per year increase in operating budget from 2021.

Benefits

Benefits will be felt at a regional level as train patronage rises, both through reducing car travel and increasing productivity and encouraging people to access health and education services in Shepparton and Melbourne.

Conservative estimates of increases in patronage, based on impacts of the Regional Fast Rail project in the mid-2000s are between 2.5 (150%) and 3 (200%) times.

Passenger increase	Benefit-Cost Ratio
150%	0.85
200%	1.12

Next Steps

In order to secure the full service improvements to eight return daily services on modern rolling stock by 2020, commitment to funding the additional \$71.5million infrastructure investment is required in the 2018/19 State budget.

Council, its partners and other local authorities across Victoria will continue to advocate to both State and Federal Governments to invest in the regional network, including development of a long-term route via Melbourne Airport.

