

Rail Freight Alliance call Industry Forum on Murray Basin Rail Project

The Rail Freight Alliance convened an industry forum of stakeholders within the Murray Basin Rail Project (MBRP) footprint, in Melbourne last week.

The aim of the Murray Basin Rail Project was to deliver important upgrades to the Victorian Rail Network. To drive economic growth, create jobs and provide a major boost to the transport industry, agriculture sector and regional communities.

The project was to standardise the rail freight lines servicing the Murray Basin region in the north-west of Victoria also increasing axle loadings on those lines from 19 to 21 tonnes.

Companies made investments based on the Victorian government's commitment. A project that was due to be finished in 2018.

RFA Chair Glenn Milne said "Industry has invested millions of dollars in new locomotives, rolling stock conversion to standard gauge and warehousing and the silence from the Victorian Government on the future of this project is deafening. A project that was to be completed nearly a year ago is far from complete, the current state of the tracks has reduced freight capacity, increased freight costs, increased road freight, and industry are hearing nothing"

Industry all agreed that the capacity of the lines have been reduced as the increased tonnage on the line promised by the government has not been achieved and line speeds are significantly slower.

"What we know is there is less capacity on the track now than before the project started," RFA Chair said "The people that will wear the cost of this failure is the Victorian people, with increased freight cost and more trucks on the road network."

This project that promised so much has fallen far short. No amount of government spin can change the facts, Victorians have been deceived.

"The question on everyone's lips – would we have been better off if the track had just been left alone." Glenn Milne said

Rail Freight Alliance will continue working with Industry to get the result all Victorians deserve.

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