# Gippsland Rail Needs Study Report

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Background

Gippsland benefits from a main line railway that links its major settlements and cities, and links them with Melbourne. This rail link is vital to economic efficiency and social inclusion in the region.

However the Gippsland line has been neglected compared to other regional mainlines in Victoria; infrastructure is inadequate and service levels are poorer in regard to journey times, reliability and frequency. Passenger trains operate at the lowest average speed of any Victorian mainline, and journey times have deteriorated significantly since 2001, for example, the journey times from Warragul to Melbourne are now typically 10-15 minutes slower than in 2001.

Recent investments in regional rail upgrading in the State have excluded Gippsland. Although the Regional Fast Rail (RFR) project increased speeds on parts of the Gippsland line, these benefits have been more than offset by slower journeys through the metropolitan area. Moreover, only one of the two tracks was upgraded, and that not completely. Single line sections, for example between Bunyip and Longwarry, still cause delays, while the chosen configuration of the Skyrail project on the Dandenong-Cranbourne corridor will further disadvantage Gippsland by precluding express running through the metropolitan area for years ahead.

Findings

- Gippsland mainline rail services are the slowest and most unreliable in Victoria and connecting coach services are of variable quality and require improvement.
- Gippsland trains are regularly delayed by preceding suburban trains on the two track corridor, particularly between Dandenong and Caulfield, whereas the completion in 2014 of the Regional Rail Link project fully separated Geelong and Ballarat line trains from Metro services and also substantially did so for Bendigo line services.
- Recent decisions in relation to the Cranbourne/Pakenham Rail project have effectively nullified the ability to add two additional tracks in the existing rail reserve between Caulfield and Oakleigh and have also added to the difficulty of doing so between Oakleigh and Dandenong.
- There have been no significant upgrades to Gippsland corridor rail infrastructure since completion of the Regional Fast Rail project in 2005/06.
- There have been no serious improvement to Gippsland railway station facilities over many years other than the recent car park and bus interchange works at Warragul.
- There has been little improvement to service frequency to Traralgon since completion of the Regional Fast Rail project in 2005/06, and some commuter services from Warragul to Melbourne are now slower than in 2000.
- There has been no improvement to services to Sale and Bairnsdale in terms of travel time, frequency, rolling stock and general service quality since the early 1990s (but acknowledging reopening of passenger services between Sale and Bairnsdale in 2004, following closure in 1993).
- All services operate at relatively low average end to end speeds of, largely due to slow running through the metropolitan area.
- There are no freight services beyond Morwell (Australian Paper Maryvale mill).
- Freight trains to Bairnsdale are prohibited and there are 10 km/h speed restrictions for passenger trains running over the obsolete and decrepit Avon River bridge at Stratford.
- Gippsland has received no benefit from major state investments such as the Regional Rail Link, the North Eastern line rebuild and investments in upgrading the Ballarat and Bendigo lines.
- The Regional Fast Rail project in Gippsland has not been completed with one line not upgraded, single line sections retained and speed restrictions.
• Efficiency of the Gippsland railway overall is impeded by inadequate infrastructure including single line sections, outdated safe working systems, and some old and unfit for purpose structures such as station buildings and bridges.

• Significant social benefits would result from improved rail services and specific infrastructure upgrading to support these services: the benefits would include better access to jobs, education, health facilities, facilitation of social inclusion and tourist industry development.

• Carefully targeted public transport improvements will reduce the region’s excessive car dependency which is presently reflected in avoidable obesity, health issues, and road trauma.

• Gippsland has a larger proportion of aged residents than the State average and these citizens need better public transport to access health facilities, visit relatives and maintain their quality of life.

• Public transport connections are not provided for several key Gippsland tourist destinations, including Walhalla, the Bav Baws, the Buchan Caves, the Tarra Valley, Port Albert, the coastal route from Melbourne to Sydney via Gippsland, and the Great Alpine Road, depriving the region of valuable tourist income, especially from international visitors.

Recommendations

This Report examines rail and coach services in Gippsland and provides detailed recommendations for staged service improvements, investments in supporting infrastructure and facilities, and better coach services to bring Gippsland’s rail and the public transport network generally to a standard that meets contemporary needs and expectations for residents and visitors.

Recommended Rail and Coach Service Improvements:

We suggest that Gippsland community expectations should be conditioned around what could reasonably be provided in three timescales:

• Short term – the next 5 years to 2021 – improved service reliability, frequency and less overcrowding consistent with additional rolling stock availability and enhanced infrastructure capability including completion of Cranbourne/Pakenham rail upgrade project, new train stabling facilities at Warragul and Sale, and initial Gippsland line infrastructure improvements. Some improvement in travel times due to more services running express between Drouin and Dandenong.

• Medium term – over 10 years to 2026 – further service reliability and frequency improvements (especially off-peak), consistent with completion of Melbourne Metro project (noting that this will further add metropolitan services on the Dandenong/Pakenham corridor), new trains for long distance services and further Gippsland line infrastructure improvements. The new generation long distance trains will enable a substantial reduction in journey times to and from Sale and Bairnsdale.

• Longer term – over 15 years to 2031 – substantial improvements in service reliability and journey time reductions assuming completion of Caulfield-Dandenong quadruplication, other metropolitan area works and further Gippsland line infrastructure improvements.

The following sets out an overview of the proposed service changes:

• All weekday, inter-peak, evening and weekend services on the Traralgon line should operate on a regular minimum hourly pattern increasing to 40 minute frequencies once the necessary supporting infrastructure is in place;

• A new service pattern with a minimum of four commuter trains each AM and PM peak period between Traralgon and Flinders Street (Southern Cross where train paths permit), with alternate express and stopping services, reducing journey times;

• All Traralgon and Sale peak and shoulder peak services should operate with VLocity consists larger than the current 3-car sets;
• Introduction of one or more morning eastbound trains originating at Warragul (including provision for train stabling at Warragul) sufficiently early to allow commuting to Morwell and Traralgon by workers and students from Drouin and Warragul, evolving later into a Latrobe Metro providing regular internal services on the Drouin to Sale corridor;
• Extension of at least two VLocity train services from and to Sale and provision of stabling at Sale;
• Provision of disabled-compliant carriages on all Bairnsdale trains;
• Early replacement of 35-60 year old locomotive-hauled carriages on Bairnsdale services with new generation trains of international standard, appropriately configured for long distance services;
• A fourth and subsequently a fifth return Bairnsdale train; reducing journey times from 225 to 200 minutes for all Bairnsdale trains by limiting stops between Melbourne and Traralgon; and more user friendly departure times;
• Introduction of explicit service standards for coach services to small, larger and medium sized Gippsland towns as well as to key tourist destinations;
• Additional or improved coach services to and from Bruthen, Mirboo North and Orbost,
• Coach connections to allow weekend tourists using public transport to spend weekends at Walhalla, Buchan, Mallacoota, Paynesville or the Tarra Valley, and improvements to coach connectivity between V/line coaches terminating at Bateman’s Bay and onward services to and from Sydney;

**Recommended Rail Infrastructure Investments:**

**Urgent Study needed of the best way of adding capacity for express services on the Dandenong Rail Corridor**

The improvements required to Gippsland public transport services require planned and staged investments to bring the Gippsland line to a level where it can support the frequent and fast train service that is central to the effective future of public transport in Gippsland.

Track configuration between Dandenong and Melbourne is the biggest single factor inhibiting the introduction of fast, reliable and frequent rail services to Gippsland. As the current Skyrail project has been constructed without providing for the extra capacity and faster services needed by Gippsland and the growing suburbs south and east of Dandenong, it is critical that a major independent planning study be commissioned to determine the most appropriate means of providing the extra track capacity needed.

**Other infrastructure investments that are needed:**

This study has identified a number of urgent investments for completion within 5 years to support improved services on the Gippsland line:

• Duplication of the single line between Bunyip and Longwarry and upgraded stations at both locations
• Expansion of the Drouin Parkway facility with an additional 400 car park spaces
• Provision of train stabling facilities at Warragul and Sale
• Extension of the Morwell crossing loop towards Traralgon for approximately 3km and upgrading of the existing loop track and turnout.
• Additional car parking at Moe
• Provision of a second platform at Morwell with associated DDA compliant access
• Upgrading of the Traralgon station precinct including provision of 200 car parking spaces
• A new safeworking system and signalling Traralgon to Sale
• Replacement of the Avon River bridge at Stratford
• Provision of remote controlled signalling for loco runarounds at Bairnsdale

Medium term, within 10 years, additional investment will be needed:

• Full upgrading of the North line Pakenham to Bunyip and Longwarry to Moe to Class 1 standard to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity and new generation long distance trains
- Upgrading to Class 1 standard of the remaining Class 2 sections of the South Line between Longwarry and Warragul to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity trains and new generation long distance trains (subject to curvature constraints)
- Extending duplication from Moe to Hernes Oak including a new station building and second platform at Moe with associated DDA compliant access
- Upgrading of existing track Moe to Hernes Oak and Hernes Oak loop track to Class 1 standard to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity trains and new generation long distance trains (subject to curvature constraints)
- Provision of a second platform at Traralgon with associated DDA compliant access
- Track upgrade to Class 2 standard Traralgon to Bairnsdale for 130 km/h operation of VLocity trains and new generation long distance trains
- New safeworking system and signalling Sale to Bairnsdale
- Provision of a train stabling facility at Bairnsdale

Longer term, within 15 years, further investment will be needed:

- Quadruplication between Caulfield and Dandenong
- An overtaking line (4 km of bi-directional third rack) between Beaconsfield and Officer
- Extending track duplication from Hernes Oak to Morwell Loop and from Morwell Loop to Traralgon
- A new crossing loop at Wurruk (near Sale)

In addition, all remaining unprotected level crossings should be progressively closed or afforded full active protection on those lines where passenger services operate. Priority should be given to close examination of such crossings on all sections where higher speeds are permitted or proposed.

**Recommendations for rail and tourism:**

- Gippsland tourist authorities and V/Line should undertake a review of rail and coach services from the tourist point of view.
- Several Gippsland coach connections should be considered for introduction, or re-aligned to support tourist needs. These include coach connections to Buchan, the Tarra Valley and Walhalla
- The public transport advice on the three relevant Government websites should be aligned. The Visit Victoria website should refer to travellers to the PTV website, not the V/Line website. The V/Line website should either carry a warning that it is less comprehensive than the PTV website, or automatically refer travellers to the PTV website if they seek destinations not served by V/Line.
- V/Line should consider including Gippsland destinations in its Escape with V/Line promotions and other marketing.

**Other recommendations:**

- The Gippsland Local Government Network consider establishing an ongoing Gippsland Public Transport Forum to articulate the region’s needs. The Forum would ensure that proposed rail service changes and coach service reviews conducted by PTV or its successor fully reflect local needs. Ideally, the Forum on behalf of the GLGN may be able to fund a full or part time Transport Connections Officer to support the Forum.

The Report provides detailed discussion of these and other issues and many detailed proposals. It is intended for consideration by Gippsland councils and to form the basis of advocacy to Government. The Gippsland railway and connecting road services are the backbone of public transport and social inclusion in Gippsland, and a key factor in future economic, social and tourist development. This Report is designed to articulate the actions required and the priorities and phasing of those actions.
1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

This Study of the Rail Needs of Gippsland has been commissioned by the four local governments directly served by the Gippsland railway: Baw Baw Shire, Latrobe City, Wellington Shire and East Gippsland Shire. The Councils intent was to provide a "combined view that could form the basis of a persuasive submission to Government for improvements in services and infrastructure in the rail corridor to provide for the current and future transport needs of their citizens."

1.2 Aim of this Report

To identify and discuss:

- Social, economic and demographic issues affecting Gippsland rail demand;
- Current rail services – demand trends, strengths and weaknesses;
- Current infrastructure strengths and weaknesses;
- Standards of service and infrastructure requirement to support such services;
- Short, medium and long term priorities for service improvements and infrastructure investments;
- Rail freight in Gippsland in coming years; and
- Some desirable Special Projects

1.3 State and National Context

After many years of relative neglect compared with financial support for road projects, State and Federal Governments over recent years have begun to revitalise the nation’s railways, recognising the unique contribution that passenger rail and freight rail can contribute to economic efficiency and social wellbeing.

Federal Governments have made further investments in rail gauge standardization and long distance freight infrastructure upgrading, such as:

- the recent $500 million upgrade of the Oaklands and Albury lines in Victoria
- the federal commitment to 50% of cost of the Murray Basin Rail project in Victoria
- limited commitment to support urban rail developments in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, SA and WA.
- funding commitment for planning the Melbourne-Brisbane inland freight rail link

The Victorian Government has a strong record in regional rail investment and modernization, with notable milestones in recent years being:

- the Regional Fast Rail project,
- the investment in locally constructed VLocity railcars,
- the $4bn Regional Rail Link project, and
- commitment to 50% of the cost of the $440m Murray Basin Rail project.

These investments mirror strong investment and modernization of passenger and freight rail systems worldwide. Investments in new rail technologies and systems are providing economic transformation in many countries. Examples are:

- China has constructed over 10,000 km of high speed passenger rail in the past decade, including the completion of exceptionally challenging engineering tasks such as the new railway to Tibet, previously considered impossible
- The HS2 project in Britain, to commence construction in 2019, which will unify the British economy, connect areas in the north and northwest with high unemployment to those in the southeast where jobs are available
• Rapid developments in rail freight technology in northwest Australia, where driverless train technology is being introduced, and the longest and heaviest freight trains in the world are operated (up to 4 km in length with loads of up to 35,000 tonnes).

1.4 Rail Revitalisation Worldwide

Similar reasons exist worldwide for the revitalisation of rail systems and the development of completely new rail facilities: These include:

For rail passenger services, recognition of:

• The capacity of fast rail to connect people to jobs, education, health and leisure opportunities by "shrinking distance"
• The capacity of well-designed rail systems to overcome some of the chronic problems of road based transport systems, viz. traffic congestion that actually increases with some major road investments; road trauma that increases with road use, fuel inefficiency and continuing issues with pollution (exemplified by the recent Volkswagen scandal that revealed some diesel vehicles were emitting 40 times the stated and permitted level of toxic pollutants)
• The capacity of rail systems to contribute to balanced development among regions by enabling long range commuting from areas with excessive unemployment to areas with well paid jobs, resulting in a more equitable sharing of prosperity, and a capacity to absorb population growth more widely through regional areas; and
• A recognition that excessive "car dependence" can be a serious threat to community health via obesity, road trauma, social exclusion and the pressure of car operating costs on the budgets of lower income families.

For rail freight services, recognition of:

• Rail's capacity to move very large tonnages of freight at lower cost than road transport and with less impact on community amenity;
• Fuel savings
• Lower pollution and emissions
• Significant reduction in road traffic congestion
• Safety benefits, especially much reduced road trauma involving large and heavy vehicles
• Minimal land footprint compared with freeway systems
• Ability to recycle existing rail infrastructure to meet new needs
• Ability to share capacity and costs with passenger rail

1.5 Gippsland's exclusion from Rail Revitalisation

Gippsland residents and businesses are becoming the “poor relations” relative to rail passenger and freight services that connect other parts of regional Victoria with Melbourne and which operate within the regions. This is manifested in several ways:

• Completion in 2014 of the Regional Rail Link project which fully separates Geelong and Ballarat line trains from Metro services and also substantially does so for Bendigo line services.
• Recent decisions in relation to the Cranbourne/Pakenham Rail project that have effectively nullified the ability to add two additional tracks in the existing rail reserve between Caulfield and Oakleigh and have also added to the difficulty of doing so between Oakleigh and Dandenong.
• Lack of any significant upgrades to Gippsland corridor rail infrastructure since completion of the Regional Fast Rail project in 2005/06.
• Lack of any serious improvement to Gippsland railway station facilities over many years other than the recent car park, bus interchange and road underpass works at Warragul
Almost no improvement to weekday service frequency to Traralgon since completion of the Regional Fast Rail project in 2005/06.

No improvement to services to Sale and Bairnsdale in terms of trip times, frequency, rolling stock and general service quality since the early 1990s (but acknowledging reopening of passenger services between Sale and Bairnsdale in 2004, following closure in 1993).

Relatively low average end to end speeds of all services, largely due to slow running through the metropolitan area.

Lack of any freight services beyond Morwell (Australian Paper Maryvale mill).

Prohibition of freight trains and severe speed restriction for passenger trains running over the Avon River bridge at Stratford.

In addition, Gippsland rail services are plagued by poor reliability, again largely due to the unsatisfactory interface with metropolitan services, particularly between the City and Dandenong, but also contributed to by the single line sections on the corridor and other infrastructure deficiencies.

In recent years there have also been a succession of unplanned impacts that have hit Gippsland rail users particularly hard, including:

- Suspension of services between Sale and Bairnsdale for some months due to unreliable operation of level crossing active protection.
- Suspension of services beyond Moe due to failure of the Morwell River Bridge.
- Recent curtailment of almost all passenger services due to wheel wear problems and unreliable operation of level crossing protection in the metropolitan area involving VLocity units, leading to their temporary withdrawal from all Gippsland line services.
2. Social and Economic Issues

2.1 Social and Economic Overview

2.1.1 Social Profile of Gippsland Local Government Areas

The following table provides some selected social information regarding the four local government areas included in this Study. It depicts a population with relatively high car ownership, relatively disadvantaged, with a higher than average aging population, that faces significant travel time and distance challenges in relation to travel to Melbourne:

Table 1: SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS RELEVANT TO TRANSPORT NEEDS – GIPPSLAND LGAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Distance to Melbourne Km (road)</th>
<th>Work trips by Public Transport %</th>
<th>Unemployment %</th>
<th>Passenger Vehicles per 1000 people</th>
<th>Index of Relative Social Disadvantage (Rank)</th>
<th>65-84 year olds as % of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baw Baw</td>
<td>44,394</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>636.7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>43,174</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>648.9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>73,903</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>6.4*</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>42,269</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This figure is understood to have increased significantly recently. See Box on Page 11.

The figures in relation to work trips by public transport contrast with communities where more adequate regional rail transport is provided, despite car ownership being at similar levels in most areas:

Table 2: SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS RELEVANT TO TRANSPORT NEEDS – LGAs WITH UPGRADED PUBLIC TRANSPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LGA</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Distance to Melbourne</th>
<th>Work trips by Public Transport %</th>
<th>Unemployment %</th>
<th>Passenger Vehicles per 1000 people</th>
<th>Index of Relative Social Disadvantage (Rank)</th>
<th>65-84 year olds as % of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>96,964</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedon Ranges</td>
<td>21,549</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>651.4</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Dandenong</td>
<td>144,680</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>614.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Geelong</td>
<td>218,378</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>624.6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1.2 Economic Overview

The Gippsland Regional Plan\(^1\) identifies the following as Gippsland’s key industry sectors:

Table 3: KEY INDUSTRY SECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NO OF JOBS</th>
<th>% OF TOTAL JOBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>11952</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>9972</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>9136</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>7921</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</td>
<td>7777</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7679</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>6104</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Gippsland Regional Plan 2015-2020, p.24
It will be noted that the employment sectors of health care and social assistance, retail, education and training and manufacturing amount together to 41.6% of total employment. These are all sectors that tend to be clustered around towns and cities in the region, and activities where both employees and clients' travel can be provided by the rail system. Employment in agriculture, fishing and forestry, construction and tourism tends to be more dispersed and is likely to be supported by road transport, although rail freight has a role to play when primary products are subject to processing for transport elsewhere, as is the case with logs, paper products and processed food products.

The important role of employment in health and education is a reminder that there are large sectors of Gippsland employment where employees and clients can access employment nodes by rail and other forms of public transport if services are provided when and where they are needed.

The Gippsland Regional Plan also divided these Industry Sectors into those that are growing and those that are contracting, as follows:

Table 4: GROWING AND SHRINKING INDUSTRY SECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROWING INDUSTRY SECTORS</th>
<th>SHRINKING INDUSTRY SECTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Electricity production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation &amp; Food Services</td>
<td>Saw Mill, Logging and Paper Products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be noted that the growing industry sectors, with the exceptions of construction and tourism, are activities that tend to be located within existing towns and cities served by rail services, and are activities that attract multiple clients to those centres, whether by private or public transport.

The contractions in agriculture and forest products industries, while negative for rail freight, have little impact on rail passenger demand.

However the growth in health, clerical, educational and professional services industries will support the use of passenger rail services. These industry sectors are growing in the Victorian economy as a whole, not just in Gippsland, so they will influence demand for travel within the region, from the region to Melbourne and from the region to interstate destinations.

2.2. Employment – Access to Jobs

Gippsland is faced by overlapping policy challenges that exacerbate unemployment and also make it harder for jobseekers to commute to places where jobs are available.

These policy challenges include:

- Pressures to downsize brown coal based power generation
- Pressures confining logging and timber production
- Pressures on the dairy industry

Unsatisfactory rail services exacerbate these problems making it difficult for jobseekers, especially those who have difficulty meeting car operating costs, to commute to more job-rich localities.

Gippsland continues to face challenging employment trends arising from:

- The decline in power industry employment, likely to continue as aging brown coal power stations are phased out;
- Poor milk prices exerting pressure on dairy farmers with some farmers being forced to leave the industry;
Overall decline in forestry industries;
Phasing down of clerical processing in Australia, and the export of call centre jobs to the Philippines;
Slow development of expected emergent industries in Gippsland such as brown coal liquefaction, coal export and East Gippsland mining exports; and
Tourist industry competition resulting from low airfares and discount carriers attracting Australian holidaymakers overseas without corresponding inbound tourism to Gippsland destinations.

Latrobe-Gippsland's unemployment rate has jumped by about four per cent in the past year.

- Unemployment rates in the Latrobe-Gippsland region are going against the trend of other regional cities in Victoria.
- Rates in Bendigo, Ballarat and Shepparton are falling below the national average to 5.0, 5.9 and 3.5 per cent, respectively. These figures are based on a three-month rolling average.
- However, Latrobe-Gippsland's unemployment rate has jumped by about four per cent in the past year. The unemployment rate for Latrobe-Gippsland now stands at nine per cent, up from 8.2 per cent three months ago and 5.2 per cent in April last year.
- Morwell's unemployment has increased by 7% since June 2015

(Latrobe Valley Express, 2 June 2016 and Small Area labour Markets Report 2016)

These factors have manifest into a circumstance of increasing unemployment in Gippsland with a need for many people to consider travelling or relocating to areas offering employment, typically in Melbourne or its nearer surrounds. Gippsland youth are particularly hard put, and find it difficult to secure employment in their home towns.

Gippsland residents require effective public transport access to areas where jobs are available and growing. This includes better access to:

- High value knowledge economy jobs in the Melbourne CBD and surrounding areas
- Manufacturing jobs in the south eastern manufacturing zone around Dandenong and
- Residential construction employment opportunities in Casey and Cardinia as well as apartment construction in the Melbourne CBD and surrounding areas.

Gippsland is not faring well in obtaining its share of high value CBD based jobs compared to Ballarat and Bendigo, and this is directly correlated to the slow and unreliable V/Line service on the Traralgon line. Data provided by V/Line and VicRoads showing the modal split of daily commuters travelling to Melbourne by car and rail from the major regional centres and intermediate peri-urban towns in 2013/14, favours rail on three of the four Regional Fast Rail corridors. Gippsland compares poorly with Ballarat and Bendigo in this respect.

The following table shows the high rail mode share of CBD commuting trips from Bendigo and Ballarat, corresponding to the lower unemployment levels in those communities:

Table 5: Estimated number and rail share of daily commuters to Melbourne from regional centres and intermediate locations - 2013/14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>GEELOONG</th>
<th>BALLARAT</th>
<th>BENDIGO</th>
<th>TRARALGON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total numbers</td>
<td>16,050</td>
<td>7,389</td>
<td>4,042</td>
<td>5,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rail mode share%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 This appears to include passengers boarding Gippsland trains at Pakenham.
Improved rail services can offset this problem by providing a service that would enable commuters from Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Warragul to comfortably access these jobs as daily commuters, remaining in their Gippsland homes and injecting their living costs back to Gippsland businesses through the multiplier effect.

2.3. Health – Access to Health Services

Good access to quality medical and mental health treatment is a fundamental human right that should not by default be restricted to car owners.

In Gippsland there are a number of significant health factors that indicate the need for improved access in the interests of social inclusion. These are:

- In 5 of the 6 Gippsland local government areas there is a lower male and female life expectancy than the Victorian average. Inability to access primary and acute medical care is likely to be one factor leading to this outcome;
- Mental health contacts per 1000 population are significantly higher in 5 of the 6 Gippsland local government areas than the Victorian average;
- Health and social support services in the Latrobe Valley are heavily represented in Morwell, resulting in frequent needs for travel to support agencies. These services based at Morwell include Centrelink, Berry St, Anglicare, Gamblers Help, Latrobe Community Health, emergency relief providers, and a dental clinic. Travellers are drawn from the whole of Gippsland.
- In relation to mental health, isolation and loneliness is an important problem for aging populations, where good transport options are vital to maintaining strong social networks and connectedness. Many Gippsland towns are not provided with public transport options that would enable older residents to travel easily, maintain connectedness and avoid social isolation.

The two top causes of death in Gippsland are cancer and heart disease. There is a Cancer Care Centre at Latrobe Regional Hospital, but both cancer and heart treatment frequently require treatment at major teaching hospitals located in the Melbourne Metropolitan area – the former at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in Parkville, while the closest major cardiovascular surgery centre is the Monash Medical Centre.

Improved rail services can offset this problem by providing a service that would enable commuters from Traralgon, Morwell, Moe and Warragul to comfortably access health services such as cancer treatment at Peter MacCallum or cardiovascular surgery at Monash Medical centre, or to be able to visit friends and relatives having such treatments, while remaining in their Gippsland homes.
2.4. Access to Education Opportunities

Rail services play an important role in transporting secondary and tertiary students to their schools, colleges, TAFEs and universities. Such students often do not own or have access to a motor vehicle. If they wish to remain living at home, (often a necessity in view of the high cost of renting alternatives) the quality of available public transport services will determine the extent of the educational opportunities open to them.

The following table shows the journey time requirements for a student living in Traralgon, depending on whether the student studies at Federation University, Churchill, Chisholm Institute Dandenong, Monash Clayton Campus or Monash Caulfield Campus.

### Table 6: JOURNEY TIMES [each way] FOR A TERTIARY STUDENT FROM GIPPSLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Originating at--</th>
<th>TRARALGN</th>
<th>MORWELL</th>
<th>WARRAGUL</th>
<th>SALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federation University, Churchill</td>
<td>24 minutes</td>
<td>28 minutes</td>
<td>68 minutes</td>
<td>107 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisholm Dandenong</td>
<td>116 minutes</td>
<td>107 minutes</td>
<td>91 minutes</td>
<td>180 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash Clayton</td>
<td>133 minutes</td>
<td>124 minutes</td>
<td>100 minutes</td>
<td>193 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash Caulfield</td>
<td>156 minutes</td>
<td>116 minutes</td>
<td>97 minutes</td>
<td>185 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Based on a journey commencing at 9.00am on a weekday, using PTV journey planner for Bus and Train journeys)

---

4 Bus  
5 Train + Bus  
6 V/Line to Clayton; Metro to Huntingdale; Bus to Monash
These times are unacceptably long. The journey from Traralgon to Caulfield, for which 156 minutes is required, is 146 km and currently takes two and a half hours, making study at this location impractical for a Traralgon student. With existing Vlocity railcars the journey instead would take about one and a half hours if operated at similar average speeds to the Bendigo line. In Germany, the 151 km journey of comparable length from Hamburg to Hannover takes 70 minutes. Introducing German train speeds would allow students and workers from most Latrobe Valley towns to study or work in Melbourne CBD and accessible locations south east of it within reasonable travelling times, but even if the 106 km/h average speed on the Bendigo line were delivered, a great many more Gippsland residents would have wider employment and study choices.

Secondary students are also significant users of Latrobe Valley train services, mainly for travel within the Valley. A wide range of different secondary education opportunities is available along the Valley, with private schools at Sale and Warragul; technical schools at Sale, Yallourn and Warragul, secondary colleges or high schools at Trafalgar, Moe and Sale, and specialist schools such as a campus of Kurnai College serving the indigenous community, at Moe. This choice of schools is desirable from an educational standpoint, but the transport outcome is that pupils need a choice of trains and connecting buses that allow them to reach their school of choice. While some schools charter their own buses to transport students, a significant number use public transport services, in part providing counter-peak patronage on trains and buses within the Valley.

2.5. Aging of the Population – Transport Requirements

Gippsland also requires improved public transport services because of its aging population. All Gippsland local government areas exhibit a strong proportional increase in persons aged over 65, for whom access to leisure activities, family visits, medical and health care and social activities are critical to their social inclusion.

The following table sets out the marked trend this decade toward an aged population in all Gippsland local government areas:

Table 7: AGING OF GIPPSLAND’S POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA</th>
<th>AGED 65+ 2011</th>
<th>AGED 65+ 2021</th>
<th>% CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bass Coast</td>
<td>7023</td>
<td>10785</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baw Baw</td>
<td>7153</td>
<td>10941</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>9825</td>
<td>14413</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>11183</td>
<td>16838</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gippsland</td>
<td>5331</td>
<td>8128</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>6982</td>
<td>11028</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Victorian Department of Health, Planning for a Healthier Gippsland, using ABS figures.

It is highly desirable that the large contingent of Gippsland residents aged 65 and over has the choice of using public transport rather than being car-dependent. Aged persons may lack confidence to drive in heavy traffic and congested circumstances and this may circumscribe their quality of life. As they pass into older age and relinquish their motor vehicles they may become isolated socially and unable to easily access necessary medical care unless effective public transport opportunities exist. For the majority of Gippslanders, they do not.

Improved rail services can greatly assist aged residents to access health facilities, visit relatives and avoid social isolation.

2.6. Rail and Tourism

2.6.1 Tourism Overview

It is widely recognised that Gippsland faces significant challenges in making the transition to a low carbon economy. RDA Gippsland has highlighted this in its vision for Gippsland in 2022, and in this transition, the role of Tourism in the future economy of the region is highlighted as follows:
“Tourism in Gippsland has grown significantly through the expansion of its range of highly accessible destinations that have leveraged the region’s extensive wilderness areas. The region focussed on the sustainable development of its iconic tourism locations, including the Gippsland Lakes, on growing the linkages with the region’s outstanding food experiences, and on the delivery of outstanding hospitality services, to provide outstanding visitor experiences.”

This vision for the future acknowledges that “improved public transport connections” will be needed to accomplish the region’s economic transition.

Improvement is clearly needed as to tourist access to the region by rail and connecting coach, as the holiday and tourist component among V/Line Gippsland travellers is estimated to be just 3%. Higher tourist usage of V/Line services will support improvements to service frequencies, and also support local accommodation and hospitality ventures and employment. The current low level of public transport-based tourism in Gippsland appears to be attributable to a range of factors, including inadequate passenger service offerings to allow public transport access to many of the region’s key attractions, poor or non-existent coach and/or taxi connections, a complete lack of marketing of rail as a means of accessing the region’s attractions, and a view that rail’s functions do not include contributing to the region’s tourist industry.

A growing section of the local tourist market is cycle based tourism, which is popular in many areas of the state and in Gippsland is evident in the Baw Baws, rail trails and other areas. Cycling tourists can be accommodated on most V/Line long distance trains, but there is very limited accommodation for them on VLocity trains and no accommodation on connecting coaches unless the bike is dismantled and placed in the underfloor luggage area. Cyclists also would like to be able to book their bikes on to a particular trip, to avoid the possibility of being unexpectedly stranded. Cycling tourism is extremely consistent with other Gippsland tourism goals, and V/line should work with Gippsland tourism authorities to see what improvements can be made.

The small role now played by public transport-based tourism was not always the case. In the Warragul station office there is a wall poster issued by the Victorian Railways circa 1950 promoting Gippsland’s attractions. The photo-collage highlights the following attractions, then accessible by rail or rail/coach:

- Lakes Entrance/Gippsland Lakes
- Buchan caves
- Tarra Valley
- Walhalla
- Latrobe Valley power stations
- The Baw Baws
This Victorian Railways poster from c.1950 is a museum exhibit on the wall of Warragul station office. We found no contemporary effort to promote rail based tourism to the region, although V/Line promotions of Bendigo and Ballarat attractions were in the racks in Gippsland stations.
The following table summarises the accessibility by rail and coach of each of these attractions today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>MEANS OF ACCESS</th>
<th>ADEQUACY</th>
<th>&quot;TRAVEL INFO&quot; ACCORDING TO THE VISIT VICTORIA WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Entrance</td>
<td>Rail and coach from Bairnsdale – 6 services daily</td>
<td>Good but slow</td>
<td>The Visit Victoria website states: “Make your way to Gippsland by car train or bus. By car take the Monash freeway and follow the M1”. No information on train services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchan Caves</td>
<td>Train and two buses, twice a week only. Listed on the PTV journey planner but not the V/Line website. Requires using the twice weekly Bairnsdale to Gelantipy bus (Route 12). The PTV journey planner lists an 8 hour 48 minute journey from Melbourne to a turnoff 1420 metres from Buchan Caves, leaving Melbourne at 8.13 on Wednesdays and Fridays and arriving Buchan at 5.01pm. The outward journey includes changing from train to bus at Traralgon and then to another bus at Bairnsdale. The return journey connects to the train at Bairnsdale and takes 8 hours. As the bus operates Wednesdays and Fridays only in both directions, there is no possibility of a weekend visit. The shortest visit possible is to arrive Wednesday 5 pm and leave Friday 9.00 am. This connection is not mentioned on the V/Line website (to which visitors are directed by the Visit Victoria website).</td>
<td>Virtually non-existent</td>
<td>Buchan caves website refers visitors seeking information on Getting There to the Visit Victoria website. Visit Victoria provides the same information as for Lakes Entrance – take the M1 Freeway! Discover East Gippsland website states “V/Line offers a combination of train and bus services to centres throughout the Gippsland region.” Examination of the Plan trip Menu on the V/Line website makes no mention of Buchan. The Escape with V/Line section of the V/Line website makes no mention of any Gippsland attraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarra Valley</td>
<td>The PTV Journey Planner provides 4 options for reaching the Tarra Valley from Melbourne, taking from 4 to 4 and half hours. The recommendations include 2 trains to Traralgon, with a connecting coach to Yarram operated by Turnbull’s Coaches, followed by a 26 minute taxi trip, or 2 coaches to Yarram, followed by a 26 minute taxi trip. On Saturday there are two trips, arriving at 6.56 pm or 9.51 pm, making a weekend stay by public transport starting on Saturday impossible.</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>The Prom Country Regional Tourism website under How to get to the Prom Country depicts a V/Line coach and states that “V/Line bus services operate between Melbourne and South Gippsland and run several times daily”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walhalla</td>
<td>No public transport access.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Walhalla is another destination that does not appear in the V/Line website as a coach destination. PTV Journey Planner includes Walhalla destinations but when times are sought the software responds with “Journey Planner could not find an access point to public transport”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yallourn and</td>
<td>Taxi ride required from Morwell station, making a reasonable connection with the train arriving from Melbourne at 10.40</td>
<td>Taxi required</td>
<td>Tours of the Latrobe Valley power stations are scheduled twice weekly at 11.00 am on Tuesdays and Thursdays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morwell power stations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6.2 Website issues

As the above table demonstrates, three of the government websites that provide information about Gippsland tourism provide variable information as to public transport access to the region. The Visit Victoria website – the state’s primary tourist web portal – provides only cursory information about public transport access and refers users to the V/Line site. However the V/Line site covers only V/Line services and does not include key Gippsland destinations. The most comprehensive site is the PTV journey planner, as it contains both V/Line services and those of other providers.

2.6.3 Rail and coach service offerings.

As the examples in the above table demonstrate, rail and rail/coach services to key Gippsland tourist destinations do not serve the tourist well, and in several cases, do not permit visitors to make weekend visits to key destinations. A review of rail and coach services from the tourist point of view is required.

In relation to marketing, the V/Line site does not include Gippsland destinations in its “Escape with V/Line” menu. And V/Line does not seem to promote Gippsland destinations by rail and rail coach as was the case in past years. Gippsland tourist organisations need to engage with V/Line to determine how this can be improved.

Added use of train and train coach services by holidaymakers and tourists can assist Gippsland tourism, but also helps regular train and train/coach users. Extra demand provides the case for the provision of extra and more convenient services. At present, the tourist/holidaymaker component of travel on the Gippsland line is so small that it provides no leverage. However, rail based holidays and tourism is strong worldwide and there is no reason for Gippsland not to benefit from this in view of the position of the Gippsland railway along the centre of the region. During the period of this study, we noted that the Bairnsdale East Gippsland News carried an advertisement for rail/coach holidays in New Zealand, including coach travel from Bairnsdale to Tullamarine as the first leg of the journey. We also noted the complete absence of marketing material and tourist travel advice (other than excellent local town information) at the stations we visited on the Gippsland line.

2.6.4 Findings in relation to Rail and Tourism

1. Holidaymakers and tourists form a very small component of rail travel on the Gippsland line
2. Rail and coach services are not tourist friendly and some destinations are very hard to access by public transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>MEANS OF ACCESS</th>
<th>ADEQUACY</th>
<th>“TRAVEL INFO” ACCORDING TO THE VISIT VICTORIA WEBSITE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Baw Baws</td>
<td>Steamrail is operates two Snow Trains from Melbourne to Traralgon, with connecting coaches that visit Mount Baw Baw and Walhalla, as well as some Gippsland food experience destinations and wineries. This initiative illustrates how a rail/coach tour can combine destinations otherwise not accessible, and incorporate Gippsland high end food experiences. Bike access from Warragul to the Baw Baws is also emerging as a destination for cycling enthusiasts. However only the Bairnsdale trains have capacity to carry a significant number of bicycles. So many cycling enthusiasts drive</td>
<td>Access by public transport non-existent except once or twice a year.</td>
<td>The official Visit Baw Baw website has a how to get there section that lists the main Gippsland line. There is no information as to how to get to Mount Baw Baw or Walhalla by public transport. The PTV website notes two buses on Route 5 Weekdays only by Warragul bus lines to Noojee and return; however these buses do not operate at weekends. The bus services appear to be designed for school pupils.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. V/Line promotes some Victorian destinations for tourist travel but currently lists no Gippsland destinations on its website.

4. The three government websites that a tourist would use to ascertain public transport access to Gippsland destinations are of variable quality. The Visit Victoria website refers public transport users to the V/Line website but the V/Line website is less comprehensive with regard to Gippsland destinations than the PTV website, as the latter includes private operators.

5. There appears to be a complete absence of Gippsland-related marketing material and tourist travel advice at the stations we visited on the Gippsland line.

Walhalla – an Opportunity Missed

Throughout the world, rail operators build patronage (and thus the quality and frequency of services they offer) by taking tourists to and from regional attractions. Walhalla is a good example of a missed opportunity to do this. Together with Erica and Rawson, it has a combined population of around 500. It has major tourist attractions including a ghost mining town, the Star Hotel, the Long Tunnel Extended Mine and the Walhalla Goldfields Railway. Rawson has a supermarket, school and a school bus service. Walhalla’s annual visitation is now said to be around 150,000. But it doesn’t even get a mention in the PTV journey planner, which states: “Journey Planner could not find an access point to public transport”. There is simply no scheduled public transport to these popular locations.

2.7 Population Distribution, Urban Development and Demand for Rail Services

Victoria's population is projected to grow to 10 million in 2051. The scale of this change is unprecedented in Victoria. Melbourne is already experiencing the difficulties of such rapid growth. It is clear it cannot continue to sprawl, or soar, without a clear development strategy to keep Melbourne liveable.

82% of this population growth is expected to occur in Melbourne. The Government’s own statutory planning obligations and strategic planning objectives require a rebalancing of population from Melbourne to regional Victoria. Yet the spatial and population imbalance between Melbourne and regional Victoria will be greater by 2051 than it is now.7

The Government’s statutory obligations and strategic plan also requires the creation of a polycentric ‘State of Cities’. Successive Victorian Governments, however, are yet to demonstrate that they have an adequate concept of what Melbourne as a polycentric city might look like, or how it will develop a ‘State of Cities’ capable of accommodating the population growth projections.

The challenge of population growth requires a holistic approach. It is vital that we integrate planning and transport strategy.

2.7.1 Gippsland’s Growth

Within this context, Gippsland communities are generally on a growth path, with the strongest growth in West Gippsland in Baw Baw Shire at the very high rate of about 3% per annum, with growth between 1 and 2 per cent in other local government areas. The Gippsland Regional Growth Strategy is designed to assist them to make the decisions needed to manage this growth. The following table sets out growth rates in the four participating Gippsland local government areas8:

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7 The issue of balancing population growth between Melbourne and the regions and the vital role regional rail can play in offsetting excessive growth in Melbourne is set out in the Rail Futures report: InterCity: How Regional Rail can Re-Balance Population Growth and create a State of Cities in Victoria (2016). www.railfutures.org.au

8 Data from Gippsland Regional Growth Plan, 2014, p 7
Table 9: POPULATION GROWTH RATES IN GIPPSLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2031</th>
<th>20-YEAR GROWTH RATE 2011-2031</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baw Baw</td>
<td>44,042</td>
<td>54,439</td>
<td>64,608</td>
<td>46.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland</td>
<td>44,680</td>
<td>51,149</td>
<td>58,808</td>
<td>31.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>76,640</td>
<td>83,531</td>
<td>90,741</td>
<td>18.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellington</td>
<td>43,920</td>
<td>46,013</td>
<td>49,276</td>
<td>12.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>209,282</td>
<td>235,132</td>
<td>263,433</td>
<td>25.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These rapid rates of population growth over the 15 years through to 2031, especially in West Gippsland, will require substantial and rapid investment in rail infrastructure. With appropriate coach connections, the potential rail catchment of the Gippsland line in this time horizon will be similar to that of Geelong or Hobart today, and will require faster and more frequent rail services as well as much improved coach connectivity. More details of how this can be achieved are set out later in this report.

2.7.2 Growth must be supported by Transport Connections

The picture in those smaller towns not supported by rail or adequate coach connections is however different. Many population segments, including younger people, working couples and the increasing segment of aging citizens, will find it unattractive to remain or move to in localities unsupported by strong transport connections. While transport connectivity is only one factor in the growth of a community, it is well established by research that towns with rail connectivity do better than those without it. The following table illustrates how Gippsland towns denied effective public transport connections struggle to maintain populations.

Table 10: POPULATION CHANGE IN MEDIUM SIZE GIPPSLAND TOWNS WITH PREVIOUS RAIL SERVICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>POPULATION 1957</th>
<th>DATE RAIL SERVICES CEASED</th>
<th>POPULATION 2006</th>
<th>POPULATION 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heyfield</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>2099</td>
<td>1459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maffra</td>
<td>5000</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>4149</td>
<td>5112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirboo North</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2202</td>
<td>2215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarram</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2105</td>
<td>2168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Later in this Report we discuss how coach connections from smaller towns that have lost rail services could be improved, with suggested Standards of Service that could be implemented to support towns of various sizes.

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3. Current Rail and Road Coach Services

3.1 Rail service pattern and trip types

V/line currently offers reasonably comprehensive passenger train services and coach/train services on the Gippsland line, although these services are let down by excessive journey times, poor reliability, aging rolling stock (in the case of Bairnsdale services) and inadequate station facilities in some cases. Bus connections to these services are of variable quality.

Services operate on a relatively frequent basis between Melbourne and Traralgon, mostly using Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) rolling stock\(^\text{10}\). In addition, long distance services operate between Melbourne and Bairnsdale using conventional locomotive-hauled rolling stock.

System-wide, V/Line classifies users of the service into commuter trips and discretionary trips. Commuter trips are 70% journey to and from work, and 30% journey to and from school. The discretionary trips are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIP PURPOSE</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visiting friends and family</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure day trips</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal appointments</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and special events</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.2 Bairnsdale to Melbourne services

The long-distance Southern Cross to Bairnsdale service provides 5 trains or train/coach combinations per weekday, leaving Bairnsdale at 0435, 0610, 1245, 1515 and 1820, and leaving Southern Cross at 0720, 0813, 1320, 1658, and 1834\(^\text{11}\). The average gap between trains is 135 minutes, with a significant gap mid-morning, of 4 hours 25 minutes in the up direction an 5 hours 7 minutes in the down direction.

Two additional train/coach combinations originate from Sale each morning at 0755 and 0920 although only the latter service provides a suitable train connection at Traralgon. Likewise, there are three additional coach services each day from Traralgon to Sale for local travel which all depart from Traralgon before the first train arrives from Melbourne. An additional train/coach combination to Sale leaves Southern Cross at 1520.

Therefore, Sale receives 3 train and 4 train/coach combination services to Melbourne and 3 train and 3 train/coach combination services from Melbourne on weekdays.

While Bairnsdale has five return services and Sale has six return services to and from Melbourne on weekdays, almost half of these involve road coach connections at Traralgon, or in one case on Sundays at Sale. However, the road coach component and change at Traralgon is unpopular with users and add considerably to journey times. For this reason and because of relative service frequency, many users instead choose to drive to Traralgon (or directly to Melbourne), thus artificially depressing patronage potential at both Sale and Bairnsdale. In addition, the timing and duration of these trips and some stopping conditions require review in the short term. In this category are the following:

- On weekdays Bairnsdale trains should be scheduled separately from the hourly Traralgon services and should have common but limited stopping conditions between Melbourne and Traralgon, thus enabling more appropriate scheduling and overall trip time reductions.

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\(^{10}\) Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) are diesel-powered trains that are self-propelled and do not involve haulage with a conventional locomotive. The multiple unit designation refers to the ability to couple two or more of these trains (or units) together and be operated as a single unit under the control of one driver.

\(^{11}\) Train services are shown in black, train/road coach combination services in red.
• Extremely long train turnaround times at Bairnsdale result in sub-optimal timings in terms of passenger convenience and impact efficient rolling stock utilisation (requires signalling changes)

In addition, there is early potential for some existing rail services to be extended from Traralgon to Sale and for a fourth daily return service to Bairnsdale that would replace a current combined rail/coach service. These proposals are detailed in Section 7 of this report.

The current services to and from Melbourne are shown below in simplified tabular form.

Table 12: COMBINED RAIL/COACH SERVICES Bairnsdale AND Sale to Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bairnsdale and Sale to Melbourne</th>
<th>Monday to Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale dep</td>
<td>0435</td>
<td>0610</td>
<td>1245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale arr</td>
<td>0600</td>
<td>0630</td>
<td>1222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross dep</td>
<td>0725</td>
<td>1156</td>
<td>1336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traralgon dep</td>
<td>0848</td>
<td>1615</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale dep</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>1145</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale arr</td>
<td>1113</td>
<td>1245</td>
<td>2105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Train services are shown in black, connecting road coach services in red

Bairnsdale is located 276 rail kilometres from Southern Cross and in 2011 had a population of 11,820. Sale is 207 rail kilometres from Southern Cross and in 2011 had a population of 13,186. However, the current combined population of Wellington and East Gippsland Shires is approximately 88,000, whom with only a few exceptions, focus on Sale and Bairnsdale as their principal service centres and transport nodes. The service level can be compared with that offered to Warrnambool and Albury, which service current populations in their regions of approximately 86,000 and 96,000 respectively (the latter excluding the City of Albury), but with broadly similar distances from Melbourne:

Table 13: RAIL SERVICE LEVELS: REGIONAL CITIES TO MELBOURNE (WEEKDAYS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in km</th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
<th>Albury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>317</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No of services each way - weekdays (rail only/combined rail and coach)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in km</th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
<th>Albury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>3/0</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Minimum journey time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in km</th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
<th>Albury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>224 mins</td>
<td>207 mins</td>
<td>199 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maximum Service Gap

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in km</th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
<th>Albury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>307 mins</td>
<td>301 mins</td>
<td>225 mins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Speed (fastest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance in km</th>
<th>Bairnsdale</th>
<th>Warrnambool</th>
<th>Albury</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74km/h</td>
<td>77km/h</td>
<td>96km/h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above table shows, Bairnsdale receives the same number of train services per day and more combined rail/coach services than the comparable regional population served by the Warrnambool line, although average train speeds are somewhat lower and journey times greater. Most cities on the longer distance routes (Swan Hill and Shepparton lines are other examples) experience gaps between trains or coach/trains of up to 5 hours.

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12 The Government has committed to introduce an additional Warrnambool service each way on weekdays in January 2017.
13 Albury services include 2 XPT Melbourne-Sydney services and one train/coach combination service each way on weekdays.
14 Minimum journey time on a V/Line Albury service is 225 minutes – average speed 85km/h.
Average speeds on all long distance services, other than Albury, are extremely low. Moreover, over the past 15 years, notwithstanding the Regional Fast Rail project, journey times have increased and for Bairnsdale, are now slightly worse than when train services were truncated at Sale (notwithstanding the interchange time of up to 20 minutes at Sale), during the 1993-2004 period. Taking a longer term view over the 26 years since 1990, little discernible progress has been made.

### Table 14: CHANGES IN MELBOURNE (SOUTHERN CROSS) TO SALE/BAIRNSDALE SERVICES SINCE 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday return rail services to Sale</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday return rail services to Bairnsdale</td>
<td>2**</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastest/slowest journey time to Sale</td>
<td>166/172 mins</td>
<td>155/168 mins</td>
<td>158/161 mins</td>
<td>163/167 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastest/slowest journey time to Bairnsdale</td>
<td>224/231 mins</td>
<td>219/243 mins**</td>
<td>217/219 mins</td>
<td>224/232 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long gaps between train services, and slow journey times need to be replaced by frequencies and speeds that are competitive with road transport and contemporary expectations.

### 3.3 Traralgon to Melbourne Services

Traralgon is the terminus for regular services to Melbourne and is mainly served by V/Line VLocity commuter trains from Melbourne, providing 18 services a day. The lunchtime and evening Bairnsdale services which operate with locomotive-hauled carriages also form part of the regular Traralgon service pattern. The service during the day operates on a clock-face timetable. However, we have taken Morwell as the central location of Latrobe City as the basis for comparison with other regional rail services. Morwell is located 144 rail kilometres from Melbourne and has a population of 14,000 out of total current Latrobe City population of over 73,000. Services depart Morwell hourly at 29 minutes past the hour in the morning, and 25 minutes past the hour in the afternoon.

A typical journey during the day from Morwell to Southern Cross takes 2 hours 8 minutes, an average speed of 68 km/h. Actual scheduled journey times vary widely between exactly 2 hours (average speed 72 km/h) and 2 hours 32 minutes (average speed 57 km/h). The fastest service during peak hours takes 2 hours, 2 minutes.

This is a poor result that compares very unfavourably with other V/Line VLocity services. It will be noted that it is currently quicker to get from Bendigo to Melbourne than from Morwell to Melbourne, and that while a Bendigo train commuter has a 12% advantage over a freeway user and a Ballarat one has a >20% advantage, a Morwell train commuter to Melbourne will take approximately the same time as a freeway user.

### Table 15: COMPARISON OF JOURNEY TIMES AND SPEEDS, V/LINE COMMUTER SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>RAIL DISTANCE FROM MELB (Km)</th>
<th>POPULATION (2015)</th>
<th>RAIL AVERAGE SPEED (Km/h)</th>
<th>FASTEST PEAK PERIOD RAIL TRAVEL TIME (MINUTES)</th>
<th>FREEWAY TRAVEL TIME (MINUTES)</th>
<th>RAIL TIME ADVANTAGE OVER ROAD (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>81 (via Tarneit)</td>
<td>228,950</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>108,437</td>
<td>105.2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100,283</td>
<td>106.2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrobe</td>
<td>144 (Morwell)</td>
<td>73,548</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although service frequency has greatly improved, journey times are now longer than before the Regional Fast Rail project was completed in 2005/06, as shown in the following table. Moreover, there has been little effective progress in achieving faster trip times over the 26 year period from 1990.

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15 Excludes one combined rail/coach service between Sale and Bairnsdale.
16 These times were for the combined train/coach journey to Bairnsdale during the period (1993 to 2004) when services were truncated at Sale.
Table 16: CHANGES IN MELBOURNE (SOUTHERN CROSS) TO WARRAGUL/TRARALGON SERVICES SINCE 1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekday return rail services to Warragul</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekday return rail services to Traralgon</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastest/slowest journey time to Warragul</td>
<td>82/105 mins</td>
<td>77/106 mins</td>
<td>77/97 mins</td>
<td>88/107 mins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastest/slowest journey time to Traralgon</td>
<td>129/161 mins</td>
<td>117/149 mins</td>
<td>116/139 mins</td>
<td>128/164 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For mode shift from private car use to rail to be maximised, a time advantage over road is an important factor. It will be noted that the Gippsland corridor, which offers little relative benefit to rail commuters, has achieved significantly lower mode shift than the corridors where this has been achieved.

3.4 Coach Connections

Coach to Train and Bus to Train interchange facilities are critical to ensuring that travellers to and from cities and towns that are not on the main railway corridor have reasonable public transport access. Making such interchange effective requires that:

- Timetables are designed to support interchange
- Coaches do not depart if connecting trains are running late
- Signage at interchanges is comprehensive as to timetables, frequencies and departure points
- The interchange area is compact, and facilitates easy transfer of passengers with luggage
- The interchange area is well-lit, safe and sheltered from inclement weather
- The interchange area meets DDA requirements and can readily be traversed by patrons in wheelchairs, as well as the elderly and those with children
- The interchange area provides toilet and refreshment facilities, either staffed or with vending machines

Interchange facilities from local urban bus services to train are also important but require fewer facilities than are required for passengers required to change mode in the middle of a longer distance journey.

In this Section, comments are offered on the two most extensive interchanges in the study area, at Bairnsdale and Traralgon. There are several other interchange points in the study area not discussed in detail, including Warragul, Morwell and Sale.

Bairnsdale coach connections

The Bairnsdale Interchange is a major train-coach interchange serving East Gippsland communities including, Bruthen, Buchan, Gelantipy, Lakes Entrance, Marlo, Paynesville, Orbost, Omeo, and Mallacoota, as well as connections to Eden, Narooma and Bateman’s Bay in southern NSW and Canberra ACT. Coaches connect in each direction with the long distance train services from Bairnsdale to Melbourne. It also serves local urban bus routes.

Paynesville has coach connections to both the 0720 and 1320 pm trains from Melbourne. The time gaps for the change are 47 minutes and 31 minutes respectively, which are too long - a 20 minute gap would be sufficient. Paynesville is provided with a coach connection to the Saturday morning (0735) train from Melbourne, but not to other services. The Saturday journey time of 4 hours 43 minutes compares unfavourably with 3 hours 22 minutes by road but is not as bad as the Lakes Entrance journey. The Saturday journey is 40 minutes shorter than the weekday journey by the morning train, partly due to a 12 minute change at Bairnsdale.

Orbost receives three coach services from Melbourne seven days a week, with coach connections to the 0720, 1320 and 1834 trains from Melbourne and the corresponding up trains at 06.10 and 12.45. Journey times are about 5 and half hours, compared to 4 and quarter hours by car. There are three services to Melbourne, at 04.13, 11.05 and 13.38. The last of these is a six hour journey that involves two coaches, one from Orbost to
Bairnsdale and one from Bairnsdale to Traralgon, connecting with a VLocity train to Melbourne and offering no opportunity for refreshments during the six hour trip. Orbost also receives three Saturday and four Sunday services, one of which is a coach connection from Sale that entails a six and a quarter hour journey time. There are 3 scheduled services from Orbost to Melbourne on Saturday and Sunday that join the train at Bairnsdale and a fourth service on Sunday at 11.03 involving two coaches with connection to the Bairnsdale train at Sale.

**Lakes Entrance** receives six coaches per day from Bairnsdale, three of which connect with the three rail services from Melbourne and three of which originate in Bairnsdale and terminate at Lake Tyers Beach after stopping at Lakes Entrance.

**Omeo** has one weekday daily connection from Melbourne that is poorly scheduled. Because the coach leaves Bairnsdale at 1325, the rail connection involves taking the 0813 train to Traralgon and then a coach from Traralgon to Bairnsdale station where there is a 45 minute overlay. As a result the total journey time is 7 hours 50 minutes, an unfavourable comparison with a 4 and a half hour car trip for the 400 km. The coach connection should be made at Bairnsdale with the 0720 train from Melbourne. This would allow an improvement of 70 minutes in the journey time without any investment or faster running. There is no Saturday service to Omeo, while the Sunday service is only for the brave - a 12 hour journey via Wangaratta.

**Mallacoota** has one weekday connection, to the 0720 train from Melbourne, which requires taking the 1130 coach from Bairnsdale and changing to a local coach at Genoa. There are no Saturday or Sunday connections. Total journey time is 8 hours 8 minutes, compared to 5 hours 50 minutes by car.

**Connections to NSW from Bairnsdale** - Three coaches a week are provided to coastal New South Wales, all connecting with the 0720 train from Melbourne. On Mondays and Thursdays, the coach travels to Batemans Bay while on Saturdays the service terminates at Narooma. Journey time Melbourne to Batemans Bay is 11 hours 14 minutes. There is no through Greyhound, Firefly or Murray's coach service from Melbourne to Sydney via the Princes Highway.

A passenger wishing to connect from Melbourne to Sydney via the Princes Highway would take the 0720 train to Bairnsdale, and then the 1130 V/Line coach to Eden arriving at 1534 (Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays only). The journey would continue with the 0605 Premier Motor Service coach from Eden the next morning arriving in Sydney at 1615. (Another option for the more adventurous traveller would be the 0240 coach from Eden arriving at Sydney Central at 1130).

There are also connections to Canberra on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The coach connects with the 0720 train from Melbourne and leaves promptly from Bairnsdale. The travel duration is reasonable at ten and a half hours, arriving Canberra just before six in the evening.

These very limited coach connections probably point to a level of unmet tourist demand.

### Table 17: SUMMARY OF BAIRNSDALE RAIL/COACH CONNECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>JOURNEY TIME FROM MELB</th>
<th>SERVICE QUALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paynesville</td>
<td>11 per week</td>
<td>5.5 hours</td>
<td>Poor frequency, but demand responsive service picks up and delivers to home address in Eagle Point and Paynesville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost</td>
<td>22 per week</td>
<td>5 5 – 6 hours</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakes Entrance</td>
<td>21 per week to Melbourne plus 17 a week to Bairnsdale only</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeo</td>
<td>5 per week</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallacoota</td>
<td>5 per week</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>3 per week</td>
<td>9 hours</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>3 per week</td>
<td>33 hours</td>
<td>Very poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra</td>
<td>3 per week</td>
<td>10.5 hours</td>
<td>Reasonable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Bairnsdale Bus and Coach Interchange - Physical Facilities**

The interchange is of modern design and has been constructed in the station forecourt. However it provides only modest protection against inclement weather, with a discontinuous canopy.

Signage at Bairnsdale Interchange is poor. While individual stands are labelled as to the destination they serve, no information as to bus and coach services and frequencies is provided on noticeboards external to the station, as is the case at other V/Line interchanges.

**Traralgon coach connections**

Traralgon is the interchange station for coach services to Mirboo North, Churchill, Yarram, Maffra and Heyfield. To reach Briagolong via Traralgon and Stratford requires a long taxi journey.

**Mirboo North** is served on weekdays by one train/coach service from Melbourne via Traralgon, one via Morwell, and two coach/coach services via Leongatha. The 1320 train and connecting coach has the shortest journey time, of 3 hours 11 minutes, while the 0635 coach via Leongatha is the slowest route. There is no service to Mirboo North from Melbourne on weekdays after 1435. On Saturday and Sunday, there are trains from Melbourne at 0805 and 1156 with coach connections via Traralgon and a coach/coach option via Leongatha at 1110. There are no services to Mirboo North on Saturday or Sunday after noon.

**Table 18: SUMMARY OF TRARALGON RAIL/COACH CONNECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>JOURNEY TIME FROM MELB</th>
<th>SERVICE QUALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mirboo North</td>
<td>26 per week17</td>
<td>3-4 hours</td>
<td>No service to Morwell after 14.35 weekdays and no weekend afternoon service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarram</td>
<td>40 per week18</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>Good service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maffra</td>
<td>21 per week19</td>
<td>3 and a half hours</td>
<td>Reasonable service but a weekday midday service is needed between Maffra and Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heyfield</td>
<td>16 per week20</td>
<td>3 to 3 and a half hours</td>
<td>No effective mid-day weekday up service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briagolong</td>
<td>No service</td>
<td></td>
<td>No service – taxi required from Stratford station</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 Modal Interchange – private cars

As well as providing for bus and coach connections to rail services, there is a significant need to provide car parking at stations on the Gippsland line, and to date this has primarily involved the provision of station car parks. There is also scope to add "Parkway" facilities - or large car parks associated with a station serving car commuters.

Originally a UK innovation at stations such as Bristol Parkway, this function is served by stations with large car parks just beyond Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo, where regional trains on those lines terminate. Further opportunities for Parkway type stations have been identified at Warrenheip on the Ballarat line and Corio on the Geelong line. Car parking at major stations (particularly Morwell and Traralgon) on the Gippsland line is well used and car park extensions in these locations are likely to be expensive but necessary.

Some years ago, Garfield was selected as a possible Parkway site and the station car park there was expanded and additional stops were provided there on Bairnsdale and other semi-fast services. However, all indications are that this has been unsuccessful at attracting commuters to park at that location, most likely because it was of little benefit to commuters from Drouin and Warragul. Drouin and Warragul remain the best solutions for

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17 Includes coaches via Leongatha and Morwell
18 Includes coaches via South Gippsland
19 One daily service via Sale
20 Some very very long journeys are theoretically possible, e.g. a 5 and a half hour journey to Melbourne via Sale. These are not included in the total
Parkway stations, being located with generally convenient access from rapidly developing subdivisions in these towns. A considerably expanded Parkway facility with capacity for approximately 400 cars is proposed at Drouin (see Section 8.1). This can be accommodated on existing VicTrack land immediately east of the current car park and with access beneath the Main South Road bridge.

Other enhancements to existing car parking facilities will be progressively required, particularly at Moe and as indicated above, also at Morwell and Traralgon. The Traralgon Station Precinct Master Plan\(^{21}\) proposes substantial re-vamping of the overall Traralgon Station precinct, including provision of 200 car parking spaces on the south side of the present station. This proposal is strongly supported.

### 3.6 Passenger experience

Passenger experience on the Gippsland line varies. The VLocity railcars that operate most Traralgon services are of recent construction and are extremely reliable units and can operate at 160 km/h on suitable track, but the service is made unreliable by lack of capacity west of Dandenong, delays caused by the intense use of the inadequate two-track infrastructure in that section of the corridor, and delays caused by late running of suburban trains on the Cranbourne and Dandenong lines.

Overcrowding of some peak services is a regular complaint, particularly in the PM peak on those services which are used by metropolitan passengers detraining at Pakenham. Another significant complaint is that the design of the VLocity vehicles compromises Wi-Fi and mobile phone reception.

The Bairnsdale trains are limited to 115 km/h and the equipment used dates back about 35 years with some carriages dating back to the 1950s. All trains are air-conditioned and a mini-buffet service is provided, although the catering service is sometimes cancelled at short notice due to a staff shortage and the air conditioning struggles to maintain comfortable conditions on hot days. Moreover, the overall design of the N type carriages used on these trains is dated and ride quality can be poor on some sections of track. These vehicles are due for complete refurbishment or preferably, early replacement with new generation long distance trains designed to contemporary international standards.

Passenger safety and security is an issue on some services and around stations. While PSOs are based at Traralgon and Dandenong, they do not regularly travel on the train and there have been reports of drunk and offensive behaviour. Medical emergencies sometimes result in long delays awaiting attention to sick passengers.

The stations on the line are generally dated and unstaffed in the evenings; some have narrow subways which are perceived as a personal safety risk. CCTV coverage is considered to be essential in these situations.

A summary of issues associated with passenger experience on the Gippsland rail corridor and proposed solutions is in Section 9 of this report.

4. Moving forward – what is needed?

4.1 Drivers for Rail Service Provision

The starting point for determining the pattern of rail and rail coach/services to be provided in future is clarity as to the key drivers for the services – in other words, what are the market demands and community needs that the services must meet to be successful?

The Gippsland Railway (and in some instances the coach services attached to it) is a publicly provided, common user facility that supports several markets: -

- The competitive market for **commuting workers and students** to travel to their jobs or places of study. In this market, rail and public bus services compete primarily with the private motor vehicle, and to a very limited extent with other options such as private buses, taxis and bicycles. This market can be subdivided into commuters to the CBD and south east Melbourne, and internal commuters within Gippsland;

- The competitive market for **tourist and holiday experiences** in the region;

- The **community service market** for the subsidised provision of transport options for non-drivers, including the young, the old, the socially disadvantaged, the disabled and those unwilling or no longer willing or able to use motor cars for longer journeys. In this market, there are some limited options through community buses, car sharing and taxis, but often the publicly supported rail/coach service is the only available transport option – with non-travel being the alternative when services aren’t provided;

- The competitive market for **bulk and containerised freight** to and from, and through the corridor. In this market, in Gippsland, rail competes with private trucking companies for all freight (see Section 6).

In all of these markets in Gippsland, rail operates under significant difficulties, and these may be summarised as follows:

**Table 19: DRIVERS AND MARKETS FOR RAIL (AND PUBLIC COACH) SERVICES IN GIPPSLAND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKET</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>KEY PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commuters to CBD</td>
<td>Direct trains to CBD and South-East Melbourne</td>
<td>Congestion in rail corridor (especially inbound from Dandenong) means service unreliable and journey time excessive</td>
<td>*Commuter express services to and from Melbourne;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overcrowding on peak period services</td>
<td>*Eliminate Pakenham &amp; Garfield stops on peak period express services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Overtaking loops Pakenham to Dandenong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*4-tracks Dandenong to Caulfield and later to South Yarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operate longer VLocity consists on busy services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal commuters within Gippsland</td>
<td>Rail serves all the largest towns</td>
<td>No early eastbound train</td>
<td>*Consider a suitably timed Warragul to Traralgon local train</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Service frequency poor during the day</td>
<td>*Latrobe Metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Improved bus shuttles to key nodes e.g. Federation University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### MARKET ADVANTAGES  KEY PROBLEMS  SOLUTIONS

| **Tourists and holidaymakers** | Rail and coach network potentially serves most attractions | Inadequate marketing of rail based Gippsland tourism  Coach connections poor or non-existent to some destinations  Government (VV, PTV & V/Line) websites inconsistent.  Local tourist websites do not always explain how to use rail/coach to access attractions. | *Improve marketing/packaging  *Improve website alignment  *Redesign connecting coaches to better support day and weekend visitors  *Provide timetables taxi or small bus services until market builds  *Market to China |

| **Social inclusion for the aged and non-drivers** | Most main communities and community service facilities served | No platforms at destinations such as Mid Valley Shopping Centre, Fulham prison  Services to smaller towns off the railway often don’t support day trips for shopping or health to main centres  Older citizens cannot “age in place” in smaller towns and/or experience social exclusion  Non car drivers experience social exclusion | *Improve bus shuttles to key nodes off the rail system including Federation University, Mid Valley Shopping Centre and Fulham prison – ensure these buses meet trains.  *Review and improve bus and taxi services to smaller towns off the railway |

### 4.2 Market Segmentation in the Bairnsdale Sub-Corridor

The following chart provides a more detailed insight into patronage sub-groupings within the above market segments on the Bairnsdale sub-corridor in 2014/15. This chart is illustrative only – as segmentation differs in different parts of the corridor and at different times of the year.

![Market Segmentation Chart](image)

### 4.3 Train service plan principles and expectations

Future train and connecting bus/road coach services for Gippsland should be primarily planned to meet the specific needs for:

- Journeys to work in the Melbourne CBD and other metropolitan destinations
- Journeys to work in the Latrobe Valley
- Journeys for education within the wider Gippsland region
- Journeys by discretionary users who would otherwise travel by car
- Journeys by the aged and non-drivers who rely on public transport
- Journeys by tourists and holidaymakers
Short and medium term, peak period commuter services for journeys to Melbourne will continue to be constrained by availability of train paths between Pakenham, Dandenong and the CBD. Until there is a major change in rail infrastructure capacity and configuration between Dandenong, Caulfield and South Yarra, Gippsland trains will be limited to two train paths per hour for train arrivals at Flinders Street between 0700 and 0900 and for departures between 1600 and 1800. No train paths are likely to be available during peak periods between Flinders Street and Southern Cross until infrastructure limitations in this area are resolved in the longer term; for the present the 0720 train to Bairnsdale being a likely exception to this.

Train timetable design is therefore a compromise between market-based requirements and practical issues of infrastructure capacity and rolling stock availability, allocation and overnight stabling facilities. We suggest that Gippsland community expectations should be conditioned around what could reasonably be provided in three timescales:

- Short term – the next 5 years to 2021 – improved service reliability, frequency and less overcrowding consistent with additional rolling stock availability and enhanced infrastructure capability including completion of Cranbourne/Pakenham rail upgrade project, new train stabling facilities at Warragul and Sale, and initial Gippsland line infrastructure improvements. Some improvement in travel times due to more services running express between Drouin and Dandenong.

- Medium term – over 10 years to 2026 – further service reliability and frequency improvements (especially off-peak), consistent with completion of Melbourne Metro project (noting that this will further add metropolitan services on the Dandenong/Pakenham corridor), new trains for long distance services and further Gippsland line infrastructure improvements. The new generation long distance trains will enable a substantial reduction in journey times to and from Sale and Bairnsdale.

- Longer term – over 15 years to 2031 – substantial improvements in service reliability and journey time reductions assuming completion of Caulfield-Dandenong quadruplication, other metropolitan area works and further Gippsland line infrastructure improvements.

Train timetables will define service frequencies and journey times. However other important characteristics of rail and other public transport services which need to be built into service plans include:

- Reliability
- Timetable, journey planner and real time service information, particularly connections
- Rolling stock allocation
- On-board comfort and amenity
- Fares and ticketing
- Dealing with luggage and bicycles
- Accessibility
- Facilities at stations and interchanges
- Safety and security

Services considered to be achievable within the foregoing timescales are described in Section 7.

4.4 Regional Network Development Plan (RNDP) proposals

The Government’s RNDP is essentially a tactical rather than a strategic plan. Its focus is relatively short term, primarily considering outputs over the next 5 to 10 years. While the challenges it lists are real, they are understated and the plan for addressing them assumes a ‘business as usual’ approach, including in the context of official population forecasts which are less than optimistic in relation to regional growth.

The RNDP project proposals are generally sound, while essentially incremental. However the Plan is vague in terms of project timelines with some initiatives shown as spanning between 5 and 10+ years. Its “Next steps” acknowledge “the importance of integrated long term planning” and “to give local governments and communities...a significant voice in planning and delivering future regional transport”.

However, the Plan does not propose any strategic policy changes, or actions to address some of the more serious planning and transport challenges expected to emerge within the next 10 to 15 years.

Its one concession to the need for more fundamental work is a proposal under the theme “New connections” to “Develop a strategic plan for the metropolitan and regional rail interface”. This is of critical importance in the Gippsland context, but needs to go beyond a high level planning exercise to be a serious study of the Dandenong corridor constraints, as the issues should already be well understood.

Some of the RNDP’s more significant proposals, which we broadly endorse, are to:

- Procure and roll out the next generation of regional trains (provided these are intended to replace 35-60 year old carriages on long distance services)
- Provide a mixture of stopping all stations and limited express trains to get people where they need to go as quickly as possible
- Work toward a minimum 20 minute peak frequency, 40 minute inter-peak frequency across the commuter rail network
- Develop a pathway towards providing five services, five days a week to Warrnambool, Bairnsdale, Albury-Wodonga, Echuca, Swan Hill and Shepparton

Specific to Gippsland rail services and infrastructure, the RNDP proposes to:

- Provide two additional return off-peak services from Melbourne to Traralgon each day
- Plan for passing loops between Moe and Traralgon, Traralgon and Sale and Sale and Bairnsdale
- Duplicate the single track between Bunyip and Longwarry
- Replace the Avon River bridge at Stratford
- Investigate and increase car park capacity and station amenity to meet demand at Moe, Morwell and Traralgon stations.

Under the heading of “Future Directions”, it also proposes to:

- Provide extra passing loops and extra track to facilitate more trains
- Upgrade track to allow higher speeds of up to 160 km/h
- Build train stabling at Sale to facilitate additional services
- Upgrade signalling to allow more trains through to Sale
- Improve safety at regional level crossings
- Retire classic fleet and procure replacement stock
- Review and upgrade stations and facilities in line with changing community needs.

In relation to Gippsland local bus and road coach services, the RNDP proposes:

- Regional bus improvements for the Latrobe Valley
- Upgrading of bus stop signage in Bairnsdale and Sale

It also promises to investigate opportunities for local transport in Gippsland to provide additional travel options for residents and to plan for and implement bus service improvements across Gippsland as demand for services change.

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22 The “classic fleet” includes all of the rolling stock presently used on locomotive-hauled trains to and from Bairnsdale.
4.5 Network integration and coach service improvements

4.5.1 The Gippsland Public Transport System:

The provision of adequate public transport services for Gippsland requires the Gippsland public transport system (GPTS) to be viewed as one interconnected system. The Gippsland railway is the backbone of the GPTS, providing strong links to Melbourne and suburbs as well as inter-town links east-west along the corridor. These inter-town east-west rail links are important but can be improved, as outlined elsewhere in this report.

Along the line, connecting coaches link with the railway at Warragul, Morwell, Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale, with Traralgon and Bairnsdale providing the most connections. These connections generally serve hinterland towns, but there are also north-south connections to Wonthaggi and Leongatha from Morwell and Traralgon and Yarram from Traralgon, as well as infrequent interstate connections from Bairnsdale to Canberra and Bateman’s Bay/Narooma.

Urban bus services also operate within Drouin, Warragul, Moe, Morwell, Traralgon, Sale, Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale, providing the opportunity to deliver passengers to and from the railway from the suburbs of these larger centres.

This complex system is greatly affected by the efficiency of the backbone railway service. As noted elsewhere, services on the Gippsland railway stand in need of considerable improvement, supported by appropriate investment.

4.5.2 Coach Services to Surrounding Towns: Importance

Coach services to surrounding towns are of critical importance and serve the following objectives:

- They support the survival of smaller towns by enabling residents to access the core Gippsland public transport system and through it needed services in Gippsland or in the region;
- They allow residents to access medical services, schools, tertiary education institutions, shopping and employment within the region. The extent of such access by non-car drivers depends on the adequacy of the public transport system (including frequency, journey time, reliability and convenience);
- They are critical to the social inclusion of smaller town citizens;
- They are capable of supporting regional tourism if services are well designed (though this is not always the case).

With Gippsland’s aging population, effective coach services are to some extent a pre-requisite of the capacity of smaller town citizens to “age in place”, while retaining the capacity to visit friends and relatives, shop and get medical treatment without depending on community services. Some Gippsland public transport services are particularly well suited to this, such as the Bairnsdale to Paynesville bus, which operates as a flexible service when it reaches Eagle Point and Paynesville, dropping users to their address.

4.5.3 Standards of Service for Connecting Coaches

In the course of this study we have carefully analysed connecting coach services to three classes of Gippsland community served by the Gippsland mainline (and excluding towns in South Gippsland, Bass Coast and Casey/Cardinia).

We have examined services to 26 towns in all: 11 towns of up to 1000 population\textsuperscript{23}; 5 of population 1000 to 2000\textsuperscript{24}, 7 of population 2001-5200\textsuperscript{25} and three tourist destinations. All centres above these population levels

\textsuperscript{23} Benambra, Boisdale, Bruthen, Gormandale, Marlo, Noojee, Nowa Nowa, Omeo, Port Albert, Swift’s Creek and Yinnar
\textsuperscript{24} Boolarra, Briagolong, Heyfield, Mallacoota and Rosedale
\textsuperscript{25} Churchill, Maffra, Mirboo North, Orbost, Paynesville, Stratford and Yarram
have direct mainline train services to and from Melbourne and to and from each other. The objective has been to identify areas where service is lacking and those where effective service is provided.

We have also examined connecting coach services to several established tourist regions/destinations with very small populations but considerable tourist potential\(^{26}\), as well as north-south and interstate coach connections\(^ {27}\), as we believe tourist development in these areas should be supported by the GPTS, and will in turn support better Gippsland mainline train services.

We suggest the following service standards based on this analysis:

**Table 20: SERVICE STANDARDS FOR CONNECTING COACHES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN TYPE</th>
<th>NO. OF TOWNS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED STANDARD OF SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small towns up to 1000 people</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre at least twice weekly</td>
<td>Two days each week on which a morning coach takes passengers to a regional railhead/shopping centre and an afternoon coach returns from the railhead to the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium towns up to 2000 people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Daily access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre.</td>
<td>Six days each week on which a morning coach takes passengers to a regional railhead/shopping centre and an afternoon coach returns from the railhead to the town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger towns up to 5000 people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Daily access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre.</td>
<td>Seven days each week on which three daily coach services are provided to and from a regional railhead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist destinations with small permanent population</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support for weekend vacations for visitors and midweek access to regional centre and mainline train connection</td>
<td>A coach service connecting with the morning train from Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays and an evening return coach on Sundays. A midweek return connecting coach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.5.4 Process for developing connecting coach services**

Development of an adequate Gippsland Public Transport System requires coach services to be designed with a full understanding of the social and economic issues associated with the region, with the functioning of small towns in the region, and with the needs of citizens and businesses for public transport connection. In recent years, Transport Connections officers were funded within local governments to assist in the identification of needs.

It is important that the development of coach connections should be undertaken through coach service reviews led by Public Transport Victoria, but significant local involvement is critical. We suggest that Gippsland Local Government Network consider establishing a Gippsland Public Transport Forum to articulate the region’s needs. The Forum would ensure that coach service reviews conducted by PTV or its successor fully reflect local needs. Ideally, the Forum on behalf of the GLGN may be able to fund a full or part time Transport Connections Officer to support this Forum.

\(^{26}\) Bemm River, Buchan and Walhalla

\(^{27}\) Bateman’s Bay, Canberra and Great Alpine Road,
Particular suggestions for improved coach connections are listed in Section 6 below, although we would expect these suggestions to be subject to the Coach Service Review process described above.

4.5.5 Matching Supply and Demand

The introduction of new services requires both capital and operating costs and needs consideration through a careful planning process that matches the costs of new services with likely present and emerging demand. Therefore the suggestions made below should also be inputs to a planning process that includes local government, residents groups, tourist and accommodation providers as well as central PTV planners.

4.5.6 Scheduled Taxis

A further important issue is that the type of service provided needs to be cost-effective. Cost effectiveness in some instances may mean the provision of a scheduled (or even available) taxi service; the provision of a minibus; or the provision of a full size coach. In some instances, full size coaches will be available and able to cost effectively support whatever services are needed. We note that taxi services are already shown with relevant journey times by PTV in relation to services to Alberton, Port Albert, Boisdale and Briagolong. We understand that at present these are not scheduled or guaranteed taxi services, but rather the journey time where taxis are available. There may be circumstances where a scheduled taxi service could be considered.

4.5.7 Demand Responsive Services

For smaller towns and localities where dwellings are scattered, we commend the demand responsive “flexible” service currently provided to Paynesville and Eagle Point, whereby the bus will call or deliver passengers to their addresses. This service is relevant to senior patrons, who may have difficulties in reaching a bus stop, as well as to tourists with luggage (possibly including at times surfboards, bicycles or skis).

The concept of demand responsive buses originated in Hannover, Germany in the 1980s and has been successfully implemented in Victoria in the Croydon area and elsewhere. The Genoa to Mallacoota services are also Demand Responsive Buses that operate when booked. With the development of internet booking services, the Demand Responsive Bus concept may allow better public transport services to be provided to sparsely populated and low density areas more effectively than in the past.
5. Infrastructure to support Gippsland rail services

5.1 Current Position

Rail infrastructure between Melbourne CBD and Bairnsdale is constrained in several respects and at many locations. It is inadequate to meet the requirements of current V/Line users, let alone the expected population growth in the Latrobe Valley and West Gippsland regions as well as the burgeoning suburbs south and east of Dandenong. These deficiencies are manifested daily in overcrowded and unreliable services and inconvenience to regular passengers.

The central issue is that the rail infrastructure serving Gippsland and southeast Melbourne remains essentially the same double track that reached Dandenong in 1891\(^28\) and the mixed double and single track beyond Dandenong that was implemented to support briquette traffic from the Latrobe Valley in the 1950s. The 2005-2006 Regional Fast Rail project undertook partial upgrading of the track as far as Traralgon and the new VLocity trains enabled service frequency to be enhanced (see 3.3, above). However neither planning nor investment in added track capacity has occurred since then. Meanwhile, billions have been spent in adding and widening freeways serving the region.

Nor has Gippsland been provided with the improved journey times and in particular a sufficient time advantage over car commuting that has been delivered in three of the other V/Line corridors, mainly as a result of improved rail infrastructure. Not surprisingly, the outcome is that the modal shift and modal share on the other corridors has not been achieved on the Gippsland line.

This will translate into ongoing and worsening road congestion, economic loss and social penalties for the region’s population until the necessary work is planned and implemented.

The current major project on and around the railway in the south east, the level crossing removal project dubbed Skyrail by its detractors, delivers its main benefits to road users, although its completion will also renew track, signalling and electric traction equipment on the Dandenong rail corridor. It will also allow a small number of additional trains per hour through removal of the political constraint imposed by the previous government on the maximum number of trains that could be operated through level crossings on the line.

The completion of Melbourne Metro by 2026 will allow a further increase in capacity of the Dandenong line to 24 trains per hour of which two per hour can be Gippsland trains, but still does not address the needs of Gippsland and the suburbs south east of Dandenong for express services that would reduce travel time by around 15 minutes in each direction. This will continue as long as the key constraints remain, principally the double track between Caulfield and Dandenong whereas a four track railway is essential to allow for express running at average speeds more than double that of stopping trains (also see 5.3, below).

Apart from preventing further significant service improvement, the various constraints are also a prime source of service unreliability due to the inability to absorb chain reaction effects arising from unplanned events. The majority of such events are relatively minor (for example a trespasser on the line or an ill passenger on a train) but can have major knock-on effects.

Weather related impacts must also be significantly addressed, especially in the context of more severe weather events due to climate change. Rail infrastructure must therefore not only be designed to support required service levels but must also be sufficiently robust to withstand potential weather events and provide sufficient resilience to enable service recovery from the most common types of unplanned events. Modern, well-constructed rail infrastructure is generally designed to handle such events.

\(^{28}\) The first section of the Gippsland line opened between Oakleigh and Bunyip in 1877 as a single line. It was subsequently extended to Sale in 1878, to Bairnsdale in 1888 and to Orbost in 1916. The section of line between Oakleigh and Dandenong was duplicated in 1891.
5.2 Network capacity and key gaps

The key gaps in Gippsland line network capacity, which also affect robustness and resilience, are:

- Inadequate track capacity between Southern Cross and Dandenong (see 5.3 and 5.4 below).
- Lack of overtaking capacity between Dandenong and Pakenham
- Only one track (South line, excluding 14 km) previously upgraded to 160 km/h (Class 1) standard on double line sections between Pakenham and Bunyip and between Longwarry and Moe
- North line between Pakenham and Nar Nar Goon remains Class 2 standard and limited to 115 km/h
- North line between Nar Nar Goon and Bunyip and between Longwarry and Moe remains Class 2 standard and limited to 130 km/h
- Single line section between Bunyip and Longwarry with 65 km/h limit turnouts at each location for trains using the North line
- 65 km/h limit turnout approaching/departing Moe for trains using the North line.
- Single line sections beyond Moe including inadequate crossing facilities at Morwell
- 10 km of single line between Moe not upgraded to 160 km/h (Class 1) standard including Moe to Hernes Oak limited to 115 km/h
- 40 km/h speed restriction for trains using the crossing loops at Hernes Oak and Morwell
- Single platforms at Moe, Morwell and Traralgon
- Inadequate train stabling capacity at Traralgon
- Outmoded train safe working system between Traralgon and Bairnsdale
- Inadequate track standard (Class 3) between Traralgon and Bairnsdale limiting all trains to 100 km/h
- Lack of an effective train crossing facility between Traralgon and Bairnsdale
- Condition of Avon River bridge at Stratford (10 km/h restriction for passenger trains, freight trains not permitted at all)
- Ineffective signalling system at Bairnsdale preventing efficient train turnarounds

The proposed phased investment program described in Section 8 would progressively eliminate these constraints.

5.3 Rail Capacity between South Yarra and Dandenong

The Melbourne Metro (MM) tunnel project will release two tracks for V/Line and freight use between Flinders Street and South Yarra. A four-track rail corridor between South Yarra, Caulfield and Dandenong is a critical medium term requirement for effective operation of Gippsland passenger (and freight) services. This will also provide an opportunity to operate semi-fast Metro services from Pakenham or Cranbourne.

Recent commitments by government to eliminate all nine remaining level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong have resulted in a design solution that misses the opportunity to segregate stopping all-stations Metro trains from regional/express services by provision of two additional tracks. Express trains would save commuters up to half an hour travelling time per day. Without them, people living in Melbourne's booming suburbs in Casey and Cardinia and in Gippsland are at a significant disadvantage, compared with those from the west and north who now benefit from Regional Rail Link.

The plans released by LXRA confirm that quadruplication cannot be accommodated within the existing rail reservation between Caulfield and Oakleigh, and would therefore involve extensive property acquisition, as well as the major costs and disruption of a further period of construction. Creation of high quality parkland beneath the elevated tracks, even within the wide reservations through Clayton and Noble Park, while otherwise commendable, is likely to further inhibit provision of additional tracks in the present rail corridor.

Contracts for the project are now in place and construction is under way, so this is essentially a fait accompli. Addressing this serious deficiency depends on several factors:
the need to redesign the MM tunnel to provide for its extension or alternatively, a separate new tunnel beyond South Yarra to Caulfield, which will allow segregation of express lines between South Yarra and Caulfield;

the extent to which quadruplication can be viable in some discrete sections between Caulfield and Dandenong within the existing rail reservation and/or without the need for extensive property acquisition; and/or

options to construct a new tunneled or elevated line on an alternative alignment, e.g. between Caulfield and Oakleigh or Springvale, including the potential to serve other major destinations, such as the Chadstone shopping precinct and Monash University.

Given the decisions made by the government, the alternative solution of a new route for express trains seems likely to become the only viable option. This is clearly a less cost-efficient option than making strategic provision now for additional tracks on the existing corridor.

Growth projections for Melbourne's south-east and Gippsland indicate that rail capacity (in terms of train frequency) will be reached by 2030. Thereafter, further capacity can only be provided by means of longer trains and/or additional tracks. Irrespective of when capacity will be reached, the need to provide faster journeys needs to be addressed by adoption of one or more of the abovementioned options for implementation within the 10-15-year timeframe. Meanwhile, travellers from these areas are destined to still suffer slow and inadequate services on the Dandenong rail corridor.

Further comment regarding this issue is shown in the box below: “How the noose is tightening on the Dandenong corridor.”

5.4 Additional capacity on the Flinders Street viaduct

The other key limiting factor in relation to Gippsland passenger services is the capacity of the viaduct between Flinders Street and Southern Cross stations in Melbourne’s CBD. In the near future, metropolitan services will fully utilise this capacity during weekday peak periods, thus requiring most Gippsland trains to turnaround at Flinders Street during these times.

The planners have safeguarded the alignment for an additional two-track viaduct between Flinders Street and Southern Cross. Although recognised as a longer term requirement, this will provide a segregated route for regional services. It would also allow all services using VLocity rolling stock to become scheduled cross-city services to Geelong, Ballarat or Bendigo. This would significantly improve connectivity between the major regional centres. It will also increase the efficiency of rail operation and platform capacity of Southern Cross Station, because these services will then be able to run through with only limited stopping time at platforms 15 and 16.

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29 Source – “InterCity: How Regional Rail can re-balance population growth and create a “State of Cities” in Victoria”, Rail Futures Institute, August 2016.
HOW THE NOOSE IS TIGHTENING ON THE DANDENONG CORRIDOR

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) has final responsibility for safeguarding the necessary capacity and suitability of the critically important rail corridor between South Yarra and Dandenong. But responsibility for planning the quadruplication of this critical corridor also lies with Public Transport Victoria, the Level Crossing Removal Authority and the Melbourne Metro rail project.

PTV has maintained that demand growth projections can be met by the additional capacity provided through its Cranbourne Pakenham corridor program. This program includes new high-capacity trains, level crossing removals and signalling and power upgrades. The expectation is that this will provide an additional 42% capacity. The assumption is that, with the proposed Melbourne Metro (MM) tunnel from South Yarra through the CBD, the government is providing infrastructure with sufficient capacity and the capability of supporting a high quality service, for the medium to long term in that area.

The Melbourne Metro tunnel through the CBD will surface at South Yarra instead of Caulfield as originally intended. The proposed merging of MM and existing tracks at South Yarra will reduce line capacity and create reliability issues. Extension of the MM tunnel or a separate new tunnel between South Yarra and Caulfield will become an unavoidable requirement.

The program of the Level Crossing Removal Authority along the Dandenong corridor has been popularised as ‘Skyrail’. However the proposed elevated solution and “fast tracked” program for level crossing removal between Caulfield and Dandenong misses the opportunity to segregate stopping all stations Metro trains and regional/express services by provision of two additional tracks. Express trains would save commuters up to half an hour travelling time per day and provide equivalent service to people living in Melbourne’s booming south east and Gippsland, compared with those from the west and north who now benefit from Regional Rail Link.

The current Skyrail project makes only "passive provision" for quadruplication. Confirmation of this approach includes a letter from the Minister for Public Transport which States:

“Bidders have been required to demonstrate that, wherever practicable, allowances have been made for the future provision of an additional two tracks on the Cranbourne and Pakenham line.”

However, the plans released by the Level Crossing Removal Authority (LXRA) indicate that quadruplication cannot be accommodated within the existing rail reservation, at least between Caulfield and Oakleigh, and will therefore involve extensive property acquisition, as well as the major costs and disruption of a further period of construction. Creation of high quality parkland beneath the elevated tracks, even within the wide reservations through Clayton and around Noble Park, is likely to further inhibit provision of additional tracks in the present rail corridor.

It therefore seems that a tunnelled solution or adoption of a completely new alignment will be required for the additional tracks. Arguably the costs of quadruplication under these scenarios could be prohibitive, and the implication is that this has been deferred indefinitely.

Growth projections for Melbourne’s south east and Gippsland indicate that train path (service frequency) capacity will be reached by 2030. By mid-century, the combined population of Drouin/Warragul, Latrobe City and East Gippsland is likely to exceed 400,000. Meanwhile, travellers from these areas seem destined to still suffer slow and inadequate services on the Dandenong rail corridor. The policy of “passive provision” is clearly inadequate.

A concrete plan is required now, so that structures and installations to be built are "future proofed" and do not have to be demolished later, and so that provision is made for the corridors and connections that will be needed. Unfortunately there is no evidence that such planning is occurring.
6. Gippsland Rail Freight

6.1 Current Position of Rail freight in Gippsland

The Gippsland Railway today is primarily a passenger railway, and this Report is focussed on improvements and investments needed to enhance the contribution the passenger railway can make to the social and economic development of the region.

However, the railway also has both the potential and capacity to serve as an important freight corridor, offering the following benefits to the community if managed well:

- The capacity to move bulk loads, such as mineral and forest products, and large volumes of finished goods such as paper products (as already occurs), through the community with minimum impact. This is important since the Princes Highway is the sole freeway and highway route through central Gippsland and large continuous bulk loadings through the region should be removed from the road system in the interests of economic efficiency, road safety and benefits to the environment;

- The capacity to convey containers to and from the port. This includes export containers, such as those currently transported on the Maryvale paper train, and also the capacity to bring inwards containers from the port to the region, if appropriate intermodal transfer facilities and services can be developed.

Rail freight is most effective carrying large loads and in this sense it is a “numbers game”. If significant exports of brown coal products from the Valley, copper ore from Benambra, or logs from East Gippsland have to be transported substantial distances to port, a rail solution will likely emerge and the location of the Bairnsdale line running through the region should offer the potential to capture such traffic.

At present however there is no capacity to offer freight services beyond Sale owing to the state of the Avon River Bridge at Stratford; there is no traffic on offer to utilise the GIFT terminal at Morwell, there is no brown coal or mineral traffic using the railway, and log traffic from East Gippsland has been lost to road transport.

The only rail freight using the line is the Maryvale paper train, now operated by Qube Logistics, which conveys containerised paper products, some for export and some for onward transit by rail to Brisbane and Perth. This train operates seven days a week and conveys some 30,000 containers per year (20,000 to the Port for export and 10,000 for domestic consumption). Qube has shown considerable initiative as incoming operators of the service. The company has invested in new locomotives and rolling stock to improve the efficiency of the service, and has worked with government to improve the axle load capacity of some sub-standard parts of the mainline. It has also established warehouses both at the Port of Melbourne and the Lyndhurst Intermodal Terminal. In a 2013 address to the South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc. (SEATS), Qube emphasised its commitment to establishing a series of open access metropolitan and regional intermodal road and rail terminals connected to the port, and to equal port access pricing between road and rail.

By arrangement with the operators, the train accepts third party container traffic at Maryvale, although this is small in volume. It is understood that this traffic has included containers of sawn timber from a Latrobe Valley sawmill.

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31 Qube, (16 August 2013) “Port Growth and Intermodal Terminals”, Address to South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc. (SEATS).
Table 21: DRIVERS AND MARKETS FOR RAIL FREIGHT SERVICES IN GIPPSLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>KEY PROBLEMS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freight</td>
<td>Corridor through the Valley</td>
<td>Stratford rail bridge means no freight trains to Bairnsdale No marketing presence for rail freight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Replace Avon River Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Upgrade infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Franchise an operator for Bairnsdale and GIFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Maintain MSIS (see below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2 Requirements for the Development of Rail Freight in Gippsland

We believe the following requirements must be met for rail freight to play its role in Gippsland’s economic and social development:

- There must be proactive commitment from state and local government to encourage rail freight development.

- The existing Mode Shift Incentive Scheme (MSIS)\(^{32}\), a temporary state government subsidy to intermodal train operators (including some containers on the Qube Maryvale service), needs to be extended on a 5-10 year basis to provide firmer investment horizons for rail and intermodal operators and their customers. The subsidy recognises the external economic benefits offered by rail freight.

- Rail freight facilitation and marketing must be innovative and entrepreneurial and take place at central and local level. At state level, a need has been identified for several years for the creation of a Rail Freight Facilitation Unit within state government to advocate for needed investments and planning for the rail freight system. Instead, recent years have seen the reduction of rail freight expertise within state government to a bare minimum.

- At the local level, successful marketing of rail and intermodal services requires effective entrepreneurs who can do business with local producers and freight forwarders, and who can build up train loads to effective levels by meeting their needs for reliable schedules and just in time warehousing, despatch and export. Such entrepreneurs have emerged over recent years in Mildura, Horsham, Warrnambool and Ettamogah near Albury. Even the tiny pulse-producing centre of Donald has a small intermodal capacity so that peas and beans for export to North Africa and the Indian sub-continent can be loaded into export containers there and added to the Mildura line intermodal train. Once the rail infrastructure to the region is restored to a fit-for-purpose standard (as described in Section 8), the franchise for providing intermodal services east of Maryvale could be offered by public tender, including rights to operate GIFT and the railyards at Sale and Bairnsdale.

6.3 Infrastructure Investments needed to support Rail Freight in Gippsland

The following are the key infrastructure issues that must be addressed to allow the present and future development of rail freight in Gippsland:

6.3.1 The Avon River Bridge

The Avon River Bridge at Stratford needs to be replaced, at a cost of about $20 million. The bridge is over a century old, and freight trains are no longer permitted to operate over it. Passenger trains are limited to 10

\(^{32}\) Under the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme, the State Government provides subsidies to intrastate intermodal operators to Warrnambool, Merbein, Horsham, Shepparton and Maryvale. These subsidies are frequently renewed by state budget processes. Although they are vital to the viability of intermodal services, the MSIS subsidies are subject to constant re-allocation and are of on-going concern to operators. See [http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/transport/freight/mode-shift-incentive-scheme](http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/transport/freight/mode-shift-incentive-scheme) for further information.
km/h. The bridge currently costs some $2 m per annum in maintenance. A road bridge in this condition would not be tolerated on a major state highway and immediate replacement is required.

The existing Avon River bridge at Stratford

6.3.2 Maryvale Line
The Maryvale line into the APM paper mill is effectively a private siding and is in need of substantial rehabilitation. There is also a need for upgrading and rationalising its connection to the main line near Tramway Road and the associated signalling. Provided there is reasonable certainty as to the ongoing operation of the mill over an acceptable investment payback period, government should seek to assume responsibility for maintenance of this line as it is effectively part of the state rail freight system, particularly since third party containers are now accepted at Maryvale. This will also assist Australian Paper to constrain their transport costs and thereby contribute to the mill’s ongoing viability.

6.3.3 Railyards at GIFT, Sale and Bairnsdale
Rail freight capability in Gippsland in part depends on the availability of railyards suitable for intermodal operation. There needs to be sidings, space for dedicated warehouse facilities and road access. This currently means that it is important that these facilities are identified and maintained by VicTrack on a care and maintenance basis.

Among these, it is likely that railyards at Sale may be re-used for passenger train stabling. As they are located within a residential precinct, this will mean that the key potential intermodal yards that must be maintained for future use in the region are reduced to Maryvale, GIFT and Bairnsdale.

The advent of a major new bulk haulage traffic on the railway, such as export brown coal, copper ore or mineral sands, would likely involve the creation of new greenfields terminal facilities (as was the case in recent years with the creation of the Hopetoun to Hamilton mineral sands traffic in Western Victoria.)

6.3.4 Lyndhurst Terminal and Port Rail Shuttles
Over the past decade, there has been a marked swing in Victoria’s port trade toward import containers. All communities, including the Gippsland community, now depend on many categories of goods imported from China and elsewhere that reach the Port of Melbourne in containers. For several years plans have been in
place to distribute a significant proportion of these by means of a port rail shuttle to three inland ports at Altona, Somerton and Lyndhurst. Unfortunately, these developments have been blocked as part of the Port of Melbourne leasing process.

The Lyndhurst terminal, which is already open as a truck terminal and is capable of immediate connection to the rail network, would play a large role in handling import containers for South East Melbourne but is also likely to serve Gippsland.

As well, the realisation of the Port Rail Shuttle, which is being strongly advocated at present by the logistics industry, will require regulatory and infrastructure changes at the Port of Melbourne. Discriminatory charges and impediments against rail handling of containers will need to be removed, and an on-dock rail container handling terminal will need to be created. This should result in economic opportunities for all of Victoria’s intermodal operators – not just the metropolitan port rail shuttle - to compete for a greater share of import containers for their regional trains.

6.4 Some Future Rail Freight Possibilities

In summary, the potential for rail freight in Gippsland encompasses the following possible areas of traffic growth:

- Recapture of log traffic from East Gippsland to Geelong, especially if this can no longer be accepted at the Port of Eden. This requires the re-opening of the Bairnsdale line to freight traffic, contingent on the replacement of the Avon River Bridge at Stratford.

- Development of a regular intermodal train conveying export containers from Bairnsdale, GIFT and/or Maryvale to the Port and receiving import containers directly from the Port. This requires an entrepreneurial, private sector enterprise, possibly franchised by government.

- Development of traffic in brown coal or brown coal products from Latrobe Valley to port. This depends on commercial market developments as yet unrealised.

- Development of copper ore exports from Benambra. This depends on the development of the mine, copper prices, and the establishment of the preferred logistics chain if commercial scale development ensues.

- Development of rail traffic in sand from deposits at Lang Lang. This requires retention and re-opening of the rail corridor from Cranbourne to Lang Lang as well as cost effective unloading facilities in areas of construction intensity, particularly in the metropolitan area. This proposal is speculative at this stage.

- Development of a “garbage train” to take putrescible waste from Melbourne for deposit in abandoned open cut mining or quarry locations. This model has been adopted in Sydney, Los Angeles and New York and provides a path to open cut reclamation as well as addressing the scarcity of landfill sites. The Sydney garbage train, operated by Veolia Environmental Services, involves payment of $2 per tonne royalty to the receiving community. Receiving waste from a number of Sydney Councils through dedicated transfer stations, it has so far
conveyed nearly 5 million tonnes of waste to the abandoned Woodlawn open cut mine near Canberra. The Los Angeles model involves a 100 year-horizon project. Such a project could be designed for Gippsland with benefit both to the region and to Melbourne. No such proposal currently exists.

6.5 Conclusions regarding Freight

Rail freight currently plays a small role in Gippsland’s economy though it has substantial potential. The investments needed to upgrade the passenger railway will also enable rail freight services to again be offered along the whole length of the corridor to Bairnsdale. Because enhanced rail freight services can operate at night, they are not as constrained as passenger services are by inadequacies of the Dandenong Rail Corridor.

Advocacy in this area should be focused on replacement of the Avon River Bridge, maintenance of intermodal capacity along the line, extension and consolidation of the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme, franchising of an intermodal operator for GIFT and Bairnsdale freight services, provision or retention of sidings, passing loops and signalling needed for freight train operations, implementation of the Port Rail Shuttle and the Lyndhurst Rail Terminal, and the removal of anti-rail discriminatory container levies within the Port of Melbourne.
7. A Phased program of recommended service improvements

7.1 Rail service improvements which should be achievable in the short term – by 2021

Subject to provision of the necessary supporting infrastructure in the short term (see Section 8.1), substantially improved services should be achievable within five years. The main features of these services (times shown are approximate) would be:

**DROUIN/WARRAGUL AND TRARALGON**

- Four services arriving Melbourne at half-hourly intervals during the two-hour AM peak and departing Melbourne at half-hourly intervals during the two-hour PM peak period, two of which would be express services with limited stops in each direction.
- Additional shoulder peak services arriving Melbourne at half hourly intervals until 1000 and departing Melbourne at half-hourly intervals from 1500 onwards.
- Regular hourly interval services at all other times including at weekends
- An additional service from Warragul to arrive Traralgon at 0705 and from Traralgon to Warragul at 1705.
- A much expanded Parkway facility at Drouin to accommodate up to 400 cars.

**SALE**

- Seven direct train services to and from Melbourne on weekdays with a choice of four weekday Melbourne AM arrival times between 0815 and 1110 and five weekday Melbourne PM departures between 1445 and 1955.
- Five direct train services to and from Melbourne at weekends.

**BAIRNSDALE**

- Four direct train services to and from Melbourne and one additional service with a road coach connection at Sale on weekdays.
  - Includes an additional later AM service arriving Melbourne at 1110, an additional mid-afternoon service departing Melbourne at 1445 and a further service departing Melbourne at 1600 with a road coach connection at Sale.
- Four direct train services to and from Melbourne at weekends.

A more detailed description of the proposed services follows:

- Traralgon AM peak and shoulder peak services based on two train paths/hour at desired arrival times at Flinders Street, e.g. at 0645, 0715, 0745, 0815, 0845, 0915, 0945, 1000, then transitioning into hourly off-peak services.
- Traralgon PM peak and shoulder peak services based on two train paths/hour at desired departure times from Flinders Street e.g. at 1500, 1530, 1600, 1630, 1700, 1730, 1800 ,then transitioning into hourly evening services.
- The above services would comprise alternate express and stopping schedules in a regular pattern with the former stopping only at Morwell, Moe, Warragul, Drouin, Dandenong, Clayton, Caulfield and Richmond and the latter at all stations including Pakenham, the latter for Gippsland passengers only.
- One AM peak express service and a post-peak stopping VLocity service originating at Sale, for example at approximately 0540 and 0725 to form services ex Traralgon and arriving at Flinders Street at approximately 0815 and 1000.
- Two PM peak and one post-peak express VLocity services departing Flinders Street for example at approximately 1600, 1730 and 2000, and extended from Traralgon to Sale to arrive at approximately 1835, 2020 and 2255 with the latter two to stable overnight at Sale.
- One AM post-peak service that would otherwise originate at Traralgon to instead originate at Warragul at approximately 0625 and stop all stations to Traralgon to form a train to Melbourne at approximately 0715.
- One PM pre-peak service departing Flinders Street for example at approximately 1400 to Traralgon, divides and one 3-car set then returns to Warragul stopping all stations at approximately 1705 and stable overnight at Warragul.
- All weekday inter-peak, evening and weekend Traralgon services generally operate on a regular pattern at hourly frequencies stopping at all stations to Pakenham (for Gippsland passengers only), then Dandenong.

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33 Peak period services are defined as those arriving in Melbourne between 7am and 9am and departing Melbourne between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays. Shoulder peak periods are defined as one hour on either side of the respective peak periods.
Clayton (Up direction AM weekdays only, Down direction PM weekdays only), Caulfield, Richmond (Up direction AM weekdays only, Down direction PM weekdays only) and Flinders Street.

- All Traralgon/Sale peak express services operate with VLocity consists larger than the present 3-car sets.
- Bairnsdale services operate independently of the regular pattern of Traralgon services, using the current locomotive-hauled carriages, mostly maintaining their present stops, with the exceptions that the poorly used Garfield stop on these services, together with Pakenham, is deleted and the late afternoon train from Bairnsdale on weekdays also operates to the same express pattern.
- A fourth daily return service introduced from Bairnsdale with morning departures at approximately 0555 and 0725 to arrive at Southern Cross at approximately 0940 and 1110. As a result, the morning train from Melbourne on weekdays would return from Bairnsdale at approximately 1125 (instead of 1245) and arrive at Southern Cross at approximately 1510. New services would replace the 1320 train from Southern Cross on weekdays. These would depart Southern Cross at approximately 1045 and 1445 and arrive Bairnsdale at approximately 1430 and 1830. The first of these would return from Bairnsdale at approximately 1525 (instead of 1820) and arrive Southern Cross at approximately 1910 (instead of 2222 at present). An additional connecting road coach service would be introduced to depart Bairnsdale at 1740 to connect at Sale with a train to Melbourne at approximately 1850 and also connect at Sale with a 1600 train from Melbourne arriving Sale at approximately 1835, departing Sale at 1845 to arrive Bairnsdale at approximately 1945.

The following tables present the above information in a more readable form. These schedules are approximate and indicative only of the service levels that could be achieved after the relevant supporting infrastructure is provided, as detailed in Section 8.1 of this report. Importantly, while consistent with the planned availability of timetable paths between the CBD and Pakenham for Gippsland services by 2021, they should not be taken as an accurate indication of specific train path availability for individual services.

Table 22: INDICATIVE WEEKDAY RAIL SERVICES TRARALGON TO MELBOURNE IN 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMES FROM</th>
<th>SLE</th>
<th>BDL</th>
<th>SLE</th>
<th>BDL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traralgon</td>
<td>0435</td>
<td>0515</td>
<td>0535</td>
<td>0615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warragul</td>
<td>0515</td>
<td>0550</td>
<td>0615</td>
<td>0650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders St</td>
<td>0645</td>
<td>0715</td>
<td>0745</td>
<td>0815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
<td>0650</td>
<td>0620</td>
<td>0940</td>
<td>0950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMES FROM</th>
<th>BDL</th>
<th>SLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traralgon</td>
<td>0435</td>
<td>0515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warragul</td>
<td>0515</td>
<td>0550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders St</td>
<td>0645</td>
<td>0715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
<td>0650</td>
<td>0620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOES TO</th>
<th>BDL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traralgon</td>
<td>0955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warragul</td>
<td>0955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders St</td>
<td>0955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
<td>0955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOES TO</th>
<th>SLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southern Cross</td>
<td>1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flinders St</td>
<td>1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warragul</td>
<td>1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traralgon</td>
<td>1555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stops</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SLE = Sale  BDL = Bairnsdale
PROPOSED STOPPING CONDITIONS:

A – Stops all stations to Pakenham, then Dandenong, Clayton, Caulfield, Richmond and Flinders Street
B – Stops Morwell, Moe, Warragul, Drouin, Dandenong, Clayton, Caulfield, Richmond and Flinders St.
C – Stops all stations to Pakenham, then Dandenong, Caulfield and Flinders Street
D – Stops Morwell, Moe, Warragul, Drouin, Dandenong, Caulfield and Flinders Street
E – Stops all stations to Warragul
F – Stops all stations to Traralgon
G – Stops Flinders Street, Caulfield, Dandenong, Pakenham then all stations
H – Stops Flinders Street, Caulfield, Dandenong, Drouin, Warragul, Moe then all stations
J – Stops Flinders Street, Richmond, Caulfield, Clayton, Dandenong, Pakenham then all stations
K – Stops Flinders Street, Caulfield, Clayton, Dandenong, Drouin, Warragul, Moe then all stations
L – Stops Richmond, Caulfield, Clayton, Dandenong, Drouin, Warragul, Moe then all stations

Table 23: INDICATIVE RAIL SERVICES Bairnsdale and Sale to Melbourne in 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAIRNSDALE AND SALE TO MELBOURNE</th>
<th>Monday to Friday</th>
<th>Saturday and Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bairnsdale dep</strong></td>
<td>0545 0645 0725</td>
<td>1030 1130 1230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sale</strong></td>
<td>0540 0640 0720</td>
<td>1025 1125 1225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traralgon dep</strong></td>
<td>0615 0715 0800</td>
<td>1045 1145 1245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flinders St arr</strong></td>
<td>0815 0915 1000</td>
<td>1245 1345 1445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Cross</strong></td>
<td>0940 1030 1120</td>
<td>1445 1545 1645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MELBOURNE TO SALE AND BAIRNSDALE</th>
<th>Monday to Friday</th>
<th>Saturday and Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Southern Cross</strong></td>
<td>0645 0745 1445</td>
<td>1145 1245 1345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flinders St dep</strong></td>
<td>0650 0750 1500</td>
<td>1250 1350 1450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traralgon dep</strong></td>
<td>0905 1005 1700</td>
<td>1505 1605 1705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sale</strong></td>
<td>1030 1130 1930</td>
<td>1730 1830 1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bairnsdale arr</strong></td>
<td>1030 1130 1930</td>
<td>1730 1830 1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Train services are shown in black, connecting road coach services in red

7.2 Rail service improvements which should be achievable in the medium term – by 2026

Subject to provision of the necessary supporting infrastructure in the medium term (see Section 8.2), improved services similar to those described below should be achievable within ten years:

- All weekday inter-peak, evening and weekend Traralgon services operate on a regular pattern at 40 minutes instead of hourly frequencies.
- All Traralgon/Sale peak and shoulder peak services operate with VLocity consists larger than the present 3-car sets.
- New long distance trains are introduced to Bairnsdale services enabling average overall trip times to be reduced from approximately 225 minutes to approximately 200 minutes.
- Five daily return services are introduced to Bairnsdale with similar stopping pattern to the previous services but with accelerated schedules, for example as under:
  - Bairnsdale departures at 0545, 0745, 1045, 1345 and 1645, arriving Southern Cross at approximately 0905, 1105, 1405, 1705 and 2005, respectively
  - Southern Cross departures at approximately 0700, 1000, 1300, 1600 and 1830, arriving Bairnsdale at approximately 1020, 1320, 1620, 1920 and 2150, respectively.

7.3 What standards of rail passenger service should Gippsland have in place in 2031?

Subject to provision of the necessary supporting infrastructure in the longer term (see Section 8.3), improved services similar to those described below should be achievable within fifteen years:

- AM peak and shoulder peak services based on three train paths per hour at desired arrival times at Flinders Street, for example at 0640, 0700, 0720, 0740, 0800, 0820, 0840, 0900, 0920 and then transitioning into 40 minute frequency off-peak services.
- PM peak and shoulder peak services based on three train paths per hour at desired departure times from Flinders Street for example at 1540, 1600, 1620, 1640, 1700, 1720, 1740, 1800, 1820 and then transitioning into 40 minute frequency evening services.
- The above services would comprise alternate express and stopping schedules in a regular pattern with the former stopping only at Morwell, Moe, Warragul, Drouin, Dandenong, Clayton, Caulfield and Richmond and the latter at all stations including Pakenham, the latter for Gippsland passengers only.
- Two AM peak express services and a post-peak stopping service originating at Sale, for example at approximately 0515, 0615 and 0720 to form services ex Traralgon and arriving at Flinders Street at approximately 0740, 0840 and 1000.
- One shoulder peak and two PM peak express services departing Flinders Street for example at approximately 1500, 1640 and 1720, and extended from Traralgon to Sale to arrive at approximately 1740, 1905 and 1945 and stable overnight at Sale.
- All weekday inter-peak and evening and weekend Traralgon services operate at 40 minutes frequencies supplemented by inter-peak Warragul – Traralgon local services to provide 20 minutes all day weekday frequency in each direction between 0700 and 1800.
- End-to-end trip times of all services are further reduced by approximately 10 minutes to achieve:
  - Warragul-Southern Cross – express 75 minutes, stopping 82 minutes
  - Traralgon-Southern Cross – express 115 minutes, stopping 127 minutes
  - Sale-Southern Cross – express 145 minutes, stopping 157 minutes
  - Bairnsdale-Southern Cross – express 185 minutes.

7.4 Proposed Coach Service Improvements

The following tables include a number of improvements in coach connections based on the existing timetable for Bairnsdale trains. When this train service is enhanced, for example to provide four return train services per day to Bairnsdale and to provide earlier departure times for the afternoon Bairnsdale to Melbourne train, (as shown in Section 7.1 above) coach connections will need to be further revised to ensure maximum flow-on of the benefits of revised train schedules.

On the basis of the Standards of Service principles outlined above, the following Coach Service Improvements should be investigated through a process of central and local consultation as outlined above.

7.4.1 Coach Services to Larger Towns

Table 24: SUGGESTED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS CONNECTING COACHES – LARGER TOWNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN TYPE</th>
<th>NO. OF TOWNS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED STANDARD OF SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger towns 2001-5000 people</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Daily access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre. Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
<td>Seven days each week on which three daily coach services are provided to and from a regional railhead.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Suggested Improvement in line with above standard:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>POPULATION 2011</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Churchill</td>
<td>4943</td>
<td>It has hourly bus services to Morwell (Route 2), 7 days a week covering the 27-minute journey, as well as a 2-hourly service 7 days a week to Traralgon. (Route 3) These services cease on Saturdays at 17.40 (down) and 18.33 (up), although there is a 20.30 service from Morwell on Sunday, returning at 21.00.</td>
<td>Possible case for a later return bus on Saturday evenings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOWN</td>
<td>POPULATION 2011</td>
<td>CURRENT SERVICE</td>
<td>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maffra</td>
<td>5112</td>
<td>3 services to and from Traralgon and Melbourne Monday to Saturday and two return services on Sunday, plus additional coach services to Traralgon and Sale.</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirboo North</td>
<td>2296</td>
<td>No service to Morwell, Traralgon or Melbourne after 14.35 weekdays. No services to or from Mirboo North on Saturday or Sunday afternoon</td>
<td>A weekday coach at 16.45 to Morwell to connect with the 17.25 train to Melbourne A weekend coach to Morwell connecting with the 16.38 train to Melbourne and a coach from Morwell connecting with the 14.56 train from Melbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbost</td>
<td>2493</td>
<td>3 services to Melbourne weekdays at 04.13, 11.05 and 13.38 - 2 services originating Marlo &amp; 1 originating Batemans Bay/Narooma; 3 services Saturday &amp; Sunday</td>
<td>Currently, the weekday 13.38 train/coach service from Orbost to Melbourne involves a long 6 hour journey including a 207 km coach journey from Orbost to the train connection at Traralgon. There is no opportunity for refreshments on this journey. This could be improved if the Saturday timetable, in which the train connection is made at Bairnsdale, were adopted on weekdays. This would require corresponding adjustment of the timing of the train from Melbourne that forms the up Bairnsdale, as well as alteration to existing industrial practices concerning train turnaround times at Bairnsdale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paynesville</td>
<td>3236</td>
<td>5 weekday and one Saturday service to and from Bairnsdale, with two services each way connecting with Melbourne trains. No Saturday evening coach to or from Paynesville No Sunday service</td>
<td>A coach to Bairnsdale on Saturday connecting with the 16.37 train to Melbourne and a coach from Bairnsdale at 16.00 connecting with the 11.56 train from Melbourne A coach from Bairnsdale to Paynesville and return on Sunday evening, connecting with the 18.16 train from Bairnsdale to Southern Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>2615</td>
<td>5 train and train coach services daily, 7 days a week</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarram</td>
<td>2168</td>
<td>3 coach services to Leongatha, Dandenong and Melbourne 7 days a week and 3 coach services to Traralgon on weekends with 2 return services on weekends</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.2 Coach Services to Medium Sized Towns

Table 25: SUGGESTED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS CONNECTING COACHES – MEDIUM SIZED TOWNS

Service Standard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN TYPE</th>
<th>NO OF TOWNS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium towns 1001-1999 people</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Daily access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre. Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested Improvement in line with above standard:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>POPULATION 2011</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boolarra</td>
<td>1003</td>
<td>Six weekday and 5 weekend return services to Churchill, connecting to Morwell and Melbourne</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briagolong</td>
<td>1075</td>
<td>5 train and train coach services daily, 7 days a week to Stratford, thence 21 minute taxi service to Briagolong from Stratford,</td>
<td>No changes suggested. Neither Briagolong nor Boisdale appear in V/Line’s website under browse by Town, but Briagolong is recognised in the PTV journey planner which lists the Stratford connection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heyfield</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>As per Maffra. Night Rider Bus from Melbourne on Friday and Saturday nights should be shown in PTV web timetable</td>
<td>Amend PTV web timetable to show Night Rider service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallacoota</td>
<td>1032</td>
<td>2 coaches on Mondays, Thursdays, to Genoa. This is a Demand Responsive bus service that operates when booked. No Saturday or Sunday service</td>
<td>Extend the weekday timetable to Saturdays and Sundays. Introduce a Sunday afternoon coach connecting with the 16.37 train from Bairnsdale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosedale</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>5 train and train coach services daily, 7 days a week</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.3 Coach Services to Smaller Towns

Table 26: SUGGESTED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS CONNECTING COACHES – SMALLER TOWNS

Service Standard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN TYPE</th>
<th>NO. OF TOWNS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>RECOMMENDED STANDARD OF SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small towns up to 1000 people</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Access for shopping and medical services to a regional centre at least twice weekly Access to mainline rail services to Melbourne</td>
<td>Two days each week on which a morning coach takes passengers to a regional railhead/shopping centre and evening coach returns from the railhead to the town.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested Improvement in line with above standard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>POPULATION 2011</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Port Albert</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>No service – taxi required to Alberton store to connect with Yarram to Melbourne V/Line coach</td>
<td>A scheduled taxi or small coach service connecting at Alberton with the morning coach from Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays and an evening return service on Sundays to facilitate weekend tourism. A similar midweek return service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benambra</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>No service</td>
<td>No changes suggested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boisdale</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>Currently 5 services weekdays and 3 Saturdays and Sundays Melbourne to Maffra with taxi connection Maffra-Boisdale.</td>
<td>Include Boisdale in the town index on PTV and V/Line Journey Planners. Neither Briagolong nor Boisdale appear in V/Lines website under browse by Town, but Boisdale is recognised in the PTV journey planner which connection at Maffra with a 16-minute taxi journey from Maffra to Boisdale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruthen</td>
<td>805</td>
<td>Currently 2 buses per day Monday and Friday and 1 per day Tues to Thursday to Bairnsdale.</td>
<td>Add one service Tuesday to Thursday and extend service to weekends.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2: SUGGESTED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS CONNECTING COACHES – SMALLER TOURIST DESTINATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Standard:</th>
<th>Town type</th>
<th>No. Of towns</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Recommended Standard of Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support for weekend vacations for visitors and midweek access to regional centre and mainline train connection</td>
<td>Tourist destinations with small permanent population</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>A coach service connecting with the morning train from Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays and an evening return coach on Sundays. A midweek return connecting coach.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Suggested Improvement in line with above standard:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOWN</th>
<th>POPULATION 2011</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bemm River</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>No service</td>
<td>No changes suggested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buchan</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>Currently 2 buses per week from Orbost on Wednesdays and Fridays. Doesn’t support weekend visits despite good camping facilities</td>
<td>Consider adding a coach service connecting with the morning train from Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays and an evening return coach on Sundays, to facilitate weekend tourism. A midweek return connecting coach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallacoota</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>See Section 7.4.2above</td>
<td>See Section 7.4.2 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Albert</td>
<td>See above</td>
<td>See Section 7.4.3 above</td>
<td>See Section 7.4.3 above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walhalla</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No service</td>
<td>Consider adding a scheduled taxi or Demand Responsive Bus service connecting with the morning train from Melbourne on Saturdays and Sundays and an evening return coach on Sundays, to facilitate weekend tourism. A midweek return connecting service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4.5 Cross Country and Interstate Coach Connections

We have not suggested a Standard of Service for Interstate and Cross Country coaches that connect to the Gippsland Railway. However three of these services could have considerable tourist potential if developed further:

Table 28: CROSS-COUNTRY-INTERSTATE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE</th>
<th>CURRENT SERVICE</th>
<th>SUGGESTED NEW SERVICE FOR INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale to Narooma and Bateman’s Bay</td>
<td>Coaches connect at Bairnsdale with the 07.20 train from Melbourne and serve Narooma once a week and Bateman’s Bay twice a week. No effective connection to Sydney via this route.</td>
<td>Consider developing this service with a Sydney connection. Internet posts have been noted from tourists seeking to travel this route by public transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bairnsdale to Canberra</td>
<td>Coach connects at Bairnsdale with the 07.20 train from Melbourne once weekly and arrives Canberra at 17.55</td>
<td>Consider developing this service with appropriate marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeo to Bright (Great Alpine Rd)</td>
<td>2 services per week from Omeo to Bright and vice versa on Wednesdays, Fridays and Public Holidays.</td>
<td>Consider developing this service with appropriate marketing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. A Phased program of recommended infrastructure investments

8.1 Short term improvements to support services to 2021

In order to adequately and reliably support the services proposed in Section 7.1 for introduction by 2021, the following infrastructure works will need to be completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECTS</th>
<th>PURPOSE / BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cranbourne/Pakenham Rail Upgrade project, including track and signalling upgrading and removal of all level crossings between Caulfield and Dandenong</td>
<td>Renewed infrastructure will improve service reliability and increase equipment resilience. Removal of level crossings will eliminate former government restriction on train path numbers at peak periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplication of the single line between Bunyip and Longwarry and upgraded stations at both locations</td>
<td>Removes point of conflict that causes delays. Eliminates 65km/h speed restrictions for all trains using North line. Provides upgraded station facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of the Drouin Parkway facility with an additional 400 car park spaces</td>
<td>Provides incentive to use rail from/to Drouin, better facilities for users, improves service attractiveness and should help reduce car dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a train stabling facility at Warragul</td>
<td>Provides overnight security for trains originating and terminating at Warragul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional car parking at Moe</td>
<td>Improved facility for users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of the Morwell crossing loop towards Traralgon for approximately 3km and upgrading of the existing loop track and turnout.</td>
<td>Critical requirement to provide corridor capacity for proposed service plan and frequency, assists service reliability and recovery by providing scheduling resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a second platform at Morwell with associated DDA compliant access</td>
<td>Consequential requirement stemming from extended crossing loop at Morwell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrading of the Traralgon station precinct including provision of 200 car parking spaces</td>
<td>Addresses many current facility deficiencies at Traralgon, better facilities for users, improves service attractiveness and should help reduce car dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New safeworking system and signalling Traralgon to Sale</td>
<td>Required to support additional services to Sale and Bairnsdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a train stabling facility at Sale</td>
<td>Provides overnight security for trains originating and terminating at Sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement of the Avon River bridge at Stratford</td>
<td>Replaces life expired essential infrastructure, removes severe speed restriction and freight train prohibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of remote controlled signalling for loco runarounds at Bairnsdale</td>
<td>Allows train turnarounds at Bairnsdale to be reduced from 70 to 20 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proposed Drouin expanded Parkway facility for an additional 400 car park spaces
Proposed second platform at Morwell and extended crossing loop.
8.2 Medium term improvements to support services to 2026

To fully support the services proposed in Section 7.2 for introduction by 2026, the following additional infrastructure works will need to be completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECTS</th>
<th>PURPOSE / BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade to Class 1 standard of remaining Class 2 sections of the South Line between Longwarry and Warragul to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity trains (subject to curvature constraints)</td>
<td>Reduces trip times by increasing train permissible speed from 130 to 160km/h, allows for return to normal left hand running, provides much more robust track structure, improved ride quality and reduced ongoing maintenance cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full upgrade of the North line Pakenham to Bunyip and Longwarry to Moe to Class 1 standard to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity trains</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upgrade existing track Moe to Hernes Oak and Hernes Oak loop track to Class 1 standard to permit 160km/h operation of VLocity trains (subject to curvature constraints)</td>
<td>Reduces trip times by increasing train permissible speed from 130 to 160km/h, provides much more robust track structure, improved ride quality and reduced ongoing maintenance cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend duplication from Moe to Hernes Oak including a new station building and second platform at Moe with associated DDA compliant access</td>
<td>Requirement to provide corridor capacity for further service enhancements. Also addresses many current facility deficiencies at Moe, better facilities for users, improves service attractiveness and should help reduce car dependency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of a second platform at Traralgon with associated DDA compliant access</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track upgrade to Class 2 standard Traralgon to Bairnsdale for 130 km/h operation</td>
<td>Reduces trip times by increasing train permissible speed from 100 to 130km/h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New safeworking system and signalling Sale to Bairnsdale</td>
<td>Required to support further additional services to Bairnsdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of train stabling facility at Bairnsdale</td>
<td>Provides overnight security for trains originating and terminating at Bairnsdale following introduction of new generation regional long distance trains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3 What should the rail infrastructure serving Gippsland look like in 2031?

To fully support the services proposed in Section 7.3 for introduction by 2031, the following additional infrastructure works will need to be completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECTS</th>
<th>PURPOSE / BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First stage of quadruplication between Caulfield and Dandenong</td>
<td>Critical requirement to allow reduced trip time (approximately 15 minutes) for Gippsland regional and outer south-eastern suburbs metropolitan express trains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overtaking line (4 km of bi-directional third track) between Beaconsfield and Officer</td>
<td>Allows regional trains to overtake metropolitan stopping services. Will become critical requirement as Pakenham services intensify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend track duplication from Hernes Oak to Morwell Loop and from Morwell Loop to Traralgon</td>
<td>Requirement to provide corridor capacity for further service enhancements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New crossing loop at Wurruk (near Sale)</td>
<td>Required to provide corridor capacity for further additional services to Sale and Bairnsdale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Gippsland rail corridor (Garfield to Sale) - schematic diagram](Gippsland%20rail%20corridor%20(Garfield%20to%20Sale)%20-%20schematic%20diagram.png)
9. Improving Passenger Experience on the Gippsland Public Transport System

Previous Sections have outlined current service levels and proposed improvements in the frequency, efficiency and connectivity of Gippsland rail and coach services, and have indicated a range of service and infrastructure improvements needed to facilitate this. Taken together, the improvements suggested should contribute to improved passenger experience and increased patronage and mode share on the public transport system.

Many of the recurring frustrations for Gippsland passengers such as delays behind suburban trains, overcrowding, lack of mobile and Wi-Fi services, delays on single line sections and poor station surroundings need investment or “hardware” solutions. However there are many aspects of passenger satisfaction that derive from “software” – or management issues - rather than “hardware”.

In this Section we note a range of areas where passenger experience needs to improve for the public transport system to fully deliver its benefits to the community. Fuller exploration of these issues is beyond the scope of this Report; however it is important that the community continue to advocate action on these issues to the Government, PTV and V/Line management. Issues marked (S) are system wide issues, while issues marked (G) are Gippsland specific or are particularly apparent on the Gippsland line.

Table 29: PASSENGER EXPERIENCE ISSUES AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>PROPOSED SOLUTION</th>
<th>TYPE OF ISSUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Train service is inadequate and unreliable, making commuters late for work</td>
<td>Extra track capacity on the Dandenong Rail Corridor; Duplication Bunyip to Longwarry and other infrastructure enhancements as set out in this report</td>
<td>Hardware (G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More effective protocols and oversight of the interface between V/Line and Metro services</td>
<td>Software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowding on peak services</td>
<td>Efficient matching of train size to demand</td>
<td>Software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of adequate and suitable rolling stock</td>
<td>Hardware (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older carriages on Sale/Bairnsdale trains fall well short of contemporary comfort and amenity standards and the air-conditioning is problematic in hot weather</td>
<td>Undertake major refurbishment of the older carriage fleet or preferably, purchase new generation long distance trains that can operate at higher speeds and meet contemporary international design standards.</td>
<td>Hardware (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger security, including drunk or drugged passengers and offensive language</td>
<td>Protective Services Officers are based at Traralgon but do not normally travel on-trains. Stronger attention to managing behaviour especially on late night services.</td>
<td>Software (G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays due to passengers becoming ill and trains being halted until paramedics arrive</td>
<td>Review of ill passenger protocols to determine international best practice in this area.</td>
<td>Software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passenger safety around stations and station car parks</td>
<td>Car park design, lighting, location and supervision</td>
<td>Hardware and software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled compliance - stations</td>
<td>Regular audit and investment</td>
<td>Hardware and software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate station waiting facilities and maintenance at some locations</td>
<td>Determine consistent standards relative to location size and selective investment. Regularly audit compliance</td>
<td>Hardware and software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate wayfinding signage and maintenance at some stations</td>
<td>Determine consistent standards. Regularly audit compliance</td>
<td>Hardware and software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-existent or inadequate displayed information regarding connecting road coach and local bus services</td>
<td>Review requirements at each location and ensure information is prominently displayed, maintained and kept up to date</td>
<td>Hardware and software (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled compliance - trains</td>
<td>VLocity trains are DDA compliant, but long distance trains such as the Bairnsdale train require a “BZN” car with disabled facilities in each consist. This car has been omitted from many services due to reduced “Z” car availability over an extended period.</td>
<td>Hardware (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSUE</td>
<td>PROPOSED SOLUTION</td>
<td>TYPE OF ISSUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone black spots on railway</td>
<td>Mobile phone coverage is required as a safety issue and to support contemporary travel expectations</td>
<td>Hardware ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Train mobile reception and Wi Fi</td>
<td>Mobile phone and Wi Fi access is required to meet modern expectations. Current VLocity trains are heavily shielded from wireless reception. A technical solution to this problem is needed.</td>
<td>Hardware ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train - Coach connectivity</td>
<td>Good interchange design, signage, and connection scheduling that is crisp</td>
<td>Hardware and software ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage handling, especially for aged and infirm passengers and parents with small children</td>
<td>User friendly stowage on rolling stock. Lockers at some key stations. Staff assistance at key stations</td>
<td>Hardware and software ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage of bicycles – uncertainty as to space availability, especially for bicycle touring clubs</td>
<td>Discussions between V/Line and Bicycle touring organisations. Pre-arranged addition of a Van to long distance trains for key events. New generation long distance trains to include specific accommodation for reasonable numbers of bicycles</td>
<td>Software (G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train buffet sometimes closed due to staff shortage or other reasons</td>
<td>Improved back up staff system</td>
<td>Software ($)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Train from Bairnsdale passing through Bunyip – a three carriage consist with no DDA compliant facilities
Uncomfortable travelling conditions on a heavily overcrowded VLocity train
Three carriage consists will become increasingly inadequate on some Gippsland services

Bunyip – looking towards Melbourne
Trains diverging from the single line to double lines and vice versa at Bunyip and Longwarry must slow to 65 km/h while passing through these points
10. Special projects worthy of investigation:

There are several special projects that could have a significant impact on rail use in the region. Brief comments are provided on each – not a fully developed rationale:

10.1 Is there a case for a Latrobe Central Station?

There could be a case for investigating whether a new Latrobe Central Station could be provided with the facilities expected at a major regional city terminal - 24/7 operation, safe and comfortable bus and taxi connections, refreshments, station staff and shops and outstanding architecture and urban design. Currently there are Master Plans for the station precincts at Traralgon, Moe and Morwell, and while these stations are in definite need of improvement, the concept of a fit-for-purpose Central Station should be investigated before these stations are extensively rebuilt.

Mid-Valley has been suggested as a potential site for a Latrobe Central station that could provide all of the abovementioned facilities together with much improved access to Churchill. It would supplement, rather than replace any of the three existing Latrobe City stations.

Potential site for a Latrobe Central station and major “park and ride” facility at Mid-Valley

10.2 A Latrobe Metro Service

10.2.1 The Bendigo Metro

In 2015, the State Government initiated the Bendigo Metro Rail Project. The project Bendigo Metro Rail aims to deliver a commuter train service for Bendigo, with an increased number of services running from Epsom, Eaglehawk and Kangaroo Flat to Bendigo.

The Victorian Government has committed $2 million towards the project. A Community Consultative Taskforce and Technical Working Group were established to provide a recommendations report to the Minister for Public Transport by 30 June 2015.

Bendigo Metro Rail aims to reduce local traffic and allow people to commute to work, school, TAFE and university via rail.
The project has been proposed to support forecast population growth in Bendigo and surrounding areas. There are over 100,000 people who live in the City of Greater Bendigo and 266,900 people are expected to live in the region by 2041.

Government accepted the Bendigo Metro Rail Report and is working to implement a range of recommendations that will include signalling and timetabling changes and ultimately a local train service serving several stations in the Bendigo area.

Similar possibilities for rail based local transport exist in Geelong, which is served by seven local stations, all currently serving only intercity or long distance trains, with no dedicated local service.

There are five stations in the Bendigo Metro concept (Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Epsom and Ascot); seven stations in a potential Geelong Metro (Waurn Ponds, Marshall, South Geelong, Geelong, North Geelong, North Shore and Corio), and nine stations in a possible Latrobe Metro (Drouin, Warragul, Trafalgar, Yarragon, Moe, Morwell, Mid-Valley, Traralgon and Sale). The Bendigo and Geelong proposals serve larger populations and more compact urban areas, but the Latrobe proposal benefits from less utilised rail capacity, double track over much of the route and established passenger traffic flows.

### 10.2.2 Benefits of a Latrobe Metro

The Metro concept is even more suited to the needs of Gippsland than it is to Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong, because the largest settlements in Gippsland are polycentric but connected to the Gippsland railway. Our study has shown that there are many passenger movements along the corridor from west to east and east to west that are essentially local in character. They include:-

- Several thousand workers daily “exported” from the peri-urban centre of Warragul/Drouin to employment in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon;
- Some 1,200 people travel daily from Sale to employment in the Latrobe Valley, most of whom do not presently have a suitable public transport option;
- Secondary school children travelling east and west because a range of school offerings meeting their preferences is arrayed along the line – with a variety of government and private schools, high schools, technical colleges and specialised campuses such as Kurnai College for the indigenous community;
- Tertiary students travelling to various specialised campuses of Federation TAFE, and university students travelling to Federation University at Churchill as well as Monash;
- Hospital patients, their carers and family travelling to Latrobe Regional Hospital and specialist services surrounding it including the Latrobe Cancer Centre;
- Welfare recipients travelling to Centrelink and many other support services including Gamblers Help located at Morwell and elsewhere;
- Visitors to Fulham Prison in Sale (it is understood that prison authorities in the past have raised the possibility of a platform being located near the prison for this purpose).

Local bus services do provide coverage of many of these needs but even former local bus operators have privately expressed the view that a rail service could perform this task more efficiently.

### 10.2.3 Latrobe Metro Concept

As in Bendigo, furthering this concept would require consultation and detailed design as well as a future commitment by government to capital and operating costs. Likely requirements could include:

- A 20 minute peak and 40-minute off peak train service between Drouin and Sale, starting sufficiently early in the morning to cater for the needs of workers and students starting and finishing at normal working hours. (Similar to the Bendigo Metro concept).
- Level crossing and signalling improvements in the region to ensure safety in view of the added frequency of services.
- Completion of double tracks and dual platforms at all stations within the Drouin to Traralgon section of the route and a suitably located crossing loop between Traralgon and Sale
- Train stabling location to be identified, but likely to be at Sale, facilitating Sale as the eastern terminus of the service
- Some redesign of local bus timetables to ensure key connections, e.g. to Federation Uni.

Local (Metro) services are being introduced in Bendigo and could be introduced in Geelong.

There is the capacity to introduce a Latrobe Metro service on the rail corridor between Drouin and Traralgon.

![Latrobe Metro service concept]

10.3 South East Metropolitan Airport

- As Victoria and Melbourne’s populations grow towards 10M and 8M respectively at mid-century, the case for a third major airport south east of Melbourne will become significant
- Best international practice is to connect rail systems through major airports, allowing rapid access to and from them from the cities and regions in their catchment.
- Identification of the site for a third airport in Melbourne’s south east is an important issue so that corridors can be protected in planning schemes and longer term plans can be made for road, rail and other infrastructure
11. Sources

11.1 Persons consulted

Rob Ashworth, Senior Transport Planner, Gippsland Region, DEJTR and Treasurer, Walhalla Goldfields Railway

Sharyn Bolitho, Manager Economic Development, Wellington Shire Council

Matthew Cripps, Director, Growth and Environment, Baw Baw Shire Council

Tim Ellis, Manager, Economic Development, East Gippsland Shire Council

Gerard Engel, Transport Planner, Latrobe City Council

Heather Farley, Co-ordinator Community Strengthening, Latrobe City Council

Paul Holton, Director, Development, East Gippsland Shire Council

Sascha Johns, Community Development Co-ordinator, East Gippsland Shire Council

Nathan Misiurka, Senior Strategic Planner, Latrobe City Council

Jane Oakley, Manager, Community Information and Advocacy, Baw Baw Shire Council

Haydn Opie, V/Line Users Group, Warragul

Tim Pianta, Regional Manager East, V/Line Pty Ltd

Andrew Stephens, Walhalla Goldfields Railway and former Economic Development Officer, Latrobe Shire Council

Phil Stone, General Manager City Development, Latrobe City Council

Donna Taylor, Co-ordinator Business Development, Latrobe City Council

Dr Natalie Thorne, Convenor, V/Line Users Group, Warragul

Chris Waites, Acting CEO, East Gippsland Shire Council

John Websdale, General Manager Development, Wellington Shire Council

Fiona Weigall, Manager Strategic Planning, East Gippsland Shire Council

11.2 Reports and studies consulted

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