



**REGIONAL  
RAIL REVIVAL**

SHEPPARTON

# Annual Environment Compliance Report 2023

Shepparton Line Upgrade



# First Nations Acknowledgement

Rail Projects Victoria respectfully acknowledges and recognises the Taungurung, Wurundjeri and Yorta Yorta peoples as the Traditional Owners of this land and waterways and pays respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Environmental Vision

Rail Projects Victoria's Environmental Vision is to be an industry leader in managing environmental impacts with a demonstrated commitment to continuous improvement in delivering major infrastructure projects.



To achieve this Environmental Vision, Rail Projects Victoria is committed to:

- Ensuring environmental management is a core value of our organisation
- Promoting a culture of exceptional environmental management, collaboration, and continuous improvement, empowering our people to embrace a positive environmental management culture to encourage enhanced environmental performance
- Ensuring all our delivery partners meet or exceed our environmental management requirements and integrate best practice into their activities
- Establishing a framework for setting objectives and targets across all environmental aspects of its work
- Providing staff with information, training, and support to meet environmental challenges
- Encouraging innovation and taking advantage of available opportunities to manage environmental risks and impacts.

In order to implement our Environmental Vision effectively, our people will:

- Establish and implement practices to fulfil environmental compliance requirements, including all applicable environmental legislation, regulations, objectives, and targets
- Implement departmental and Rail Projects Victoria environmental plans, objectives, and targets
- Endeavour to protect and conserve the local and regional environment
- Effectively manage the environmental impacts including social impacts, waste, water, and energy use

## 1.2 Purpose

As part of the delivery of the Shepparton Line Upgrade (the Project), RPV is required to prepare an Annual Environmental Compliance Report and publish it on the RPV public website. The first of these reports was published in 2022 and can be found [here](#).

The aim of this report is to show the progression and performance of the Project over the past twelve months from a planning and environment perspective.



Figure 1: Murchison East Station



### 1.3 About the Shepparton Line Upgrade

The Project is part of the Regional Rail Revival (RRR) program, a joint initiative of the Australian and Victorian governments. More than \$4 billion has been invested in the program to deliver upgrades to every regional passenger rail line in Victoria. Upgrades to the Shepparton Line are being delivered in stages, with Stage 2 works almost complete and Stage 3 progressing.

Stage 1 has been completed and allowed 10 extra train service to run each week between Melbourne and Shepparton. Stage 2 works are almost complete and have enabled modern VLocity trains to travel to Shepparton for the first time from October 2022, improving service reliability and providing passengers with more comfortable journeys. Work is progressing on Stage 3, which will enable nine daily return services and increasing service reliability.

Stage 2 has been delivered by Acciona Rail (formerly Coleman Rail) and KBR as part of an alliance with RPV and V/Line. Stage 2 includes:

- Station upgrades including platform extensions for longer VLocity trains at Mooroopna, Murchison East, and Nagambie
- A crossing loop extension near Murchison East to allow more trains to pass each other

- Upgrading train detection technology at 59 level crossings between Donnybrook and Shepparton, with 32 of those upgraded to feature boom gates, flashing lights and bells, further boosting safety
- A new stabling facility to house VLocity trains

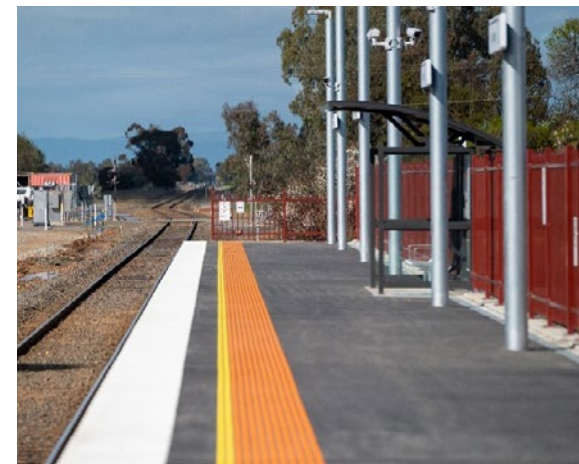
The delivery partners of Stage 3 of the Project include Acciona Rail and KBR and V/Line. Stage 3 will enable faster and more frequent services, including 9 weekday return services. The works for Stage 3 include:

- Signalling upgrades between Seymour and Shepparton to allow 9 weekday return services
- Track upgrades between Seymour and Shepparton to improve service reliability and enable trains to travel faster
- Expanded stabling for VLocity trains to support more services
- A further 1.1km extension of the Murchison East crossing loop to allow a 1200m freight train and two 6-car VLocity trains to pass each other

Refer to [bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/shepparton-line-upgrade](https://bigbuild.vic.gov.au/projects/shepparton-line-upgrade) for further information on the Shepparton Line Upgrade.



**Figure 2:** Smoking ceremony at Mooroopna

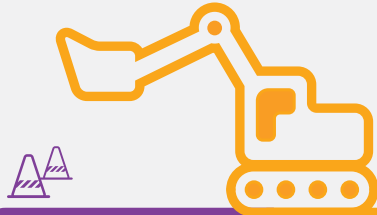


**Figure 3:** Nagambie Station



Total investment in the Shepparton Line Upgrade is more than

**\$750m+**



Creating

**600**

jobs over its three stages

### Stage 1

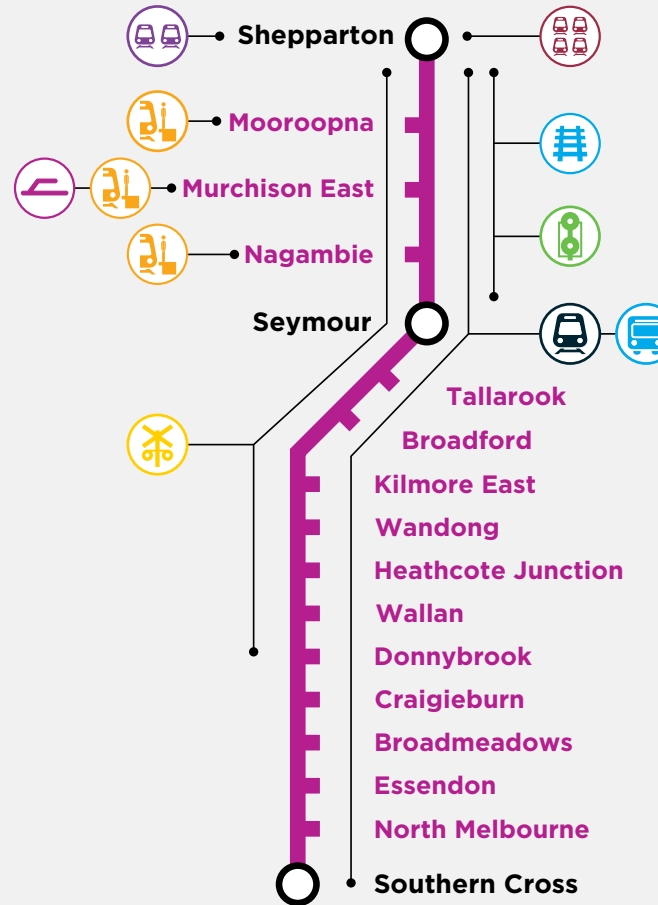
Fast-tracked to enable an additional **10 weekly services** on the Shepparton Line in 2019.

### Stage 2




Work enabled **modern and reliable** VLocity trains to run on the line in 2022.

### Stage 3

Signalling and track upgrades to enable **nine return services a day**.






### Stage 1

-  Additional train services
-  Stabling upgrade
-  Coach services

### Stage 2

-  Platform extensions
-  Crossing loop extension
-  59 level crossing upgrades
-  Stabling for VLocity trains

### Stage 3

-  Track upgrades
-  Signalling upgrades
-  Expanded stabling

## 2 Environmental Management Framework



An Environmental Management Framework (EMF) was developed to ensure that environmental aspects of the Project are managed effectively.

The EMF is a document that supplies a list of environmental standards and outcomes, referred to as Environmental Management Requirements (EMRs). The Framework guides the design and construction works of the Project, ensuring compliance with critical planning, environmental, and heritage conditions. RPV works closely with our delivery partners throughout the Project to ensure conformance to all the requirements set out in the EMF.

## 2.1 Independent Environmental Audits

The project is independently audited at regular intervals to ensure compliance with the EMF. This provides a snapshot allowing us to see where we are performing well and allows us to identify opportunities for improvement. Under the EMF, audits are required to be undertaken within three months of construction beginning, and then on a six-monthly basis (or as agreed upon by RPV) until the completion of the Project. Some examples of what is evaluated during an audit include:

- The Project’s compliance with planning, environment, and heritage approvals
- Project management plans and reports
- The Alliance’s response to non-conformances, incidents, and complaints received.

To date, four audits have been undertaken, and as shown in the table below, no non-conformances have been identified. The key findings concluded by the Independent Environmental Audit can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Summary of independent environmental audits completed for the Project.

Audit date	Audit scope	Key findings
<b>July 2021</b>	28 environmental criteria were assessed	✓ No non-conformances
<b>January 2022</b>	18 environmental criteria were assessed	✓ No non-conformances
<b>July 2022</b>	18 environmental criteria were assessed	✓ No non-conformances
<b>May 2023</b>	Stage 2 completion audit  Stage 3 pre-commencement audit	✓ No non-conformances



## 3 Environmental Performance

By adopting RPV's Environmental Policy and applying best practices, our delivery partners have not only met, but exceeded our environmental targets and objectives.

Within the last 12-months, our partners have demonstrated a strong ability to seek and take advantage of opportunities to manage the Project's environmental risks and decrease the environmental impact.

### 3.1 Protecting the Natural Environment

#### 3.1.1 Reducing Our Native Vegetation Impact

Reducing the Project's impact on native vegetation is a high priority for RPV and our delivery partners. Vegetation in the Project Area may provide important habitat for threatened fauna, such as the Striped Legless Lizard, Swift Parrot, Regent Honeyeater, and Squirrel Glider. By reducing vegetation removal, the Project ensures that fauna will still have access to the habitat they need to thrive.

For Stage 2 of the Shepparton Line Upgrade, approximately 24 hectares of native vegetation were approved for removal. However, through the Delivery Partner's mitigation measures during both the design and construction phases, impacts were limited to 7.4 hectares. This equates to a reduction of 68% from what was initially approved.

Large trees are also an important part of the natural landscape, and of the 137 approved for removal, an impressive 126 were able to be safely retained.

The impact from this substantial reduction in native vegetation impact will carry over to Stage 3 of the project. By completion of Stage 3, the amount of native vegetation removed is predicted to remain below what was initially approved for Stage 2, allowing as much habitat as possible to remain for the threatened species that rely on it.



**Figure 4:** *GPOP (Galvanised Pipe on Post), installed in the Shepparton Rail Corridor as an above ground signalling solution to mitigate the vegetation removal required for trenching or boring*

### 3.1.2 Repurposing Logs to become Fish Hotels

Timber from the Project has been repurposed by Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) as part of their Fish Habitat Improvement Project.

By placing these logs in the river, flow diversity and habitat are improved, providing better conditions for the fish.

This picture was taken at one of GBCMA's lagoon rehabilitation sites. The timber is providing shelter, known as a 'fish hotel' to threatened fish, including the Golden Perch and the Southern Pygmy Perch.



**Figure 5:** *A log from the project being used as a fish habitat*



### 3.1.3 The Tree Hollow Project

Tree hollows are important for the wellbeing and safety of wildlife, providing vital shelter and nesting locations for many different species. Our delivery partners completed a habitat replacement program in September 2022, installing 53 hollows in 30 trees.

One method of hollow installation involved using a special tool known as a “hollow hog” to drill hollows directly into trees. A total of 31 carved hollows were installed. The other method involved the use of hollow tree parts that were salvaged from trees that needed to be removed for the Project. A total of 22 of the hollow logs were then attached to the trees.

As opposed to the traditional style of nest box, hollows that are drilled into trees don't require any ongoing maintenance. They also provide better thermal insulation and provide a closer resemblance to a natural hollow, making them more appealing to local fauna. Similarly, if salvaged hollows fall out of the trees, they will provide hollow habitat on the ground and decompose naturally. This has the benefit of not adding anything unnatural to the environment, as opposed to a built and painted nest box.

The new hollows were inspected in March 2023 and three ringtail possums were found occupying two of the hollows. Another monitoring period will take place in spring 2023 to look for evidence of other wildlife making the hollows their homes.



**Figure 6:** A hollow being drilled



**Figure 7:** A hollow to be reattached



**Figure 8:** Two ringtail possums sharing a hollow, captured 27 March 2023

### 3.1.4 Green Energy and Recycled Water

Solar power was installed at the Shepparton Stabling Yard, Murchison East Combined Equipment Room, and the Nagambie compound. These systems contributed to the energy used in construction being 52.5% certified renewable energy.

The Nagambie compound installed a 6.0kW Makinex Hybrid Power system in November 2022. The system uses solar panels to charge a battery and supply the compound facilities with power. It contains a backup generator to ensure the compound receives a constant supply of power. The system in the Nagambie compound is the second of its kind to be deployed in Victoria, and the first to be used on an RPV project.

The Shepparton Stabling Yard also installed a 7kL rainwater tank to supply water for toilets, train washdown, and train carriage cleaning. This will reduce the demand on the potable water supply. The 7kL tank is expected to supply the stabling yard with over 60kL of rainwater annually.

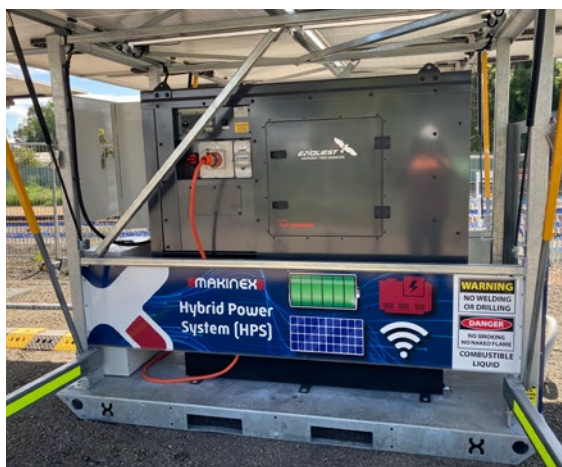
Throughout the year over 100kL of recycled water was used in construction.



**Figure 9:** Solar Panels at Shepparton Stabling Yard



**Figure 10.1:** Makinex Hybrid Power system at Nagambie Compound



**Figure 10.2**



**Figure 10.3**



### 3.2 Acknowledgement of Country Signage

The Alliance has worked with the Wurundjeri, Taungurung, and Yorta Yorta people to prepare acknowledgement of country signs for Donnybrook Station, Nagambie Station, and Murchison East and Mooroopna Stations. These signs inform passengers of the traditional land they are on and provide additional information on the history and significance of the area.



Figure 11: Welcome to Wurundjeri Land Signage for Donnybrook Station



Figure 12: Welcome to Taungurung Country Signage for Nagambie Station



Figure 13: Acknowledgement of Yorta Yorta Country Signage for Murchison East and Mooroopna Stations

## 4 Continuing our Environmental Excellence



The upcoming planning and environmental commitments for the Project include:

- To continue to monitor and improve environmental conditions on site through audits, site inspections, and procedures
- To find ways to further reduce the amount of vegetation affected by the project, and to revegetate where possible
- To investigate opportunities for reinstating habitat connectivity for fauna

As the Project progresses, we are confident that the lessons learned from the Project will allow us to improve and drive even better environmental outcomes in the coming months.

### More information

To find out more about Regional Rail Revival:

 [regionalrailrevival.vic.gov.au](http://regionalrailrevival.vic.gov.au)

 1800 105 105 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

