



# STUART GRIMLEY MP

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

## MEDIA RELEASE



### Government Response to Wimmera Rail Not Good Enough

14 September 2021

Member for the Western Victoria Region, Stuart Grimley MP, has received a response from the Minister for Public Transport regarding the reintroduction of rail to the Wimmera. The Minister has stated that the government has no plans to return rail to the Wimmera.

Mr Grimley has been working in close consultation with the local community asking what is needed to improve their access to public transport. It quickly became apparent that the current coach system is not suited to the community's needs.

The Wimmera lost their rail service in 1993 and have been operating using coaches for decades. In a time where connectivity is becoming increasingly important, a reasonable train service to Melbourne is needed. The Victorian Government has funded The Overland train until 2023. Although the community appreciate this, it is inadequate for the needs of the community.

The Minister said there are a series of constraints in the way of the return to rail and significant investment in infrastructure and rolling stock would be needed. These constraints and their costs are yet to be made public. Mr Grimley has asked the Department of Transport to provide more information to the public on these constraints.

The government has committed billions of dollars on rail infrastructure in Melbourne. Many of these projects have gone over budget - some by billions of dollars.

The Suburban Rail Loop is expected to cost \$100 billion. The Metro Tunnel was to cost \$11 billion and has blown out by \$2.7 billion. The West Gate Tunnel Project initially \$6.7 billion has now blown out by \$3.3 billion. The Level Crossing Removal Project is now costing \$15 billion. And to top it all off a further \$10 billion has been committed for the Airport Rail Link. In metro rail infrastructure alone, the Victorian government is estimated to spend \$138.7 billion in the years to come.

#### Quotes Attributable to Stuart Grimley MP:

"It is ludicrous that the government is spending billions of dollars on rail infrastructure in Melbourne but can't find any funding to support regional rail in the Wimmera.

The support from the Victorian Government extending The Overland train was welcome, but it is a band-aid trying to fix a broken leg. The \$3.8 million a year to support the train, from Adelaide to Melbourne is nothing in comparison to the significant spending in Melbourne.

I asked the Minister to meet with the local community and Councils who are campaigning for a shuttle. I also asked him to reveal a business case for a train public. Unfortunately, these are yet to be addressed. I will continue to lobby the Minister to undertake these tasks.

Regional Victorians are sick of being treated as second-class citizens. The Victorian government must provide equality of funding to all areas of Victoria, not just Melbourne. I will continue to fight for the return of Wimmera rail."

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