

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio:	Transport Infrastructure
Witness:	Hon Jacinta Allan MP
Committee Member:	Mr Danny O'Brien MP
Page/s of transcript:	Thursday 17 December 2020, P. 8

Question:

Minister, the Regional Rail Revival project: what is the current completion date for the Shepparton and Warrnambool line upgrades, given they have both blown out already?

Minister, I am running out of time. Can I get on notice, then, the completion dates for the Warrnambool, Gippsland, north-east and Echuca line upgrades?

Answer:

The Australian and Victorian governments have invested more than \$4 billion in the Regional Rail Revival program, which is upgrading every regional passenger rail line and creating jobs and local supplier opportunities across Victoria.

The program is in full swing across the state:

Shepparton Line Upgrade

The Shepparton Line Upgrade has already delivered benefits for passengers, with Stage 1 of the project allowing 10 weekly services to be introduced in 2019, nearly a year ahead of schedule.

We have awarded a contract for the Victorian Government-funded Stage 2 of the project, with early works now underway and construction targeted for completion in late 2022.

This stage will allow more modern and comfortable VLocity trains to run on the line for the first time.

The Australian and Victorian governments recently funded \$400 million to deliver Stage 3 of the Shepparton Line Upgrade, which will allow faster services and deliver nine return weekday services.

Rail Projects Victoria is currently finalising the delivery strategy for Stage 3 of the project, with timelines to be announced in the coming months.

Warrnambool Line Upgrade

We have completed early works as part of Stage 1 of the Warrnambool Line Upgrade, which included upgrading 12 level crossings to feature boom gates, bells, lights and improved train detection technology, boosting safety and the first steps towards enabling VLocity trains to run on the line.

Construction on the major package of works for Stage 1 is also underway, delivering signalling upgrades and a crossing loop to allow a fifth weekday return service and better reliability along the line. Stage 1 of the project is targeted for completion in late 2021.

The Australian and Victorian governments recently funded \$260 million to deliver Stage 2 of the Warrnambool Line Upgrade, which will enable VLocity trains to travel to Warrnambool for the first time.

Rail Projects Victoria is currently finalising the delivery strategy for Stage 2 of the project, with timelines to be announced in the coming months.

Gippsland Line Upgrade

The Gippsland Line Upgrade has already delivered benefits for passengers, with level crossing upgrades enabling VLocity trains to travel to Bairnsdale.

The new rail bridge over the Avon River in Stratford was completed three months ahead of schedule in late 2020, delivering better service reliability and allowing trains to travel at up to 90 km/h in this section.

VicConnect – a consortium comprising UGL Limited, Decmil and Arup – will deliver the major package of works between Pakenham and Traralgon, which will deliver better reliability and a 40-minute off-peak frequency.

Early works including site investigations, procurement, engineering and design are underway with construction targeted for completion in late 2022.

North East Line Upgrade

Construction on the North East Line Upgrade commenced in early 2020 and is now three quarters complete after ARTC completed an accelerated program of works while trains weren't running due to the NSW and Victoria border closure.

More than 80 level crossings have been renewed and more than 80 rail bridges have been upgraded, giving passengers a smoother ride.

Being ahead of schedule has also enabled ARTC to deliver additional works on top of the original project scope, including upgrading an extra 20 rail bridges and renewing track turnouts at Violet Town and Seymour.

The Victorian Government is investing more funds to prepare the North East Line for VLocity trains, which will be delivered on completion of the project.

An additional \$10 million in joint Australian and Victorian Government funding will deliver critical upgrades to stabling at Albury Station to enable it to house VLocity trains overnight, bringing the total investment in the project to \$285 million.

The North East Line Upgrade is targeted for completion in mid-2021.

Bendigo and Echuca Line Upgrade

The Bendigo and Echuca Line Upgrade will deliver a modernised electronic train order system – the first of its kind in Victoria – to enable more frequent services for passengers in greater Bendigo and Echuca, and serve as a pilot program for a potential wider roll-out on Victoria's regional network.

The introduction of the new train order system enables the project to deliver two new weekday return services to Echuca, one more than previously committed, giving local passengers and visitors more travel choices.

The Victorian Government has also invested \$49.6 million in Bendigo Metro 3, including new stations at Goornong, Huntly, and Raywood, which are being delivered as part of the Bendigo and Echuca Line Upgrade.

Goornong locals will be the first to benefit from the project, with the new station on track to be delivered by the end of 2021.

Huntly Station is targeted for completion in mid-2022, a year ahead of schedule, with Raywood Station on track to follow in late 2022. These new stations will give people in these growing communities access to the train network close to where they live.

Work is also continuing on the track upgrade between Epsom and Echuca, with track condition assessments, inspections, site surveys and ecological field surveys of local flora and fauna underway. This information will be used to inform the design and construction of the project.

I trust this information addresses your questions regarding delivery timeframes for Regional Rail Revival.