

CONNECTING PEOPLE VICTORIA 2026



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SAFE TRANSPORT FOR EVERY VICTORIAN

For over 80 years, Bus Association Victoria (BAV) has represented small, medium and large bus companies across Victoria.

These companies provide safe and efficient transport services that have kept our state moving through the depths of war, pandemic and economic depression.

They boast a safety record that is second to none and provide transport services to some of Victoria's most vulnerable and socio-economically disadvantaged residents.

Many of our members are based in regional Victoria and make an additional vital contribution to their communities through the economic stimulus they provide.

For these companies to continue to thrive, they need a state government that makes appropriate investments in services, reduces red tape and makes a real commitment to the negotiation of existing contracts.

BAV believes these commitments should be central to the policy platform of all political parties contesting the next election.

This document outlines these priorities and was developed following extensive consultation with relevant public transport stakeholders operators.

We call on all political leaders to make a commitment to enacting these policies and work with BAV in ensuring another 80 years of safe, smart and efficient public transport service delivery across Victoria.

Sincerely,



STUART LOCKE

President
Bus Association Victoria



PETER KAVANAGH

Executive Director
General Counsel
Bus Association Victoria

CONTINUE NEGOTIATING THE RENEWAL OF SPECIAL SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTS, REGIONAL ROUTE AND RURAL SCHOOL BUS CONTRACTS

BAV calls on all political parties to commit to retaining the current method of negotiating regional route, special school bus and mainstream school bus services.

There is substantial evidence that negotiated contracts deliver better outcomes for local communities that rely on these services, promote service continuity, and allow operators to respond effectively to local needs and conditions.

Any government policy that would see a handful of large companies operate the services would in result a loss of local community and economic development and would risk driving a race to the bottom on both wages and service quality. BAV members are embedded in their communities and understanding of their needs, any change would see this diminish.

Such an approach would also further destabilise rural and regional communities facing economic and social pressure by redirecting public funding away from the regions at the expense of regional small and medium-sized businesses and would see less money reinvested in these, often remote, communities.

Negotiating contracts is therefore not simply an operational consideration but a critical investment in regional and rural economic stability, workforce sustainability, and community wellbeing. In an election where the support of rural and regional Victorians will be decisive, this commitment is essential.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS

Service improvement is a core pillar of BAV's Strategic Plan, and we call on the next Victorian Government to articulate a clear, long-term vision for bus service provision across both metropolitan and regional Victoria.

We know that access to public transport is highly contingent on where you happen to live, with outer suburbs and regional areas facing significantly longer wait times and less mobility. This limits the accessibility of our city for Victorians from these areas and reduces economic and educational participation.

BAV supports the establishment of minimum public transport service standards for all Victorian commuters such as:

- 15 minute bus services in all of Melbourne's interface council areas
- A bus service aligned to all metropolitan train arrivals at major stops and interchanges
- 20 minute services for all other inner metro and regional bus services
- The extension of all routes on Sunday to accommodate weekend commuters

These minimum standards recognise the differing needs of metropolitan, regional, and rural communities, while ensuring equity of access to reliable public transport. These improvements should not see any reduction in existing service delivery. In regional Victoria in particular, bus services are often the only form of public transport available, making service frequency, coverage, and reliability essential.

Service planning should address known service gaps and prioritise areas experiencing population growth or disadvantage. BAV has solicited a range of service improvements from its members, all of whom are deeply familiar with the needs of their local communities. These improvements can be found at Attachment A on page 13 of this document.



STATEWIDE MYKI TICKETING

BAV calls for the full rollout of a uniform ticketing system across all bus services, including regional and school bus networks where appropriate. To ensure universal adoption, this should occur at no cost to the operator.

A consistent, statewide ticketing system is critical to improving the passenger experience, reducing barriers to public transport use, and ensuring buses are fully integrated into Victoria's broader transport network.

The present incomplete metropolitan myki, separate V/Line systems and varying ticketing systems in non-myki regional towns are inconsistent, and disadvantage regional passengers, limit multimodal connectivity, and undermine patronage growth. A statewide myki rollout would deliver fairness, simplicity, fare compliance, and improved data to support service planning.



RED TAPE REDUCTION, CROSS-BORDER REFORM, AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL SUPPLIERS

BAV calls for meaningful regulatory reform that reduces unnecessary compliance while maintaining safety and service standards, including harmonisation of cross-border requirements.

The growing burden of red tape and regulatory complexity is of great concern to bus operators. Overlapping and inconsistent requirements, particularly across state borders, have increased costs, driven smaller operators out of the industry, and accelerated consolidation.

BAV has previously corresponded with the Victorian Government on a range of sensible red tape reductions we would like to see made. These include:

- Establishment of a cross-border transport working group with involvement from relevant state bus associations, local operators and relevant Government representatives to meet twice a year to address new and ongoing cross-border issues
- Development of a single, low-cost national permit system for access to all National Parks and calls for the current system to be reviewed under the regulatory reform and harmonisation process
- Request the Victorian Government and V/Line review and remove duplicative auditing processes, avoid introducing redundant contract clauses requiring submission of fatigue records already regulated elsewhere, and align with commitments to reduce red tape and support regional transport operators
- Consolidate all qualifications required to operate a school bus and other public transport services including Driver's Licence, Driver Accreditation, and Working With Children Check (WWCC) into a single, integrated authority attached to the driver's licence, reducing duplication and potentially eliminating overlap across multiple government departments.

There is also an opportunity for government to work more closely with industry on supplier and procurement settings, particularly around local content and supply chains.

Greater engagement with local supplier partners can strengthen Victorian manufacturing, improve resilience, and support regional economies. The Government should formally collaborate with BAV to identify supplier-related barriers and opportunities, including understanding where supplier state-base requirements may be impacting operators.

This will become increasingly more important as the industry continues to decarbonise the fleet into the future. A sensible and collaborative approach, from all stakeholders, is required to ensure success.



5

ROAD QUALITY, CONGESTION, AND ON-ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

The quality of regional road infrastructure has a direct impact on bus safety, reliability, operating costs, and service delivery. Poor road conditions contribute to vehicle damage, service delays, and increased congestion, particularly in regional and growth areas.

BAV calls for a real and measurable increase to government funding of regional and rural road maintenance and targeted on-road improvements that support bus operations, reduce congestion, and improve safety outcomes for drivers and passengers alike.

Improving road conditions is a cost-effective way to improve service reliability without increasing operating complexity. Regional commuters are deserving of the same quality roads as metropolitan commuters. At present, this is not the case.

We suggest that the State Government work urgently with local councils, BAV and transport operators to identify potholes, black spots and other road hazards which pose a risk to regional commuters on local bus routes and urgently commence work to rectify these issues. BAV stands ready to work directly with Government and its members to establish a process to identify these high-risk road issues and address them.



6

RETURN OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS TO THE BUS NETWORK

BAV calls for the return of Authorised Officers to the bus network, funded by the State. It's not good enough to just have Authorised Officers for metropolitan and regional rail services.

A visible and consistent Authorised Officer presence improves safety and security for drivers and passengers, improves fare compliance, and reinforces appropriate behaviour on services. Since their withdrawal circa 2014, the absence of Authorised Officer on bus routes has been felt most acutely in regional areas and on longer routes where drivers often operate in isolation.



DRIVER SAFETY, SECURITY, AND WORKPLACE FACILITIES

Building on impending legislative reforms introducing zero tolerance for assaults on transport workers, BAV calls for a comprehensive Driver Safety and Security Package. This should include investment in on-board and route-based safety measures, with high-risk routes prioritised for early implementation. Further, bus drivers, who time and time again show their heroics, be it during a pandemic, natural disaster or other more tragic events, should be recognised as essential workers.

In addition, the Government should ensure that every bus route across both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria provides drivers with access to appropriate toilet facilities at major terminals or designated rest points. State funding should be provided to construct or retrofit facilities where they do not exist, along with improved lighting and CCTV placement. These are basic workplace standards and essential to driver safety, dignity, and retention and importantly increase the attraction to greater female participation within the industry workforce.



8

WORKFORCE INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION

BAV seeks an expansion of the existing Women in Transport funding program to include workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The bus workforce remains predominantly male and ageing, and greater inclusion is vital to securing the future of the industry, particularly in regional Victoria.

Government-funded driver training and mentoring through the Women in Transport program has increased female participation and has helped regional operators address ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. Expanding this program would broaden the talent pool, strengthen workforce sustainability, and deliver meaningful social and economic inclusion outcomes.

In addition, BAV supports advocacy around senior Australians remaining in the workforce, particularly in relation to pension and income settings that can discourage continued participation. An extension to the number of working hours which can be engaged in before any impact on the pension would be a welcome change, and one BAV and its federal counterpart, BIC, have long advocated for.

While this is primarily a Federal issue, it has direct implications for the bus industry, which relies heavily on experienced older workers. We also support the continued inclusion of bus drivers as an occupation on the Skills and Shortage List maintained by the Federal Government.



9

TRANSITION SUPPORT FOR THE ZERO-EMISSION BUS WORKFORCE

As Victoria transitions to a zero-emissions bus fleet, the shift in required skills poses real risks for existing workers and operators. Electric and hydrogen technologies require new technical competencies and safety procedures, and without adequate support, this transition could disrupt employment and service delivery, especially in regional areas.

BAV calls for renewed and increased Government funding for industry-led training programs, building on the successful AMWU/BAV/Kangan TAFE electric bus mechanics training initiative. Supporting workers and operators through this transition will ensure the move to zero-emissions buses strengthens local capability, protects jobs, and delivers long-term environmental and economic benefits.



TOUR AND CHARTER OPERATOR SUPPORT

Victoria's tour and charter bus operators play a vital role in regional Victorian economies. Every coach carries not just passengers, but direct economic activity into regional towns, which supports not only hotels and motels but cafés and restaurants, wineries and retail businesses. A single trip can inject thousands of dollars into a small community and provide a vital economic base to struggling rural workers.

Tour and charter operators make Victoria accessible to seniors, school groups, community organisations, and international visitors who may not otherwise travel independently. This not only broadens the tourism market, but it also strengthens inclusivity, making sure Victoria is a place for everyone.

In the wake of recent bushfires, this role becomes even more critical. Natural disasters can create a perception that some regions are unsafe, even when they remain open and eager for visitors. Without proactive support, this perception can significantly reduce visitation and exacerbate economic hardship for already affected towns.

Supporting tour and charter operators is an efficient and high-impact way for government to stimulate regional economies. We suggest that the Government

- Work directly with BAV on a low-cost advertising campaign to encourage local and interstate passengers to visit Victoria's regional and rural areas via coach.
- Subsidise travel for seniors to access tour and charter buses to visit rural and regional areas.
- Invest in parking and other infrastructure at local attractions to increase access for tour and charter operators and their customers
- Provide toll relief for tour and charter buses to stimulate activity. Schools and clients are reassessing sports, excursions, and program participation due to rising toll costs. Private bus operators are facing significant toll increases, creating an uneven playing field and reducing access to events and major landmarks.
- Increase dedicated bus parking at schools and venues. The current trend of reducing bus zones at schools and event locations, combined with enforcement fines, is making access increasingly difficult. This can create unintended safety risks, such as primary school children having to walk around corners or along busy main roads to board buses because vehicles cannot safely access designated pick-up areas.
- Permit school buses to use tram stops for passenger pick-up and drop-off during school runs. In many inner-Melbourne locations, tram stops are the only practical and accessible points for loading and unloading passengers. Allowing "drop-and-go" or "load-and-go" use (without parking) would improve safety, efficiency, and access.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS



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BASS COAST

The following service enhancements are proposed to address longstanding gaps in coverage, frequency, and connectivity across the Bass Coast corridor, with a focus on improving access to key town centres, employment, and essential services.

Phillip Island Town Service (New)

Phillip Island currently lacks a dedicated local town service to connect its key communities and activity centres.

It is proposed to introduce two looped services centred on Cowes and San Remo, providing comprehensive island coverage:

- Cowes Loop (Priority): Servicing Cowes, Ventnor, Rhyll, Sunderland Bay, and Smiths Beach, with strong connectivity into the Cowes CBD.
- San Remo Loop: Servicing Surf Beach, Cape Woolamai, Rhyll, Newhaven, and extending into San Remo.

A staged implementation could commence with a single vehicle alternating between the Cowes and San Remo loops, with future expansion based on demand. The Cowes loop is identified as the initial priority due to higher population density and activity levels.

Cowes – Anderson – Wonthaggi Corridor

There is a need to improve connectivity and service frequency, particularly during weekends and evenings.

- Current local services only connect with 4 of 8 V/Line services at Anderson.
- It is proposed to increase services to ensure connections with all V/Line services, improving regional accessibility.
- Weekend and public holiday services should be increased to align with demand, including the introduction of 7-day operations and improved late-night options.

Wonthaggi Town Service (All Loops)

Wonthaggi operates as a 7-day retail and service centre, however public transport services do not currently reflect this.

- Increase all town services to 7 days per week to align with trading hours and community needs.
- Improve service frequency to support access to employment, retail, and health services.

Inverloch Town Service (New)

Inverloch currently has no dedicated town service and limited connectivity to surrounding areas.

- Introduce a local loop service within Inverloch, connecting residential areas with key destinations.
- Extend the service to Wonthaggi, creating a strong link between two major communities.
- This model could mirror the existing Wonthaggi – Cape Paterson service, providing a proven framework.

Wonthaggi – Traralgon (via Leongatha)

- Undertake a corridor review to improve service frequency and reliability.
- Prioritise improved connections between Wonthaggi and Inverloch as part of a broader network optimisation.

Coronet Bay – Grantville (via Corinella)

- Improve connectivity by aligning services with all V/Line connections.
- Ensure consistent and reliable transfers to support commuter and regional travel.

Coronet Bay – Wonthaggi (via Corinella)

- Increase service levels to a minimum of one return service per weekday, improving access to employment, education, and services.

Summary

These proposed improvements aim to:

- Address gaps in local town services (Phillip Island, Inverloch)
- Improve regional connectivity (V/Line integration at Anderson and Grantville)
- Align services with community demand and 7-day economies
- Support access to employment, education, healthcare, and tourism



CASTLEMAINE

Service Frequency

- Increase overall service frequency to improve network performance.
- Alternatively, retain the existing network structure and introduce additional services between 7:30am and 7:00pm daily. This could be achieved without increasing operating hours (additional kilometres only), representing a relatively low-cost initiative that improves operational efficiency and value for money.

Span of Hours

- Extend hours of operation to better accommodate peak and commuter travel demand.

School Town Services (STS)

- Introduce School Town Special services to address a current service gap. Students residing within 4.5km of schools (i.e. within the township) are ineligible for the school bus network and currently have limited transport options.



MARYBOROUGH

Network Simplification and Coverage

- Simplify the network to improve coverage of key destinations, including the shopping centre, train station and hospital.
- Increasing traffic congestion is placing pressure on current timetables. As the town continues to grow, this is likely to result in on-time running issues without network adjustments.

Network Expansion

- Introduce new services to Carisbrook and Dunolly to improve regional connectivity.

Span of Hours

- Extend weekday services to operate between 3:00pm and 5:00pm.
- Extend Saturday services to operate between 1:00pm and 5:00pm.
- Address significant afternoon service gaps in the current timetable.

School Town Services (STS)

- Introduce STS services to better support student travel demand.



MOOROOPNA

Span of Hours

- Extend operating hours to better serve commuter demand. This would enable Mooroopna residents to arrive in Shepparton in time for standard working hours and provide confidence of return services in the evening.
- Increasing the service span would support mode shift from private vehicles to public transport.

Frequency

- Increase service frequency to 30-minute intervals (hourly in the north and south corridors).
- Improved frequency would enhance network efficiency and make public transport a viable option for medical appointments and other essential trips.



SWAN HILL

Network Review

- Conduct a comprehensive review of the Swan Hill town service, which has not been substantially updated for over 20 years.
- The current network does not service the entire township, including new residential estates and a new aged care facility. Recommend extension of services to these areas.

Operational Structure

- The existing north-south route is operated by a single bus, with each loop taking approximately 30 minutes.
- This results in potential wait times of up to one hour if a passenger misses a service or arrives at a stop when the bus is operating the alternate route.

Previous Planning

- A previous proposal recommended splitting the network into four sections operated by two buses. An additional vehicle was procured in preparation; however, implementation did not proceed following a change of government.





WANGARATTA

Network Review

- Undertake a comprehensive review of the town centre network.

Route-Specific Improvements

- Route 402: Minor expansion could improve estate coverage without additional operating costs.
- Route 403: Relocate the Aquatic Centre bus stop to improve timetable reliability and on-time running.
- Route 404: Install a DDA-compliant bus stop outside Rangeview Nursing Home.

Customer Experience

- Introduce tap-on/tap-off payment to improve customer convenience.
- The existing fleet is clean and modern; no vehicle upgrades are required.

Span of Hours

- Extend Saturday services to operate until 3:00pm (currently concluding at 12:30pm).



WARRAGUL & DROUIN

The existing town service routes for Warragul and Drouin were established in 2017. Since that time, both townships have experienced significant residential growth, including the development of multiple new estates that currently have no access to public transport.

- Extend network coverage to encompass substantial township growth not reflected in current route alignments.
- Ensure inclusion of newly developed residential estates which remain unserved by the current network.
- Extend final weekday services so that the last service does not commence prior to 5:00pm.
- Extend Drouin services to Sundays, improving accessibility and network consistency across the week.
- Consider a kilometre-neutral modification to an existing Warragul route to service a new shopping precinct. While the Department of Transport and Planning did not support the proposal, the community and patronage benefits are considered to outweigh the concerns raised.



PAYNESVILLE – EAGLE POINT – NEWLANDS ARM

- Introduce additional services that enable passengers to travel from Paynesville/Eagle Point to Melbourne and return on the same day using public transport for the entire journey, with improved alignment to V/Line train services.
- Provide additional services to better connect the Newlands Arm community.
- Introduce later evening return services from Bairnsdale to support access to cinema sessions, club and community activities, and casual or part-time employment.
- Increase services to enable community groups to travel to the Bairnsdale Aquatic and Recreation Centre and other key destinations from the town centre and surrounding areas.



GEELONG AND SURROUNDS

Moorabool Street Interchange

- Extend the Moorabool Street interchange.
- Split the southbound stop to include both sides of Little Malop Street, with eastbound services operating from the new section and remaining services from the current location.
- This would improve passenger distribution, operational efficiency and overall network functionality within central Geelong.

Route 40

- Increase weekday frequency to align with the standard of other Geelong services. Route 40 is the only service connecting the eastern suburbs and Gordon TAFE with the western suburbs, including Deakin University and Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre.
- Introduce weekend and public holiday services. Route 40 is currently the only Geelong service without weekend operations, leaving Breakwater, Grovedale and Waurn Ponds without public transport access on weekends.
- Improve service levels to reflect strong performance. Although Route 40 has the lowest frequency in Geelong, passenger usage relative to the number of trips compares favourably with many other routes.
- Maintain and strengthen connections to key destinations: Geelong Station, Geelong Hospital, East Geelong, Gordon TAFE, Breakwater, Marshall Station, Grovedale, Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre, and Deakin University.

Routes 30/31 and 41

- Increase off-peak frequency to 20-minute intervals, consistent with other Geelong services.
- Restore the originally planned 20-minute frequency that was reduced prior to implementation.
- Standardise daytime frequencies across the network to improve connectivity and make interchanging between services simpler and more reliable.



Armstrong Creek, Mt Duneed and Charlemont

Continued residential growth in Armstrong Creek, Mt Duneed and Charlemont requires ongoing service planning to meet current and future demand.

- Introduce services to the Whites Road area west of Surf Coast Highway, which is expanding further away from existing corridors.
- Provide improved coverage to the Anchorage Estate area, which is currently distant from Warralily Boulevard and Barwon Heads Road and lacks connection to Charlemont Road.
- Extend services into the growing Harriott Road area, which is developing beyond the reach of Barwon Heads Road. Existing school bus operations in this area indicate established demand.
- Ensure future route planning proactively responds to continued development across these growth corridors.

Southern Bellarine (Barwon Heads, Ocean Grove, Queenscliff)

- Increase overall service levels to reflect significant population growth, particularly in Ocean Grove, which now has a population comparable to Torquay or Drysdale but with substantially fewer public transport options.
- Improve coordination and coverage of Routes 55 and 56, which both service Ocean Grove but offer limited practical choice for many residents depending on their location.
- Improve connectivity to Geelong, train stations, local shopping centres, schools and neighbouring Bellarine communities.
- Review service coordination, noting that few Route 55 and 56 trips connect effectively within Ocean Grove as they are largely timed to connect with services outside the area.
- Increase capacity and service levels during holiday seasons, when caravan parks and visitor accommodation generate additional demand.
- Expand weekend and off-peak services to better reflect the area's permanent population and tourism activity.

Northern Bellarine (Drysdale, Clifton Springs, Curlewis, Portarlington, Indented Head, St Leonards)

Drysdale functions as the primary interchange point for Bellarine services and should remain the central connection hub for passengers travelling to and from Geelong.

- Retain and strengthen the Drysdale bus interchange as the key transfer point between services.
- Introduce an additional service through the Curlewis estate while retaining Route 61 along Jetty Road. The new service could connect with other routes at Drysdale interchange.
- Provide a more direct service between Drysdale and St Leonards, potentially extending to Portarlington, to avoid requiring St Leonards passengers to travel indirectly via Portarlington. This could form part of a broader cross-peninsula service.
- Increase morning return services from Geelong and afternoon services to Geelong to reflect growing commuter demand, as current timetables remain heavily peak-oriented.
- Increase weekend service levels, reducing the current 90-minute gaps between trips and extending operating hours later into the evening.
- Upgrade facilities at Drysdale to establish a proper bus terminal that supports safe, convenient and efficient passenger interchanges between services.

Cross Peninsula Service (Southern–Northern Bellarine Connection)

There is currently no direct interconnecting public transport service between the southern Bellarine communities (Ocean Grove, Queenscliff and surrounding areas) and the northern Bellarine communities (Drysdale, Portarlington, St Leonards and surrounding areas).

- Introduce a cross-peninsula service to directly connect southern and northern Bellarine communities without requiring travel via Geelong.

Option 1 — Drysdale to Ocean Grove

- Operate a direct service between Drysdale Interchange and Ocean Grove.
- Service key destinations including Drysdale interchange (shopping precinct), Ocean Grove shopping centre, Ocean Grove beach, and Drysdale swimming pool (if feasible).
- Ensure strong connections at Drysdale interchange to Geelong-bound services and Portarlington services to maximise network integration.
- This represents the lower-cost implementation option.

Option 2 — St Leonards to Ocean Grove via Drysdale

- Extend Option 1 via Murradoc Road to St Leonards.
- Provide St Leonards with a long-requested direct connection across the peninsula.
- Maintain Drysdale as the central interchange, connecting with services from Portarlington and to Geelong.
- Enable passengers from Indented Head and Portarlington to travel across the peninsula without indirect routing.

Bellarine Holiday Service

- Introduce a dedicated holiday-period service operating from the start of the December school holidays through to the end of the January school holidays, and during Easter school holidays.
- Operate seven days a week, including public holidays, using a consistent timetable across all days.
- Operate between 9:00am and 8:00pm (during daylight saving), enabling return travel after dinner and evening activities.
- Run hourly services in both clockwise and anticlockwise directions, forming a loop service connecting Bellarine townships.
- Connect major destinations: beaches and shops in Ocean Grove, Queenscliff, St Leonards, Indented Head and Portarlington; Queenscliff Ferry terminal, marina and town centre; Drysdale shopping precinct; caravan parks and holiday accommodation.
- Support both permanent residents and the substantial seasonal population increase during peak holiday periods.

Anglesea – Torquay – Geelong Connections

- Introduce additional bus services between existing V/Line services linking Anglesea and Torquay.
- Service the three Anglesea bus stops before continuing to Bell Street, Torquay to connect with services to Marshall Station and Geelong.
- Improve access for Anglesea residents to Torquay's retail and medical services, including supermarkets and health facilities.
- Advocate for an additional V/Line service to Lorne.

Supporting context:

- Anglesea's population increased from 2,551 (2016) to 3,208 (2021), representing 26% growth as the town transitions to a more permanent residential community.
- During holiday periods, the population increases significantly, with peak overnight populations exceeding 16,000.
- Current public transport consists solely of the Geelong–Apollo Bay V/Line service, operating seven days per week but with only four daily services (five on Fridays).
- Travel time from Anglesea to Geelong Station is approximately 74 minutes via Torquay, Wairn Ponds and Belmont.
- There is ongoing community demand for improved Geelong connections.



V/LINE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS — GREAT OCEAN ROAD CORRIDOR

Non-Summer Timetable Review

The non-summer timetable has remained largely unchanged for many years despite increasing permanent population growth. A comprehensive timetable review is required.

Current Issues

- Only three services operate from Apollo Bay to Geelong on weekdays, and four from Lorne.
- The first arrival into Geelong is 8:35am.
- The first outbound Geelong departure is 10:11am, arriving Anglesea at 11:22am and Lorne at 12:02pm, making same-day morning trips impractical.

Option A — Fully Fund Existing 50% Capital Bus

- Increase capital funding of the partially funded bus to 100% V/Line funding.
- Reinstate the early 6:36am Geelong–Lorne summer departure in the non-summer timetable (arriving 7:48am Anglesea and 8:29am Lorne).
- Enable additional afternoon return services from Lorne.
- Improve peak-period flexibility and train connections.
- This option would require only half additional capital funding rather than a full new bus.

Option B — Additional Morning Departure

- Introduce a 9:30am departure from Geelong Rail, arriving 10:42am Anglesea and 11:23am Lorne.
- Adjust timing to align with train connections where possible.
- This option would not require an additional bus but would not be wheelchair accessible unless further funding is provided.

Option C — Additional Anglesea-Only Service

- Operate an early morning Geelong–Anglesea service (arriving approximately 7:00–7:15am) prior to undertaking school runs.
- Likely operated by a 57-seat coach with seatbelts but no wheelchair accessibility.
- Would not extend to Lorne.

Summer Timetable Improvements

Patronage data indicates strong and comparable demand across weekdays and weekends during summer periods.

Weekday Issues

- The 9:46am Apollo Bay–Geelong trip carries approximately 34% of all inbound weekday passengers.
- The 1:25pm Lorne–Geelong service is also heavily utilised.
- Significant gaps exist between busy trips (up to 2 hours 49 minutes).
- The 10:11am outbound Geelong trip carries approximately 38% of all outbound passengers, indicating concentrated demand.

Weekend Considerations

- Weekend patronage is comparable to weekday patronage on many trips.
- Some Saturday services carry equal or greater loads than weekday equivalents.
- Timetables should better reflect consistent demand patterns across all day types.

Recommended Actions

- Introduce additional services between high-demand trips to reduce long service gaps.
- Align weekend timetables more closely with weekday service levels during peak holiday periods.
- Improve load balancing to reduce reliance on backup buses and manage capacity more efficiently.





YARRA VALLEY

In 2023, the Yarra Valley bus network underwent its first major service level change since 1992. While this review presented a significant opportunity to modernise the network, a key proposal to improve tourist connectivity was not adopted despite extensive advocacy with local Members of Parliament, local council and the Minister for Tourism.

Route 685 — Lilydale to Healesville (Yarra Valley Chocolaterie Deviation)

- Propose a minor route deviation of Route 685 to directly service the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie.
- The Chocolaterie is the second largest tourist attraction in the Yarra Valley after Healesville Sanctuary.
- In 2022, the venue attracted approximately 900,000 visitors and employs around 100 staff.
- The deviation would require only one additional kilometre per trip and approximately one extra minute in the timetable.
- The proposal was previously rejected on the basis that two new bus stops and associated footpath infrastructure would be required.
- Instead, two large bus stops were constructed along the existing alignment in locations expected to generate very low passenger usage.
- Implementing the proposed deviation would significantly enhance customer experience and provide direct public transport access to one of the region's most popular tourist destinations, supporting both visitors and local employment.

Further information can be provided upon request.

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