



Media release

The Hon Terry Mulder MP

Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads

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Regional Rail Link works to kick off in July

Early track works on the Regional Rail Link will begin on 1 July, Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder announced today.

“Regional Rail Link will get started by moving part of the existing track between Sunshine and Tottenham to make way for the future country line tracks,” Mr Mulder said.

“The Regional Rail Link will mean V/Line’s country trains having a separate track for the first time to improve the reliability and capacity of the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines.

“Suburban trains will no longer be stuck behind country trains and vice versa.

“This will also mean that suburban trains on the Werribee, Sydenham and Craigieburn lines will be more reliable.”

Mr Mulder said the first construction works will be carried out in July, which would see a two-week closure of the Sydenham, Ballarat and Bendigo train lines.

Mr Mulder said during the two-week shutdown, from 1 to 18 July, essential maintenance works would also be carried out by V/Line on country lines and by Metro on suburban tracks. The Sunbury Electrification Project will also undertake track works and upgrade two stations.

“While the lines are shut down for two weeks over the school holidays, it is critical that V/Line and Metro take the opportunity to do some long-needed maintenance work,” Mr Mulder said.

“For far too long our rail network has been neglected. There has been insufficient basic maintenance and renewal.

“The Victorian Coalition Government has committed \$900 million over the next four years to maintaining our rail network.

“This temporary shutdown will allow construction and maintenance work on rail lines that can’t be undertaken while the trains are running.

“During the first two weeks in July, there will be a coordinated effort by V/Line, Metro and the Sunbury Electrification Project to make sure the country and suburban line maintenance, upgrades at Sunbury and Diggers Rest stations and preparation for the new Regional Rail Link occur concurrently.

The following works will take place during the two-week closure:

- The Regional Rail Link Authority (through Metro Trains Melbourne) will realign the Sydenham line tracks between Tottenham and Sunshine to make way for the new Regional Rail Link tracks.

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- Metro Trains Melbourne will undertake essential maintenance works to tracks, sleeper renewal, points and crossing works, overhead wiring, platforms, bridge and viaduct foundations and drainage, platform renewal at Middle Footscray station, station painting at Middle Footscray, Tottenham, Keilor plains, Watergardens and St Albans and pit renewals at St Albans and Ginifer stations.
- V/Line will undertake maintenance activities and major renewal and embankment works along both the Ballarat and Bendigo corridors;
 - Ballarat - stabilisation of the Ingliston Bank, stabilisation and drainage works to the Fiskin cutting
 - Bendigo – culvert renewal between Kangaroo Flat and Harcourt stations, essential maintenance works at Potts Road level crossing (between Malmsbury and Elphinstone stations)
 - Track maintenance, tamping of tracks, minor work on bridges, culvert cleaning works
- The Sunbury Electrification Project will undertake station upgrade works at Sunbury and Diggers Rest stations:
 - Sunbury – platform extension and renewal, yard track stabling works and refurbishing the existing station building
 - Diggers Rest – platform extension and renewal, refurbishing the existing station and car park construction
 - Installing new crossover track at Watergardens, overhead wire works, signalling works, track works to support signalling and level crossing works.

Mr Mulder said that coordinating these works during the July school holidays aimed to reduce future disruption for rail passengers and the community.

During the line closures, buses will replace V/Line trains on the Ballarat and Bendigo lines. V/Line long distance services will see a combination of train and bus services operate over this period: trains will continue to run between Ararat/ Maryborough and Ballarat, connecting with buses to Melbourne. Trains will also run between Swan Hill or Echuca and Bendigo and connect with buses to Melbourne.

Buses will also replace Metro trains on the Sydenham line between Albion and Footscray. Express buses will run from Albion and Sunshine direct to Flemington Racecourse station where passengers can continue their train journey via North Melbourne to CBD stations.

Over coming weeks, commuters will receive more information to help with journey planning during the July closures. Further information can be found at www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au or phone 131 638 (Sydenham line) or 136 196 (Ballarat and Bendigo lines).

Regional Rail Link is a new major rail line that will provide capacity for sufficient extra trains for thousands more passengers across the Melbourne and country rail networks in the peak period.

The \$270 million Sunbury Electrification Project will electrify the rail line from Watergardens to Sunbury and change the way trains on the Sydenham-Sunbury line currently operate. It will allow this line to carry more passengers and run more reliably, which is vital to the ongoing viability of Melbourne's broader train network.

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