

Media Release

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Confirm rail service upgrades now

Indications that Ballarat rail commuters might have to wait till the end of 2014 before they know what benefit they might get from State Government rail infrastructure investment is unacceptable, according to the Committee for Ballarat.

Committee CEO, Doug Lloyd, said yesterday the \$4.3 million investment outlined last week to be included in today's State Budget was the result of joint representations from the Committees for Ballarat, Geelong and Wyndham.

He said that in responding to the representations, Premier Brumby made it clear that all regional rail services coming out of Southern Cross Station would benefit from the investment.

"In that case, it should be clear now how each of the regional lines to Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong will benefit from this welcome infrastructure development," Dr Lloyd said.

"Unfortunately, though, the Government is only outlining how many additional services will be available to Geelong as a result of the works. This is not good enough. There should be a clear indication now what these improvements will mean for Ballarat. We should not have to wait till 2014 to find out."

In foreshadowing the budget funding announcement, the Government revealed that the investment would provide for peak hour trains leaving from Geelong to Melbourne every 15 minutes by as soon as 2014.

However, a regional rail link spokeswoman was quoted as saying it was too early to say whether Ballarat would get extra train services similar to Geelong. "Timetabling and stopping patterns will be determined closer to project completion, based on an assessment of demand and travel patterns," the spokeswoman is quoted as saying.

"If it can be made clear what the benefits will be for Geelong then it can be made clear to the commuters and people of Ballarat what benefits we might expect as well," Dr Lloyd said.

"This Committee was part of the joint submission which helped deliver this outcome and the Premier announced at the time that there would be benefits for each of the regional centres involved. We now require proactivity from the regional rail authority to define the future benefits and timetable for Ballarat and other lines affected."

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