

# CONVERSATION REPORT

NOVEMBER 2015 – REGIONAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government



# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
<b>01</b> SNAPSHOT OF THE ENGAGEMENT	<b>3</b>
<b>02</b> WHAT DID WE DO?	<b>5</b>
<b>03</b> WHAT DID REGIONAL COMMUNITIES TELL US?	<b>11</b>
<b>04</b> BREAKDOWN BY REGION	<b>13</b>
GIPPSLAND	13
GRAMPIANS	15
HUME	17
LODDON MALLEE	19
BARWON SOUTH WEST	21
<b>05</b> MEDIA	<b>23</b>
<b>06</b> APPENDIX 1	<b>25</b>
<b>07</b> APPENDIX 2	<b>27</b>

The Victorian Government recently undertook a community and stakeholder engagement program regarding the future of public transport throughout regional Victoria. This report details the approach taken and the findings.

## FOREWORD

THE REGIONAL TRANSPORT ADVISORY GROUP (RTAG) WAS FORMED IN JUNE 2015 TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE A COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT'S *REGIONAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN*. THE RTAG MET REGULARLY BETWEEN JULY AND OCTOBER 2015 AND HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM PUBLIC TRANSPORT VICTORIA (PTV), THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, JOBS, TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES (DEDJTR), V/LINE AND ITS OPERATORS TO PROVIDE A LINK BETWEEN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES AND THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT.

The *Regional Network Development Plan* will be the first ever long-term and state-wide strategy for public transport in regional Victoria. What we've learnt through this process is that many regions are facing similar challenges when it comes to public transport services and investment. A state-wide strategy that sets out the guiding principles and future direction for regional public transport is critical. While it's important to have a guiding vision, the plan will also enable transport solutions to be developed at a local level to meet the needs of regional communities.

Two very important selling points for attracting people and investment in regional Victoria are access to jobs and good transport connections. Regional cities become much more liveable when public transport works well. There is an opportunity to capture the advantages of regional cities to complement the metropolis of Melbourne – the *Regional Network Development Plan* will help to drive local economies and send the message that regional Victoria is open for business.

We have observed and participated in this engagement process with interest. It is one of the most extensive transport engagements ever undertaken in regional Victoria – 1,400 people in 38 regional locations

capturing more than 15,000 pieces of feedback – setting a new benchmark for future community and stakeholder engagement. We congratulate the Victorian Government for undertaking this most comprehensive process and for making such a firm commitment to listen to the views of people living and working in regional Victoria.

It was encouraging to see a range of government departments and transport delivery partners come together to deliver and participate in the engagement program – there was input from various sectors including health, transport, education, tourism and regional and economic development ensuring collaboration and understanding between different interests and responsibilities.

We encourage all levels of government and political parties to take note of the public sentiment captured through this engagement process and to consider the need for bi-partisan support to a long-term public transport plan in regional Victoria.

We would like to thank regional Victorians for coming out in numbers and participating in this process. You have demonstrated great passion for improved public transport outcomes and we will watch with interest as the Victorian Government develops and implements the *Regional Network Development Plan*.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORT ADVISORY GROUP



**Jaclyn Symes MP, Co-Chair**  
Member for Northern Victoria  
Hume and Loddon Mallee



**Richard Elkington, Co-Chair**  
Gippsland Regional  
Development Committee Chair  
Gippsland



**Bruce Anson**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Warrnambool City Council  
Barwon South West



**Patience Harrington**  
Chief Executive,  
City of Wodonga  
Hume



**Jo Bourke**  
Executive Director, Wimmera  
Development Association  
Grampians



**David McKenzie**  
Chair Committee for  
Greater Shepparton  
Hume



**Trevor Budge AM**  
Manager of Strategy,  
City of Greater Bendigo  
Loddon Mallee



**Judy Verlin AM**  
Former Chair, Committee  
for Ballarat  
Grampians



**Janet Dore**  
Board member of  
Geelong Authority  
Barwon South West

# 01

## SNAPSHOT OF THE ENGAGEMENT



1,700



ONLINE  
SURVEYS

20

IN DEPTH  
INTERVIEWS



670

ONLINE  
COMMENTS

102

SUBMISSIONS



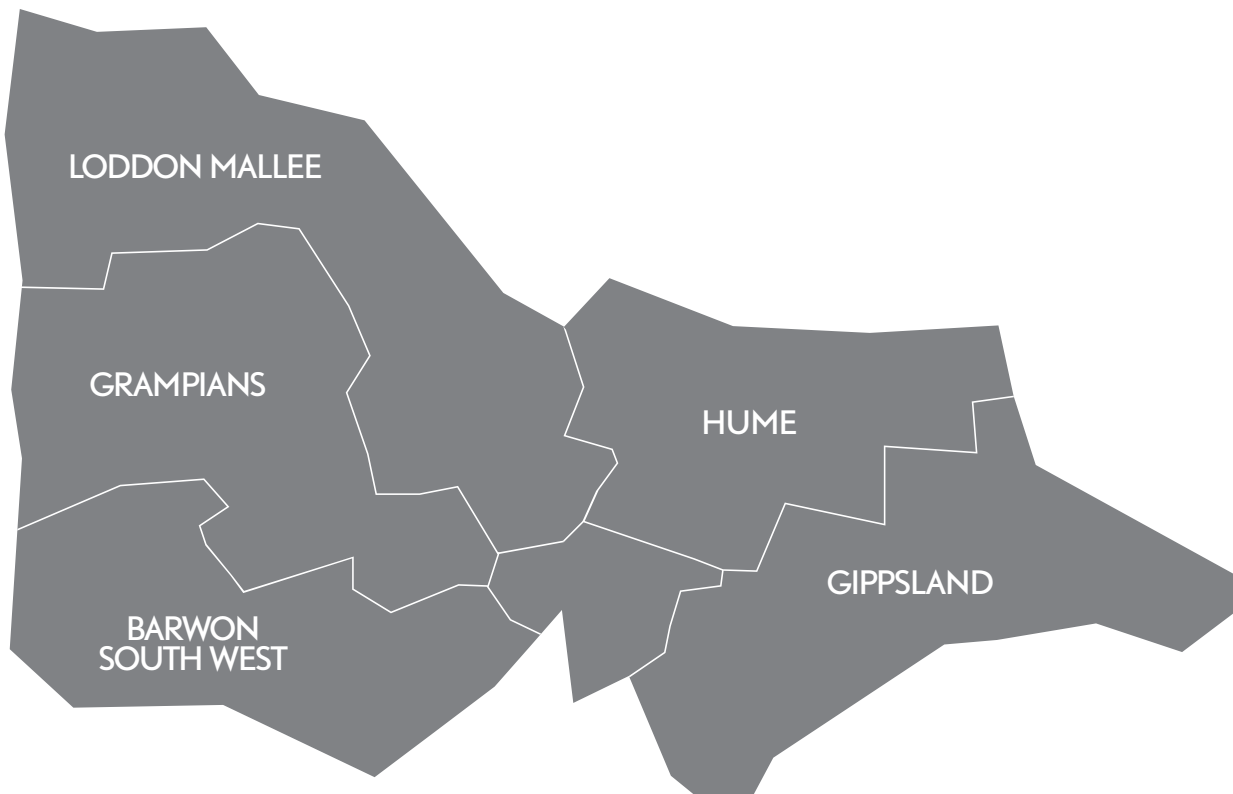
PIECES OF FEEDBACK

TOTAL

# 02

## WHAT DID WE DO?

THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS WAS BROKEN UP INTO GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE SPECIFIC ISSUES AND CHALLENGES THAT EXIST AROUND VICTORIA. THIS ALSO HELPED WITH REPORTING BACK TO COMMUNITIES THROUGH CONVERSATION SUMMARIES, WHICH WERE DEVELOPED AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORKSHOPS IN EACH REGION TO PROVIDE A SNAPSHOT OF THE KEY TOPICS DISCUSSED AND EXPLORED. THESE CONVERSATION SUMMARIES ARE AVAILABLE AT [PTV.VIC.GOV.AU/GETINVOLVED](https://ptv.vic.gov.au/getinvolved)





## WORKSHOPS

The consultation project team which included representatives from the Regional Transport Advisory Group, Public Transport Victoria, V/Line and Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, travelled around the state to deliver a series of community and stakeholder workshops (see Appendix 1 – *Workshop dates and locations*). The workshops were designed to capture as much feedback as possible on a range of topics. Participants were asked to identify what they valued with the current public transport service and what issues or challenges they faced. Table hosts helped to group the topics into themes, which were explored further in the second part of the session. Participants were then asked to look to the future and detail their ideas and suggestions for the service going forward.

More than 1,400 people attended across the 38 workshops held in locations throughout the Barwon South West, Gippsland, Grampians, Hume and Loddon Mallee regions. We received nearly 500 feedback forms from the workshops with 88 percent of respondents providing positive feedback on aspects such as the workshop format, timing and professionalism of staff running the sessions.

“Thank you for making this forum available. Thank you to all the hosts for their patience and understanding. They were excellent at keeping us on topic.”

– **Wonthaggi workshop**

---

“Workshop was well planned, well structured, gave extensive opportunity for everyone to express their views and encouraged in depth discussions.”

– **Maryborough workshop**

---

Those who felt the experience could be improved cited reasons such as the timing or location of the workshops as well as concern about the effectiveness of the workshops.

“Needed more time while at the same time do not want to go too late.”

– **Ballarat workshop**

---

“Query the effectiveness of workshops like this in the absence of indicative budgets available to implement the suggestions.”

– **Seymour workshop**

---

Generally, people felt the workshops were well run with many expressing their gratitude for the opportunity to have their say.

## GET INVOLVED WEBSITE

PTV launched its Get Involved website in June 2015, providing a one-stop shop where people could register for a workshop, participate in online discussion forums and fill out a survey regarding their travel needs. Conversation summaries were published progressively on the site as a reporting back mechanism for local communities. The website attracted around 11,700 visitors, with 670 comments received through the discussion forums and more than 2,000 interactions between participants.

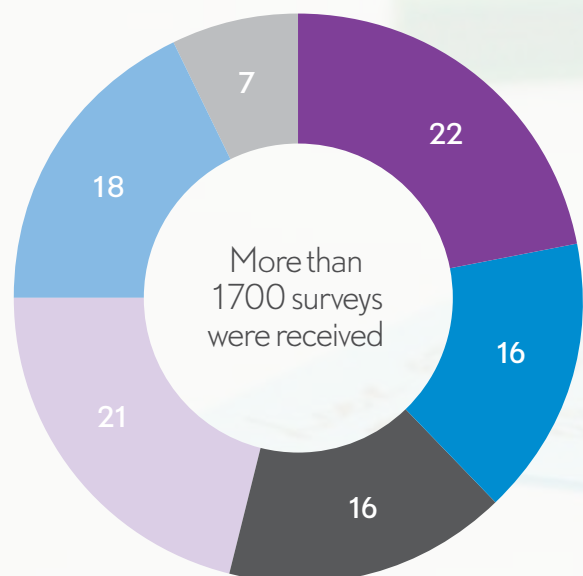
## SURVEYS

The survey was available online and reply paid hard copy surveys were made available at regional train stations and other locations such as parliamentary and council offices. Surveys were also sent out on request to people who contacted PTV through its call centre.

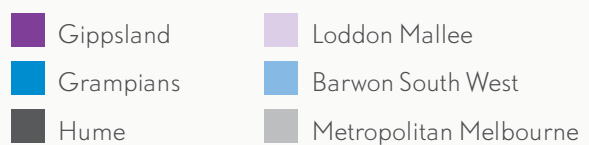
## SUBMISSIONS

As well as participating in the workshops or through the online channels, many organisations and individuals made detailed submissions. Just over 100 submissions were received via email, hard copy and over the telephone providing an additional opportunity for people to provide input. Many local Councils, advocacy groups and individuals have previously undertaken their own research and planning work and these documents are also being considered as important inputs into the *Regional Network Development Plan*.

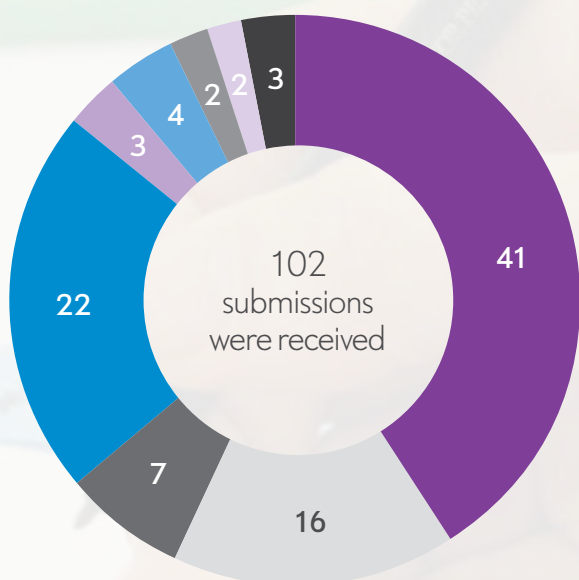
Surveys – Breakdown by region



Numbers (%)



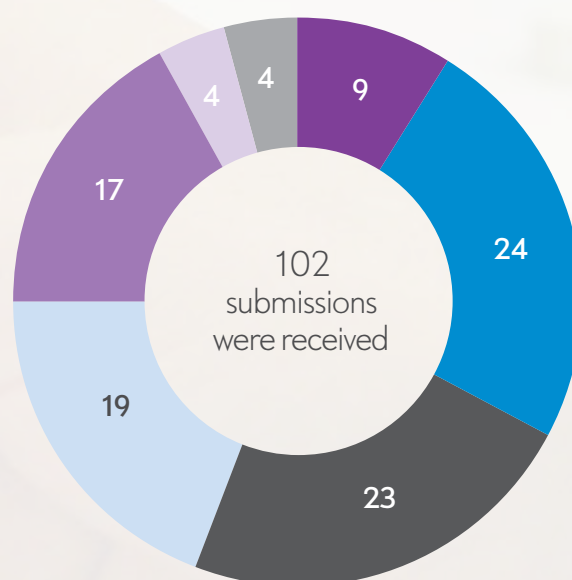
Submissions – Breakdown by participant groups



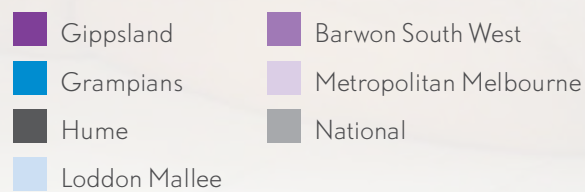
Numbers (%)



Submissions – Breakdown by region



Numbers (%)



## ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Before commencing the consultation process, PTV conducted in-depth interviews with community members in the Latrobe Valley, West Wimmera and Mildura to gain insight into people's perception and current use of existing public transport services. The findings from these in-depth interviews highlighted that many people prefer driving to catching public transport in regional Victoria. However, people who don't have access to a car rely on public transport as their only option for getting around, making it a vitally important service to local communities.

## MEETINGS AND BRIEFINGS

The project team met with a number of local organisations and industry bodies to brief them about the *Regional Network Development Plan* and seek their input into the process. Such groups included the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), Regional Cities Victoria and the Border Rail Action Group (BRAG).

"Our primary concern for transport is to enable Victorians facing disadvantage to access valuable opportunities in their lives, whether to work, learn, stay healthy, protect their rights, stay connected to family and friends and participate in community life."

– **Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) submission**

---

"Gippsland's current population of around 270,000 people is forecast to grow to 386,000 by 2041, with demand for public transport services already increasing rapidly."

– **Gippsland Local Government Network submission**

---

"The CfG advocates for a level and standard of passenger (commuter and tourist) service which will enhance the economic needs of the Geelong region and assist with Melbourne's burgeoning population growth."

– **Committee for Geelong submission**

---

## MELBOURNE WORKSHOP

A workshop was held in Melbourne with representatives from industry bodies such as VECCI, the RACV, the Committee for Melbourne and major hospitals to gain further insight into stakeholder and community needs.

## WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

- People from local communities
- Shires and councils including mayors, councillors and staff
- Bus, taxi and rail operators
- Business and trader organisations
- Health and education services
- Tourism industry
- Members of Parliament.



# 03

## WHAT DID REGIONAL COMMUNITIES TELL US?

ONE CLEAR MESSAGE FROM OUR 38 WORKSHOPS AND FEEDBACK CHANNELS WAS THAT PEOPLE IN REGIONAL VICTORIA VALUE THEIR PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

Regional communities told us they would like to use public transport more, but the main barriers to this are:

- frequency of services
- connectivity (services getting people to where they need to go, when they need to go)
- capacity (particularly overcrowding on trains)
- reliability of services
- timetabling.

All regions wanted more services to Melbourne that started earlier and finished later; and bus and train timetables that corresponded.

A major concern by passengers across all regions is **connectivity of services between regional centres and small towns**. Residents felt that the connections between trains and buses could be improved; and the services both around towns and between towns were very limited. Feedback from many regions focused on the fact that school buses should be used in their area during the day to run local bus services (to shopping precincts, medical precincts, educational precincts and train stations). If local connections could be improved this would definitely lead to greater use of public transport in regional Victoria.



Many regions focused on the desire to see better use of school buses during the day to run local bus services.

**Facilities, infrastructure and the on-board service** were other key factors that people across regions were concerned about. Bus shelters that need replacing, inadequate car parking at stations, inadequate toilet facilities and the actual comfort and cleanliness of trains – particularly for the long distance services that feature older rolling stock – were common areas of feedback. Storage for bikes and wheelchairs on both trains and buses/coaches was also a key issue. Passengers would like to use their time on public transport more productively with most regions raising the need for better connectivity on trains as well as business carriages.

The **inconsistent ticketing system across regional Victoria is causing frustration** – some places use myki and others use paper ticket systems. Sometimes passengers are required to purchase both (or multiple paper tickets) depending on the location.

**Communication is an area that could be improved.** People want up-to-date information at stations (to receive advice of changes to services/delays) and better promotion of public transport in the regions. Informing people about how they can use connecting services (catch a bus, then a train to Melbourne for example) is seen as really useful in encouraging more people to use these services. There is an opportunity to keep this conversation going – people in regional areas would like to see ongoing engagement and education about public transport in the regions.

By generally promoting public transport and its benefits, more people will use the services.

A consistent theme throughout the regions was that it's **not all about getting to Melbourne**. There is a need to focus on improving public transport within and between the regions. Regional centres offer a host of educational, work, medical and social opportunities and services. The economic and social boom in regional Victoria would continue to grow with improved access to regional centres.

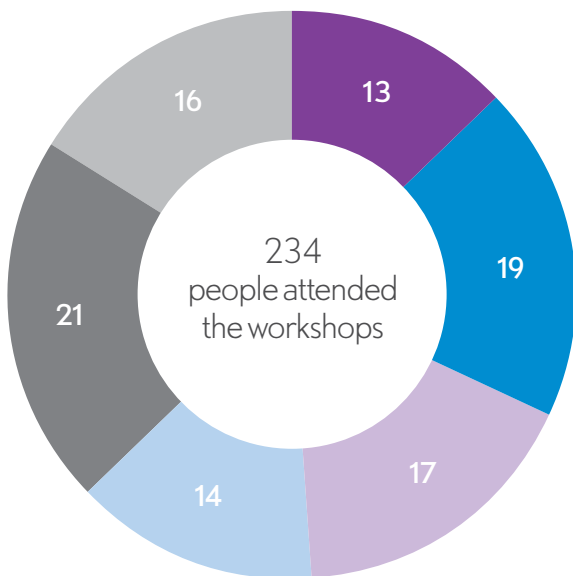
With an ageing population in the regions, the public transport system needs to support **universal access** that encourages independence. There are many people in regional communities living with a disability or who are socially disadvantaged – this demographic relies heavily on public transport and the consultation highlighted an opportunity to build confidence in the system by improving access for all.

A number of submissions and workshops talked about **freight**, its relationship to public transport and the need to consider industry. The topic was particularly prevalent in the north of the state where regional communities rely heavily on the rail and road freight industry to get their goods to market.

# 04

## BREAKDOWN BY REGION GIPPSLAND

### WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS



Numbers (%)



Population: 259,816\*



Train between Melbourne and Bairnsdale (via Traralgon).



Coaches service the townships of Traralgon, Moe-Yallourn, Morwell, Warragul, Sale, Bairnsdale, Drouin, Wonthaggi, Lakes Entrance, Maffra,



Leongatha and Churchill. All of these locations also have a town bus service, except for Leongatha.

\*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data 2011

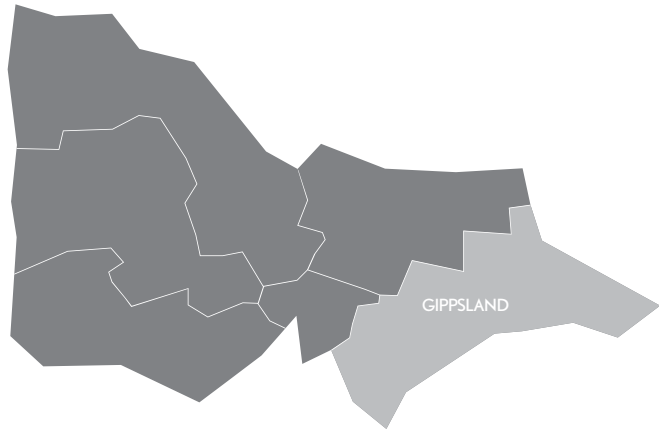
While people in Gippsland told us they appreciated their current public transport services, there was strong feedback that existing services could be improved. People would like to see more frequent services within the current timetable, but also more services running earlier/later in the day. Overcrowding on the train is an issue, with people wanting more services and more connections, particularly to smaller towns.

Participants commented that they really valued the train service from Melbourne to Bairnsdale, noting that Bairnsdale was without a train service between 1993 and 2004. Travelling on trains is generally seen to be a comfortable and relaxing way to travel. They valued their bus services too and there were suggestions for smaller, flexible bus services rather than traditional services to get people to where they needed to go. People also provided good feedback about the conductors and other frontline staff running the system.

“Staff are friendly, courteous and competent.”

“We need a more frequent train shuttle between Gippsland towns.”





## TOP FIVE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN GIPPSLAND

### Reliability and capacity

- Better reliability on the train service to Melbourne – not getting stuck behind metropolitan trains
- Improving the long journey time to Melbourne – having fewer stops on the line and fixing up the Avon River bridge

### Frequency

- More frequent services for the current timetable, particularly in the outbound direction
  - This would alleviate overcrowding
  - Faster service to Melbourne with fewer stops on the line
- More services in major regional centres
  - More frequent services between Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale

### Timetabling

- Longer operating hours – services that start earlier and finish later.
  - Many mentioned about getting to Melbourne for an event and wanting to be able to then catch the train home after the event

### Connectivity/services

- Improving connections between Gippsland towns, including between South Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley
- Improving integration of services – trains and buses (currently limited coordination) and taxis
- More frequent bus services between regional centres and smaller towns (could be smaller flexible services to meet local needs)
  - Connecting people with medical centres, retail and educational institutions (including weekends)
  - Use school buses during the day for town services
- Reinstating train services to South Gippsland

### Ticketing

- Having to buy both paper ticket and myki (for some journeys) is confusing. Need better integration of ticketing.

Other issues included:

- Facilities
  - Improve bus shelter facilities, toilets at stations, car parking – people have to travel by car to get to the station
- Lack of bus services between towns and regional centres
- People travelling with bicycles
  - Allowing bikes on buses would improve service integration, allow people to access local bike trails.

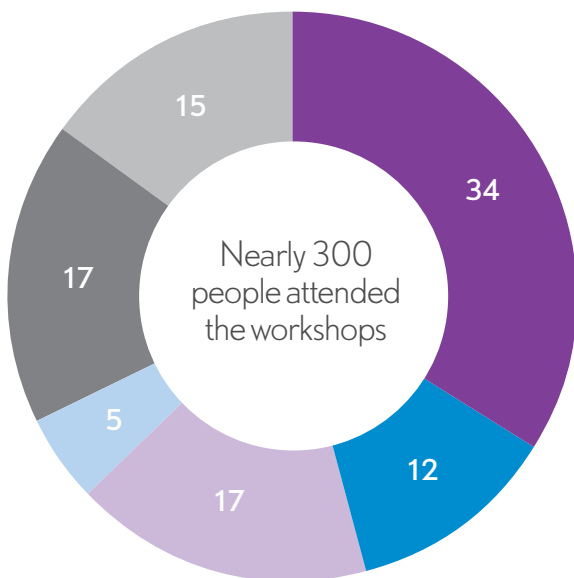
“I don’t have a car so I rely on public transport. I really enjoy catching the bus. I know most of the people on the bus these days and I know the drivers. Overall I think public transport in the area is good but the most annoying thing is that the bus timetables don’t match up. There is a lot of waiting around for connections if you want to get to the surrounding towns.”

– Mark, Morwell

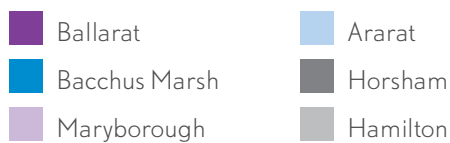
# BREAKDOWN BY REGION

## GRAMPIANS

### WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS



Numbers (%)



Population: 224,430\*



Train service between Melbourne and Ararat (via Ballarat and to Maryborough).



The following major towns have access to coach and town bus services: Ballarat, Horsham, Bacchus Marsh, Maryborough, Ararat, Hamilton, Stawell.



\*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data 2011

Many participants in the Grampians region raised positive aspects of existing services such as the helpfulness of V/Line staff and bus drivers and the use of modern, comfortable trains and buses. People generally liked using public transport – particularly train services – noting that it is the preferred way to travel. Many workshop participants noted that travelling by train is quicker than driving.

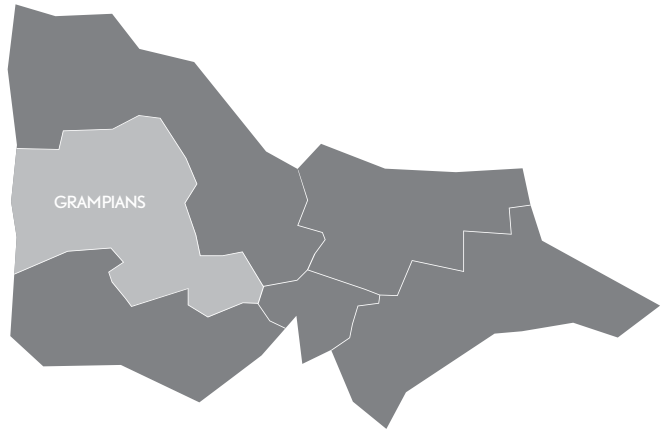
“Great relaxed way to travel on either a bus or train.”

“Trains are clean and comfortable.”

While the community recognised there were good public transport services in the region, there was a belief that these could still be improved. One of the most common concerns raised was around frequency and reliability of services, both on the Ballarat train line and for buses between regional centres and smaller towns. These services were about connecting people with medical centres, educational facilities and events, particularly on weekends.

Communities were also very much in favour of better use of existing transport resources i.e. school buses and other community transport, to provide greater flexibility and choice in services around and between towns.

“Community transport programs can work well... and would work better with support.”



## TOP FIVE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE GRAMPIANS

### Frequency

- More frequent services on the Ballarat line, including from Bacchus Marsh. People felt more frequent services would help to reduce overcrowding and improve comfort levels
- More train services to Maryborough and Ararat to boost tourism, jobs and economic development
- Reinstating passenger rail services past Ararat to Horsham

### Reliability

- More frequent services for current timetable, particularly in the outbound direction
  - Improve reliability on Ballarat line

### Communication

- Improve information and communication on services – more frequent, current information

### Connectivity/services

- Provide more bus services between rural and regional towns
- More bus services to Bendigo, Ballarat and Maryborough
- Opening up rail lines between the regions
- Improve connections between bus and train services
- More bus services to connect people with medical services in regional centres and Melbourne, educational institutions and for sporting events and tourism opportunities, particularly on weekends
- Improve connectivity to Horsham and Mt Gambier
- Use school buses during the day – improve local connections around town for the elderly
- Better connections to support tourism – currently there's no bus service for Horsham-Halls Gap-Grampians Peaks Trail

### Timetabling

- Longer operating hours – services that start earlier and finish later so people can get to work/school/university and social events earlier and come home later in evening.

Other issues included:

- Bus stop shelters, improved footpaths for greater accessibility
- Transport links – good links would improve liveability in small communities
- Ticket prices – significant price difference Melbourne–Ballarat; Melbourne–Bacchus Marsh
- On-board train facilities – providing WiFi and better luggage storage.

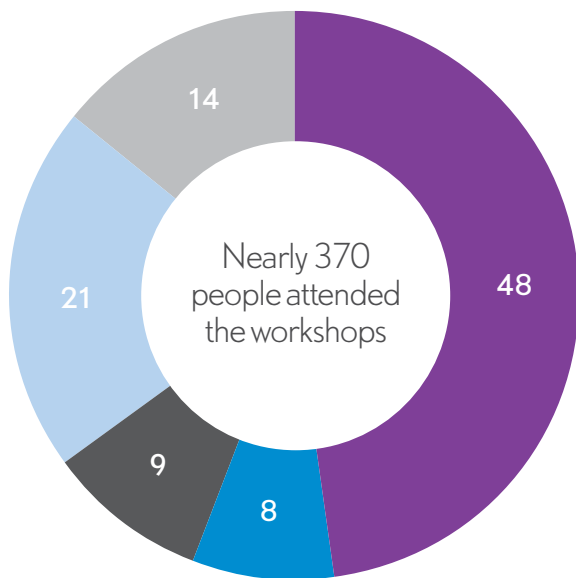
“I ride my bike anywhere I need to go unless it's raining. I like catching the bus as well. The drivers are really chatty and friendly and it only costs me \$1.10 for two hours. I also catch the bus down to Melbourne with my bike in a box in the luggage space. If I had a car I would still catch the bus every now and then, just to have a chat to the drivers. I'd still catch the bus to Melbourne – petrol is too expensive.”

– Reece, Horsham

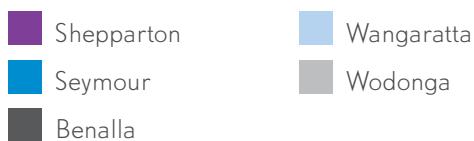
# BREAKDOWN BY REGION

## HUME

### WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS



Numbers (%)



Population: 266, 471\*



Train service from Melbourne over the NSW border to Albury and a train service between Melbourne and Shepparton (via Seymour).



The following major towns have access to coach and town bus services: Shepparton – Mooroopna, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla, Wallan, Yarrawonga, Kilmore, Seymour and Cobram.

\*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data 2011

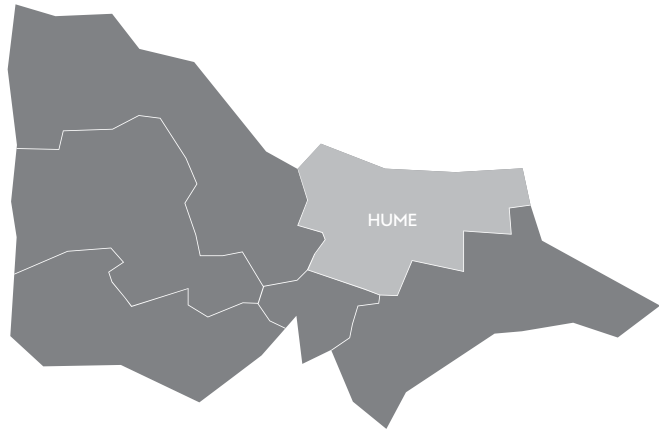
The community in the Hume region value existing services – the frequency of train services between Seymour and Melbourne attracted positive comments from people in nearby towns. However, there was a strong sense that train services in Hume are lacking compared with what is offered on the commuter lines between Melbourne and Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Traralgon.

Another main concern was the need for more local bus services within major centres and services to smaller towns, particularly connecting east to west. Where those services do exist, residents wanted the frequency increased. Passengers also raised concerns about both the frequency and timetabling of services to and from Melbourne, with requests for later services.

“Later trains required from Melbourne on weekends.”

“The need for much better cross-regional connectivity, east west, not just to Melbourne.”

“Connecting small regional towns together not just large cities.”



## TOP FIVE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN HUME

### Reliability

- Greater reliability of services; improving the long journey time and on-board experience when travelling to Melbourne by train

### Frequency

- More frequent services – suggestions to run shuttle services between Shepparton and Seymour and also Albury and Seymour to achieve greater frequency

### Timetabling

- Longer operating hours – services that start earlier and finish later
  - Many mentioned about getting to Melbourne for an event and wanting to be able to then catch the train home after the event.

### Connectivity

- Better east-west connections within the region
- Need for more connections to Melbourne
- Need for better/more cross-regional connections and services i.e. services between Shepparton and surrounds to Bendigo

### Facilities

- Better toilets at stations and on trains
- More car parking at stations
- Improved signage and lighting at stations
- Better food service on trains
- Cleaner trains
- Help people to use their time productively on trains by providing WiFi and powerpoints.

Other issues included:

- Unified ticketing system instead of both paper tickets and myki
- High fare costs
- Access to public transport for people with disability or mobility issues
  - Don't feel there is easy and safe access i.e. steep ramps, stairs
  - Difficult when service is changed from train to coach
- Improve ways to travel with bicycles
  - Can't take on a coach (if service changes)
  - Some services don't accept bicycles – not good for accessing local bike trails and tourism
- Provide flexible and innovative community transport options
  - Making better use of existing resources like school buses
  - Use community buses for 'once a week' services.

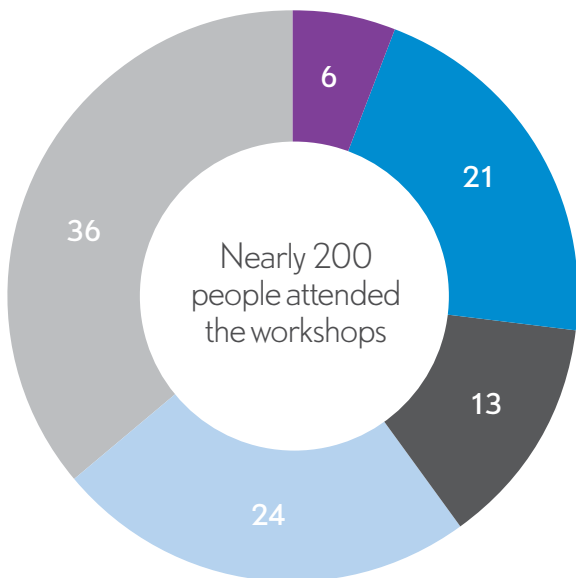
“Coaches make train travel hard for people with a disability.”

“Use school buses and drivers between school times.”

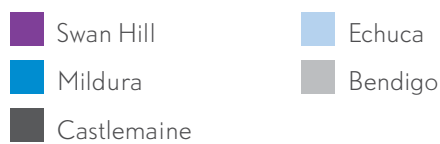
# BREAKDOWN BY REGION

## LODDON MALLEE

### WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS



Numbers (%)



Population: 309,349\*



Train services from Melbourne to Swan Hill and Echuca (via Bendigo).



The following major towns have access to coach services: Bendigo, Castlemaine, Echuca, Gisborne, Kyabram, Kyneton, Swan Hill, Gisborne. All have a town bus service, excluding Kyabram.

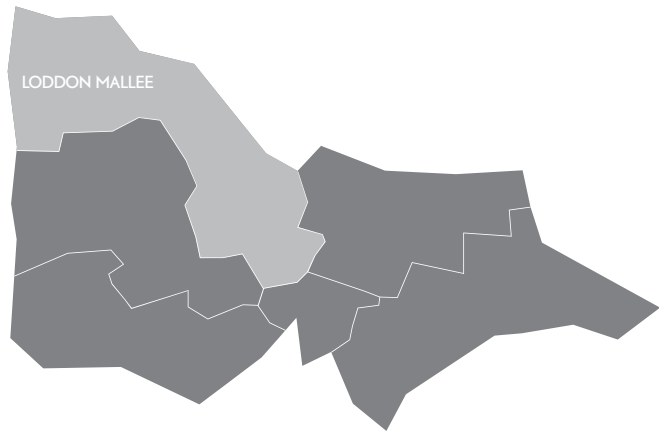


\*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data 2011

The feedback received throughout the Loddon Mallee region was particularly diverse. This is not surprising given the size of the region and the characteristic differences between the major centres of Bendigo, Swan Hill, Echuca and Mildura. A consistent theme across the region was that people would like to see increased linkages between smaller towns and regional centres. Essentially there was a call for greater coverage and frequency of public transport services to improve travel within the region, rather than focussing on getting people to Melbourne. Many still recognised that it was important to get to people to and from Melbourne – particularly young people who may be living away from home for study or work purposes.

There was a great level of enthusiasm for public transport in Bendigo where people felt there was an opportunity to make public transport the number one choice for travel. Also, people felt there would be substantial benefits to considering ‘active transport’ – walking and cycling – as part of the region’s public transport planning, particularly in Mildura and Bendigo.

The need for long-term planning was a key theme raised within the region – thinking ahead to ensure public transport planning is linked to land use planning and expected growth trends.



## TOP FIVE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN LODDON MALLEE

### Connectivity/services

- Improve linkages and connections between rural towns and centres in the region, particularly between Bendigo and other regional cities and towns
- Improve frequency and coverage of local bus services, including linkages and routes to community services, local hospitals, schools, train stations or retail outlets (particularly relevant in Echuca)
  - Could use school buses for local services during the day
  - Services that allowed people to access work and universities as well as community infrastructure were seen as vital
  - Improve linkages to Mildura airport (including buses and taxis) in terms of frequency, availability and cost
  - Extend service times and improve service connections
  - Open up rail lines between the regions and to Mildura

### Reliability and capacity

- Reliability of train services to Melbourne
  - Additional train carriages to boost capacity
- Improving journey time to Melbourne

### Frequency

- Improve frequency or connection times for links to other towns and cities in the region
- Increased train services on the Swan Hill and Echuca lines
  - This would help to generate tourism for the river towns
  - Many rural people will drive up to two hours to Bendigo to catch the train to Melbourne, because of greater frequency of train services from Bendigo to Melbourne

### Timetabling

- Linking trains and bus timetables – problem in all areas – connections are missing, particularly a problem in Echuca
- Longer operating hours – services that start earlier and finish later
  - Many mentioned about getting to Melbourne for an event and wanting to be able to catch the train home after the event
- More services to cater for demand in the counter peak direction i.e. from Castlemaine into Bendigo

### Access and equity, infrastructure improvements

- Stations need improving – toilets, shelter, car parks
- Bus stops that lacked shelter
- Access onto buses and between platforms 1 & 2 at Bendigo Station is difficult
- Toilets on the coach to Melbourne not easy for aged to use
- Access for people with a disability on buses is difficult (when trains are cancelled).

Other issues included:

- Rail freight – 23-tonne axle loading not just for passenger rail but for freight for the Mildura line.
- Ticketing – myki works well and is convenient where available but needs to be rolled out state-wide
- Improve information and communication around services
- Tourism – many respondents stated their local area needs to be seen as a destination, and that services should not only be designed for commuters
- For Castlemaine, commuter connection now at Footscray instead of North Melbourne is inconvenient
- Cross border issues make it difficult for operators.

“Access to platform 2 in Bendigo is difficult with pram/wheelchair/ lots of luggage.”

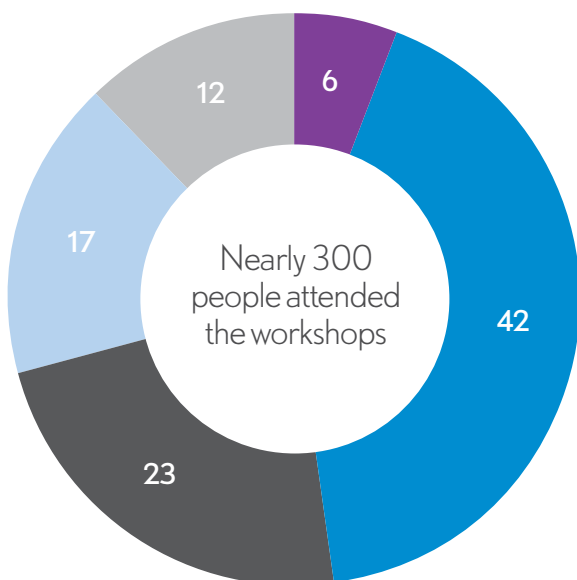
“I have about 50 itinerant workers and it’s hard for them to get around if they don’t have a car. There’s a bus service that runs down the highway but that’s 3km away. The farms on the highway find it easier to get workers because they can just use the bus. An “on demand” service would really work around here.”

– Tim (farmer), Mildura

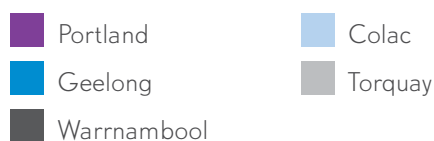
# BREAKDOWN BY REGIONS

## BARWON SOUTH WEST

### WHO ATTENDED THE WORKSHOPS



Numbers (%)



Population: 387,100\*



**Train service between Melbourne and Warrnambool (via Geelong). 10 minute peak and 20 minute inter-peak average frequency between Melbourne and South Geelong.**



**Coach service: Geelong, Warrnambool, Colac and Portland.**



**Town bus service: Geelong, Lara, Drysdale – Clifton Springs, Leopold, Torquay – Jan Juc, Ocean Grove – Barwon Heads, Colac, Warrnambool and Portland.**

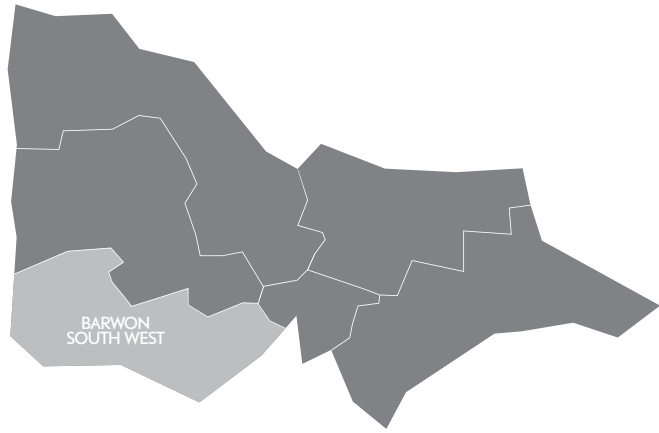
\*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics census data 2011

The Barwon South West region is home to Victoria's largest regional centre, Geelong. Given the size of Geelong and its surrounding suburbs, the feedback centered on offering a more commuter or suburban service for getting to and from Melbourne and also around Geelong itself. Recent changes to bus routes around Geelong were a key focus. Participants expressed concern about the changes while others provided positive feedback. A review is underway to determine the effectiveness of the new routes.

While trains are relatively frequent between Geelong and Melbourne, those living in townships beyond Geelong are advocating for more frequent services. This could be realised by introducing a shuttle service between Geelong and Warrnambool to boost the current offering of three daily return passenger services to four in the short-term and five in the long-term.

Close to half of the participants' comments and responses related to issues of service frequency, carrying capacity, geographic coverage and public transport operating hours. Those from areas outside Geelong said it was difficult to make a day-trip to Melbourne.





## TOP FIVE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN BARWON SOUTH WEST

### Frequency

- Increased frequency of train services between Geelong and Warrnambool
- More frequent train services on weekends
- More frequent town bus services

### Timetabling

- Related to this issue were timetables which did not meet the needs of people travelling for business or medical reasons who needed to arrive at a specific time.
- Extending bus operating hours so there are services available earlier in the morning and later in the evening, as well as weekends

### Services/connectivity

- Local bus routes, particularly where there have been changes, so the elderly can access medical appointments, shops and other services
- More inter-city bus services i.e. getting people from Portland to Warrnambool to access education and health services
- Coverage between the coastal towns (Anglesea etc.) to transport and shopping hubs such as Waurin Ponds
- Some participants identified the need for greater and more frequent connections between regional cities and towns, especially between Hamilton, Warrnambool and the coastal towns as well as to Ballarat
- Some suggested that additional services should be provided on a seasonal basis (to support tourism) and for special events
- Connections between buses and trains are poor. People would drive to Geelong to take a train to Melbourne rather than take public transport for the whole trip

### Public transport experience

- On-train issues raised included unclean toilets, poor quality food and drinks, out-dated carriages, lack of WiFi access and storage and security of luggage
- Issues concerning stations included security concerns, inadequate parking, general maintenance and toilet facilities
- Shortage of adequate bus shelters as well as security of bus shelters

### Communications

- There was also a need for better information about timetables, ticketing and communications about changes and disruptions.

Other issues included:

- Unified ticketing system instead of both paper tickets and myki
- Access
  - While not mentioned as often as some other issues, there was a need for better access for people with disabilities. Motorised scooters/ wheelchairs often do not fit through train doors or on buses. However, this varies – some say there is good access to buses for the disabled or elderly.

“Increase frequency of Bellarine town bus services including weekends.”

“Pre 9.00am arrival in Melbourne suits people on business trips more than after 9.30am.”

“People who need to use a ‘walker’ cannot enter the current rail carriage (door too narrow).”

“Cannot get disability scooter on trains.”

# 05

## MEDIA

THERE HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE MEDIA INTEREST AND COVERAGE OF THE *REGIONAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLAN* ILLUSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ENGAGEMENT TO REGIONAL COMMUNITIES.

Many regional newspapers that have covered the topic of public transport extensively include the Ballarat Courier, Bendigo Advertiser, Border Mail, Geelong Advertiser, Shepparton News, Sunraysia Daily, Wangaratta Chronicle as well as papers in the Gippsland area. In addition, coverage has been generated in smaller local papers as well as through radio and regional television.

Generally, the coverage has focused on the fact that regional Victorians are being presented with a chance to have their say, discuss their issues, raise concerns and voice ideas on how to improve their public transport services. The coverage has also focused on key issues and advocacy campaigns for the different regions such as bus timetabling in Geelong, reliability issues on the north-east train service, the Shepparton All Aboard campaign, the operation of the Ballarat line and the need for more passenger train services in the south-west.

Coverage has also focused on the fact that the *Regional Network Development Plan* is looking at the short, medium and long-term priorities for regional public transport services. The amount of media coverage illustrates the importance of this engagement process to local communities and that they will be extremely interested to hear the progress going forward with the *Regional Network Development Plan*.

The RTAG has been instrumental in raising awareness of the *Regional Network Development Plan* in their regional communities, particularly through the media.

**BALLARAT COURIER**

## **RAIL FUTURE TO BE DISCUSSED ON MONDAY**

Ballarat VIC, General News – 17 Jul 2015

**WANGARATTA CHRONICLE**

## **HAVE YOUR SAY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Wangaratta VIC, General News – 17 Jul 2015

**WIMMERA MAIL TIMES**

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORT: REGION TO RESPOND**

Horsham VIC, General News – 20 Jul 2015

**GEELONG ADVERTISER**

## **REGIONAL TRANSPORT IN FOCUS**

Geelong, VIC, General News – 20 May 2015

**HEPBURN SHIRE ADVOCATE**

## **MEETING LOOKS AT SERVICES IN SHIRE**

Hepburn VIC, General News – 22 Jul 2015

**WEEKLY TIMES**

## **GET ON BOARD TO BOOST TRANSPORT IN THE BUSH**

Weekly Times, Melbourne, General News – 29 Jul 2015

**SHEPPARTON NEWS**

## **TRANSPORT WORKSHOP IMPORTANT FOR REGION**

Shepparton VIC, General News – 25 Jul 2015

**EAST GIPPSLAND NEWS**

## **TRANSPORT TALKS START HERE**

East Gippsland, VIC, General News – 17 Jun 2015

**WANGARATTA CHRONICLE**

## **GET ON TRACK TO PUBLIC FORUM**

Wangaratta VIC, General News – 31 Jul 2015

**SHEPPARTON NEWS**

## **POSITIVE STEP IN LONG JOURNEY**

Shepparton VIC, General News – 01 Aug 2015

**WANGARATTA CHRONICLE**

## **ANOTHER CHANCE TO HAVE A SAY**

Wangaratta VIC, General News – 07 Aug 2015

**SEYMOUR TELEGRAPH**

## **WHAT YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT**

Seymour VIC, General News – 12 Aug 2015

# 06

## APPENDIX 1 WORKSHOP DATES AND LOCATIONS

GIPPSLAND	
LOCATION	DATE
Warragul	23 June 2015
Sale	24 June 2015
Bairnsdale	25 June 2015
Bairnsdale*	26 June 2015
Traralgon*	13 July 2015
Traralgon	14 July 2015
Wonthaggi	14 July 2015
Leongatha	16 July 2015

LODDON MALLEE	
LOCATION	DATE
Swan Hill	21 August 2015
Mildura*	24 August 2015
Mildura	24 August 2015
Castlemaine	25 August 2015
Echuca*	26 August 2015
Echuca	26 August 2015
Bendigo	27 August 2015
Bendigo*	28 August 2015

GRAMPIANS	
LOCATION	DATE
Ballarat*	20 July 2015
Ballarat	20 July 2015
Maryborough	21 July 2015
Ararat	22 July 2015
Horsham	27 July 2015
Hamilton	28 July 2015
Bacchus Marsh	13 August 2015

HUME	
LOCATION	DATE
Shepparton*	30 July 2015
Shepparton	30 July 2015
Seymour	7 August 2015
Benalla	10 August 2015
Wangaratta*	11 August 2015
Wangaratta	11 August 2015
Wodonga	12 August 2015

BARWON SOUTH WEST	
LOCATION	DATE
Portland	31 August 2015
Geelong*	4 September 2015
Warrnambool	8 September 2015
Warrnambool*	9 September 2015
Colac	9 September 2015
Geelong	10 September 2015
Torquay	11 September 2015

OTHER	
LOCATION	DATE
Melbourne*	3 September 2015

*\*Denotes a stakeholder workshop*





