

# Media Release



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## Half-baked Murray Basin Rail Project hurting Victorian farmers

The Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF) says the Victorian Government's latest proposal for additional works on the state's outdated regional freight rail infrastructure must also include the Murray Basin Rail Project as it was originally planned to help alleviate the pressures on farmers.

VFF Grains Group President Ashley Fraser said there is a vital need to unify Victoria's fragmented freight rail network.

"As long as we continue to operate on two separate rail gauges in Victoria, farmers and industry will be made to suffer with an outdated, costly and inefficient network."

"The Sea Lake and Manangatang lines must be converted to standard gauge, we can't accept anything less."

"Victorian farmers need a long-term vision for a unified, modern regional rail network," Mr Fraser said.

Mr Fraser said farmers are being unfairly disadvantaged along the broad gauge Sea Lake and Manangatang lines as grain buyers are drawn to grain silos located along standard gauge rail lines.

"Already this harvest season we're seeing buyers lean towards paying higher prices for grain at silos along the standard gauge Mildura line. It's a clear reflection of buyers avoiding the added cost of transporting produce to port via broad gauge rail lines."

"We're all for farmers receiving the best possible price for their produce, but we need to ensure a level playing field and as long as we continue to operate two different rail gauges, this isn't possible."

The VFF has requested the Victorian Government fund the completion of the full Murray Basin Rail Project in next week's State Budget. Regional Victoria deserves its fair share of the billions being spent on infrastructure projects.

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