

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



Friday, 14 May 2021

KEEPING VICTORIAN FREIGHT ON THE TRACKS

The Andrews Labor Government is backing Victoria's freight industry, getting trucks off local roads and taking more Victorian produce out to the world with an extension of the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme.

The *Victorian Budget 2021/22* will invest \$3.6 million to extend the scheme until 30 June 2022, continuing the Labor Government's push to move more freight on rail and reduce heavy vehicle emissions.

Under the scheme, four freight operators will receive incentives to move up to a combined 42,508 containers by rail – taking the equivalent of 28,000 truck trips every year off country roads and reducing truck congestion on suburban roads around the Port of Melbourne.

The Mode Shift Incentive Scheme delivers almost \$5 million in benefits to Victoria every year through reduced road maintenance, crashes, congestion and emissions – and will continue to support recipients Linx Portlink in Tocumwal, Wimmera Container Line in Dooen, Westvic Container Export in Dennington and Seaway Intermodal in Merbein.

Freight operators receiving the Mode Shift Incentive Scheme play a crucial role in moving Victorian produce to from the farm gate to our ports including meat, dairy, grain, hay, fresh fruit, oats, peas, wine and cheese – supporting more than 170 vital jobs across regional Victoria.

Taking trucks off local roads doesn't just get more Victorian products to the export market – it delivers significant environmental, economic and safety benefits, with rail freight producing three times less carbon pollution than road freight, and fewer trucks on the road means driving improved road safety outcomes right across the state.

The scheme is one of a number of initiatives the Labor Government is backing to get more freight onto rail – including the improvements to the regional freight network, the Port Rail Shuttle Network, the Port Rail Transformation Project and planning for an intermodal terminal in the west.

The Government also invested \$83 million in funding into Victoria's regional rail freight network during the pandemic, supporting the shift from road to rail freight by delivering critical upgrades and creating vital local jobs when Victorians needed them most.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne

"Our primary produce sector is thriving – and with freight volumes set to keep increasing in the coming years, it's vital we get more freight on rail and take trucks off local roads."

"The Mode Shift Incentive Scheme is helping farmers right across Victoria get their produce to market, backing local jobs and making country roads safer – we're proud to keep supporting this vital program."