

Rural Victoria Hung Out to Dry

The saga continues on the Murray Basin Rail Project (MBRP) with Minister Allan finally admitting to the rumours that have been rife since mid last year.

Rail freight Alliance first raised concerns with Minister Allan at their last June Conference over the rumours that the project was out of money. “Rumours of budget overruns have been wide spread, Minister Allan presented at our conference last year and said none of these rumours were true and she felt like she was playing Wacka Mole against such rumours”, RFA Chair Cr Milne said “Even the current Chair of the Rail Freight Advisory Council and immediate VFF Past President and, Mr. Peter Toohey, stated the MBRP would be fully complete in time for the 2019 harvest.”

The MBRP was broken into five projects and due for completion before the end of 2018. Today (Mid 2019) stage 2 remains uncompleted.

“After a comprehensive study, 2 business plans and the sale of Rural Finance Corporation to fund part of the project, this is what we are left with. Poorly scoped, mismanaged and poorly constructed, what promised so much for Victoria is now a complete mess. A half-done project, leaving freight paths compromised and the work that has been done to date has left the track in a worse state than before.” Cr Milne said

“It leaves me to wonder, what is the future for Victorian exports and our regions, this project was entrusted to Minister Allan and she has failed to deliver. This project was to be a game changer and bring prosperity to the regions - Once again rural Victoria has been hung out to dry.” Cr Milne stated

“Is the Victorian Government’s asset management so poor that 6 months after a completion date, that urgent works are needed? The state has received funds to complete a project, and through mismanagement and waste they have come up short, now the choice is go cap in hand to the federal government or not complete the project, the only ones short changed are the Victorian people.” Cr Milne states

RFA met with Minister for Freight and Ports Melissa Horne last week raising funding and project concerns with her. “Now is time for Minister Horne to fight for the future of rail freight and get this project the funding it needs to be completed and repair the substandard works that have been done to date.

ENDS

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