



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

Member for Western Victoria  
State Leader of Derryn Hinch's Justice Party

## MEDIA RELEASE



### **Grimley Asks Public Transport Minister to Meet Wimmera Community & Provide Information on Business Case**

4 August 2021

Western Victorian MP Stuart Grimley is calling for Minister for Public Transport, Ben Carroll, to meet with communities along the Nhill-Ararat rail line.

Through an Adjournment Debate in Parliament, Mr Grimley asked the Minister to meet with councils and community groups including Horsham Rural City Council, Hindmarsh Shire Council and the Nhill Train Alliance to discuss the return of rail to the Wimmera.

During Mr Grimley's electorate tour in mid-July he met with these groups and other individuals to discuss the push for the return of Wimmera rail.

During the trip, Mr Grimley was also informed that prior to COVID-19, the Department of Transport had begun a business case evaluating a shuttle from Nhill or Kaniva that connects with the Melbourne service at Ararat. Mr Grimley asked when the business case will be finished and if it will be made public in his question to the Minister.

Mr Grimley says the current transport system in the Wimmera is horrendous at best. It is a bus-based network with horrible timetabling, extremely long and uncomfortable trips and difficult for elderly residents to use.

Instead of using buses to go to appointments in Melbourne, locals either go without or drive themselves to Ballarat to catch the train. For those in Nhill, that's a three-hour drive, then a train ride to Melbourne and then back again. The choice left for locals is either pay to stay overnight in Melbourne, which many can't afford, or drive back home.

The Minister has 30 days to respond.

#### **Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:**

"People living in country Victoria understand that they won't always have access to the exact same services as metropolitan areas and they understand that it does take longer to travel elsewhere. But in saying this we are seeing, now more than ever, a wider gap of services between the country and the city.

During our meetings in July, Horsham Council told me that the Department of Transport were undertaking an internal business case for a train shuttle from Nhill through to Ararat. I'm seeking information on when this will be finished and if it will be made public.

It seems that all the pieces of the puzzle are available for the return of rail; rolling stock is sitting in stabling yards in Melbourne that match the current track; the condition of the track is up to passenger rail standard, as it is used by the Overland, the right infrastructure is in place and the community are pushing for it.

The only thing the communities in the Wimmera need now is a commitment from the state government to return the rail service. Just because they live in the country, doesn't mean they should have second class services.

#### **Office of Stuart Grimley Media Contact:**

Callum Whitehead / 0437 096 982 / [callum.whitehead@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:callum.whitehead@parliament.vic.gov.au)