

Media Release



Victorian
Farmers
Federation

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Murray Basin Rail Project must be completed as promised

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is calling on the Victorian and Federal Governments to commit to fully funding the Murray Basin Rail Project as originally outlined in the 2015 business case, including the promised increases in Tonne Axle Load (TAL) capacity and train speeds.

“Farmers are not interested in political point scoring from either side. A commitment was made over four years ago to build the Murray Basin Rail Project and we are still waiting for it to be completed,” said Mr David Jochinke, VFF President.

“V/Line was the lead agency responsible for the project and they completely mismanaged it. It is unacceptable that they have allowed the lines to fall into such disrepair. V/Line must be held accountable for their mistakes and delays.

“The international competitiveness of our \$1.5 billion Victorian grain industry relies on the productivity and efficiency of our supply chain. The conversion of old broad gauge rail lines to standard lines is critical to the efficient transport of grain and other products from North West Victoria to our ports.

“Failing to convert the Sea Lake and Manangatang rail lines to standard gauge effectively isolates these lines from the rest of the Victorian and interstate network, and undermines the efficiency gains of the entire network upgrade project.

“Most broad gauge trains in Victoria have already been converted to standard gauge in anticipation of the removal of broad gauge lines. The duplication of broad and standard gauge trains will increase costs, result in the underutilisation of grain storage sites along broad gauge lines, and push more freight onto our roads.

“For every year this project is delayed, Victorian farmers lose \$12 million in additional freight costs,” said Mr Jochinke.

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About the VFF

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) is dedicated to representing the interests of farmers and making a positive difference to their businesses and communities. We strive to create an environment for our members, our farmers, that enables profitable, safe, sustainable production to ensure an enduring social licence in a community that respects and values the sector.

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