



Rail Freight
Alliance

Murray Basin Region Freight Transport Project
Position Paper



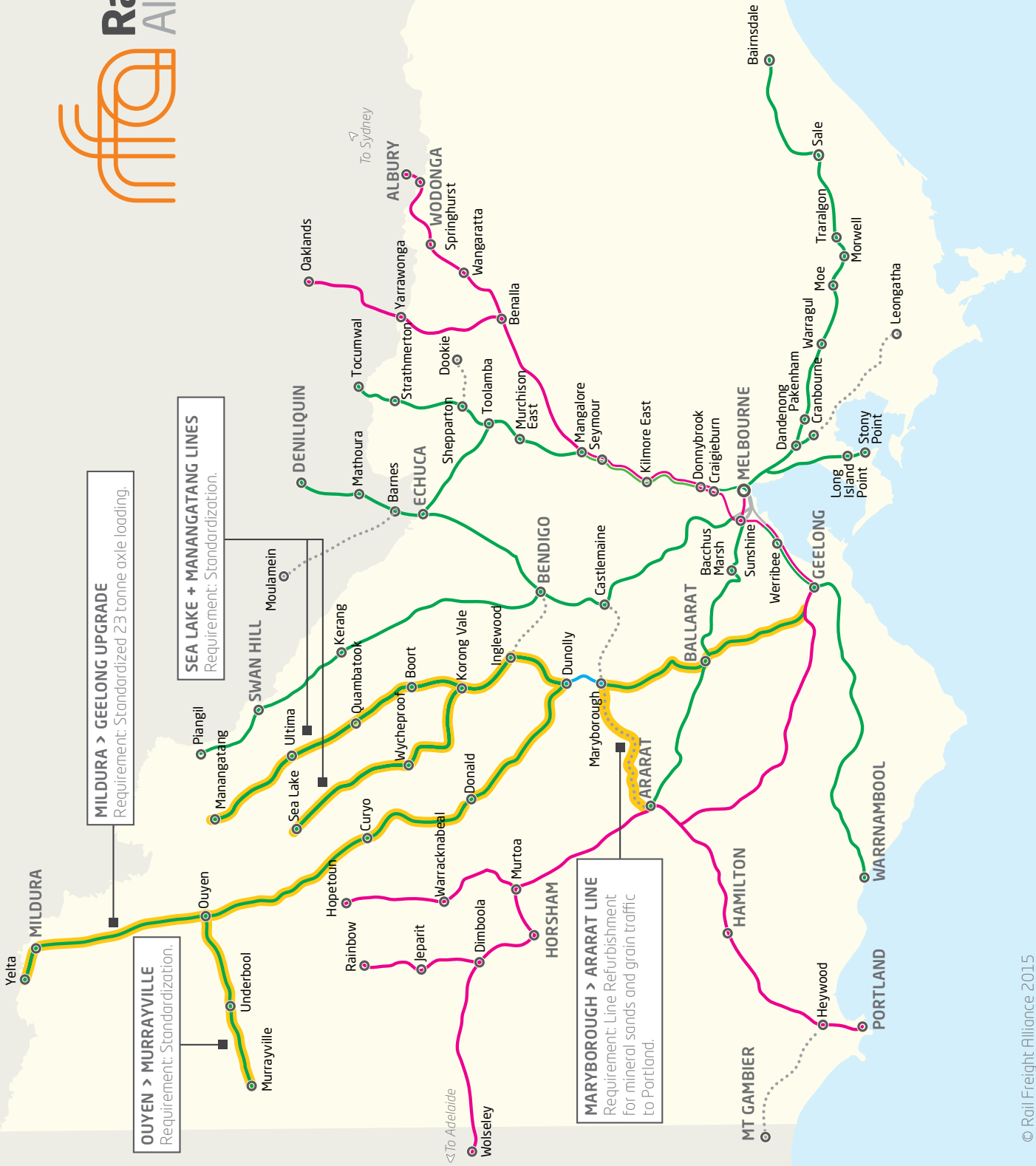
Position Paper



The Rail Freight Alliance considers the Murray Basin Region Freight Transport Project as an intergenerational infrastructure commitment and of Nation Capacity Building Significance.

The Rail Freight Alliance has considered the GHD Report regarding the Murray Basin Transport Plan based on the agreed criteria listed below.

- Investment in an intergenerational project
- Rail network solution
- Sustainable freight transport solution
- Access to, and competition between, the three (3) ports
- Maximum axle loading capacity
- Flexible rail freight capacity



Inter-Generational Project

The Alliance believes that it is vital that this project is built to a standard not only for today, but for future generations. To build a 23 tonne axle loading from Mildura to Geelong will allow the transcontinental line to be factored into future projects. If this is not done as part of this project, it will diminish the future viability of such an extension.

Rail Network Solution

The cost to the State and Local Road Network would increase enormously under Options 1 and 2. Further, Grain Assets established for Rail Network would become stranded. For example, the Sea Lake Line currently has significant accumulation and rail out loading facilities at Sea Lake, Nullawil, and Charlton.

Port Access and Competition

The Ports of Portland, Geelong and Melbourne must be accessible from the Mildura Line and there must be competition between the Ports under the chosen route.

Flexible Freight Capacity

The Alliance believes that a flexible freight capacity should also be a focus of this investment. There is a current and growing need for a flexible freight solution. Grain and Mineral Sands need the ability to be transported in bulk or containers.

Rail Freight Alliance Preferred Option

Members believe Victoria would be best served with a combination of options 3 & 4. The Alliance suggests fully implementing Option 3, standardisation of the Murrayville Line and refurbishment of the standard gauge Ararat to Maryborough Line.

Murrayville Line

The Alliance believes the Murrayville Line should be considered as part of a Network Solution to Freight from the Region. A significant Freight Task exists within this area, evidenced by the recent announcement of accumulation facilities along this line.

Maryborough to Ararat Line

The Refurbishment of the Line between Maryborough to Ararat would allow for Mineral Sands and Grain Traffic to Portland. We recommend that some levelling and realignment be considered as part of this scope of works.

Axle Loadings

Maximum economic axle loading capacity should be invested in this project.

The Mildura Line must be upgraded to 23 tonne axle loading. Further, the Alliance requests that the government give consideration to increasing axle loadings to 23 tonne on the Sea Lake and Manangatang Lines.

Members consider that while Standardisation of these lines will bring competition, increased axle loadings will increase efficiencies of train movements.

Level Crossings

Municipalities represented along the line also discussed the need for a range of level crossing upgrades, and to this end have indicated their willingness to work with State Government to investigate the issues at Level Crossings further to improve efficiencies along the Line and to improve safety outcomes more generally.

Project Importance

The Alliance believes that the project must be implemented as a whole and that the project should not be staged. A fully networked Rail System for Western Victoria will support and provide surety for future Freight and Logistic Investment in the Region.

