

Temporary Exemptions Report

Victorian Regional Railway Service

Reporting Period:

1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019

V/Line Corporation
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Introduction

V/Line's Role

V/Line is an operating agency as part of Victoria's integrated transport portfolio, delivering services under a Partnership Agreement with the Department of Transport (and other key contracts).

V/Line is:

- An accredited operator of passenger services including rail and coach
- A freight access provider
- A maintainer of infrastructure, rolling stock and project deliverer
- A key contributor towards Victoria's large infrastructure projects.

About V/Line – Service Provided

V/Line, as a brand, has provided public transport services to regional Victoria for over 30 years.

Each week, V/Line schedules more than 1,997 train services between Melbourne and:

- Geelong and Warrnambool
- Ballarat, Maryborough and Ararat
- Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca
- Seymour, Shepparton and Albury

- Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale.

At the same time, more than 1,462 V/Line-branded coach services connect with the rail network and serve regional Victorian communities. Some of our coach services also link Victoria with South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Private sector operators provide all V/Line-branded coach services under the management of V/Line.

As well as being a public transport operator, V/Line also leases, provides access to and maintains over 3,520 kilometres of rail track used by passenger services and freight rail operators.

V/Line is a major employer with a workforce of 2,190 including many who live and work in regional Victoria.

V/Line's Accessibility Action Plan 2019-2022

V/Line's 2015-2018 Accessibility Action Plan (AAP) drew to an end in December 2018.

Throughout those three years, and since V/Line's first AAP in 2012, there has been significant improvements in how customers access V/Line services, the provision of information, and the skills of customer service staff.

Some of V/Line's key achievements in 2018–19 include:

- Online disability awareness training, which was rolled out to all frontline staff to support in-person training completed over the last three years. This module highlighted the key message of 'seeing the person, not the disability', with almost all frontline staff completing this training in the 2018-19 year.
- Introduction of virtual tours on the V/Line website of all V/Line Fleet types. This provides customers with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with V/Line trains prior to travel, increasing their understanding and confidence in travelling on V/Line services.
- Significant development on the V/Line network over the last 12 months through Regional Rail Revival (RRR) projects, VicTrack delivered upgrades and V/Line delivered works. Key accessibility improvements delivered in 2019 include:
 - Bendigo Station bridge.
 - Rockbank Station – fully upgraded station with two new longer platforms, an accessible pedestrian overpass linking the two platforms, a new sealed car park, with accessible parking, bus and taxi bays, hearing loops and improved passenger information displays.
 - Platform extension at Eaglehawk.
- V/Line's Accessibility Reference Group continued to be a key stakeholder group for all accessibility projects and activities. This group was instrumental in the detailed design phase for station designs as part of the Ballarat Line Upgrade (BLU) as well as the development of V/Line's 2019-2022 AAP.
- Commencement of a package of works to upgrade the existing VLocity fleet. This includes improvements to allocated spaces and doorways to increase accessibility for customers who use a mobility aid.
- Roll out of improvements to Sprinter fleet with new allocated spaces and luggage.

V/Line has developed the 2019-2022 AAP to build on the achievements of the past three

years and continue to improve access for regional public transport services. The AAP focuses on delivering inclusive and accessible services whilst promoting compliance to DSAPT and improvements in functional access.

To develop the 2019-2022 AAP, V/Line has consulted with customers, the V/Line Accessibility Reference Group, disability service providers and advocacy organisations as well as staff and key internal stakeholders.

To achieve this, V/Line's four key priority areas for 2019-2022 are:

Priority 1 – Customer service and communication: continuous improvement and innovation to deliver positive travel experiences for our customers both via our frontline staff and V/Line's communication channels.

Priority 2 – Consultation and collaboration: consultation with customers and key stakeholders to identify improvement initiatives and seek guidance on improvement projects.

Priority 3 – Building inclusive environments: identifying priority areas for access improvements on the network to provide inclusive and accessible public transport spaces.

Priority 4 – Building an inclusive culture: development of a workplace and workforce that is inclusive for all customers and staff.

V/Line is committed to continuous improvement for access to its services, in order to provide an inclusive journey for all passengers and is looking forward to commencing activities under the 2019-2022 AAP.

Temporary Exemptions Reporting

The Public Transport Development Authority (trading as 'Public Transport Victoria' and 'PTV') (**PTV**), established under the *Transport Integration Act 2010 (Vic)*, is the statutory authority responsible for managing the regional rail network on behalf of the State of Victoria. V/Line is a statutory authority, continued under section 128 of the *Transport Integration Act 2010 (Vic)* and is ultimately responsible to the Victorian Minister for Public Transport and the Victorian Treasurer.

Pursuant to the Partnership Agreement between PTV and V/Line, dated 20 December 2017, V/Line is the operator and maintainer of the regional rail network.

V/Line and PTV are members of the Australasian Railway Association (**ARA**). V/Line participates in the ARA Disability Policy Working Group.

On 1 October 2015, the Australian Human Rights Commission (**AHRC**) granted temporary exemptions to members of the ARA in relation to various provisions of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth)* (**Transport Standards**) and the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Cth)* (**Premises Standards**).

V/Line provides this Report in relation to the regional Victorian passenger rail network and in accordance with the reporting requirements contained in the temporary exemptions.

This report is for the period 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019.

If you wish to provide feedback or require further information on this Report please contact V/Line:

- call

1800 800 007
TTY (03) 9619 2727

- in writing
Customer Relations
Reply Paid 5343
Melbourne VIC 8060
- online at www.vline.com.au/Contact-us

Part A – Exemptions from the Transport Standards

2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage

Temporary Exemption: rail premises and rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, flange gaps of up to 75mm are permitted where a level crossing forms part of an access path on rail premises or rail infrastructure.

Reporting Requirements:

- a. **Action taken to improve safe use of level crossings where they form part of an access path**

Safety education

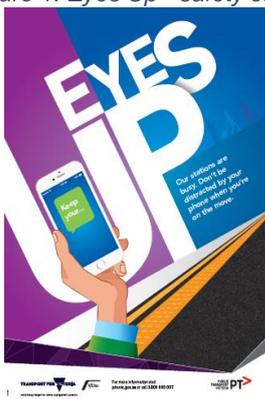
Safety is V/Line's highest priority and educating customers and regional Victorian communities about safe behaviour at level crossings forms a large part of V/Line's safety campaign activity. During the relevant reporting period V/Line continued the targeted safety campaign released last year to encourage customers to always put safety first and remain train safe. This included key messages including encouraging customers to:

- Slow down
- Hold on
- Eyes up
- Keep close

V/Line also conducted targeted communication activities at level crossings where:

- upgrade works have occurred
- there was an extended period of track works
- the timetable changed
- a level or pedestrian crossing was closed.

Figure 1: Eyes Up - safety campaign poster



Rail Safety Week

Rail Safety Week is an initiative of the TrackSAFE Foundation, where operators from across Australia promote rail safety, both internally and in the wider community. During 12-18 August 2019 V/Line, in conjunction with PTV, promoted Victoria's key message "Rail safety – it's my responsibility" via a 'Stop before you cross' campaign. Targeting messaging occurred at hot spot locations.



Figure 2: Rail safety week campaign poster

School education program

As part of Rail Safety Week V/Line collaborated with several regional schools to deliver TrackSAFE Education sessions with 4 schools in regional Victoria. V/Line staff collaborated with the schools and TrackSAFE Foundation to tailor education sessions to each school's cohort and group size. Sessions included talks from V/Line staff, age appropriate activities focusing on track safety and key messages for safely using public transport. V/Line has 10 more sessions planned for the end of 2019 and will run this program again in 2020.



Figure 3: Rail safety for schools logo

Level crossing upgrades

V/Line continues to improve safety by upgrading pedestrian and level crossings on the regional rail network. Crossings that have been upgraded since 1 October 2018 are shown in Table 1 below.

Falls Rd, Stratford
Reeves Lane, Munro
Lagoon Rd, Munro Shallow
Sth Buntine's Lane, Lindenow
Sth Scott's Road, Lindenow
Marriage Lane, Bairnsdale
Power Station Rd, Bairnsdale
McCallum St, Swan Hill

Table 1 Upgraded level and pedestrian crossings in regional Victoria

Progress made on the removal of level crossings

Since 1 October 2018 3 pedestrian and level crossings have been removed across Victoria. Pedestrian crossings that have been closed are in Table 2 and level crossings in Table 3 below. Occupation crossings refer to crossings within private property.

Location
Rockbank Station

Table 2 Closed pedestrian crossings in regional Victoria

Type	Location
Public road crossing	Oakview Lane, Pakenham
Public road crossing	Princes Hwy, Warncoort

Table 3 Closed level crossings in regional Victoria

b. Any developments in research into possible technical solutions for bridging flange gaps

V/Line participates in working groups with the rail industry research body, the Australasian Centre for Rail Innovation (ACRI), who are currently undertaking a variety of research projects under their Level Crossing Research project. Currently, there is investigation being undertaken into identifying and testing projects that eliminate the need for level crossing rail flange gaps.

Using this research as a guide V/Line installed [VeloSTRAIL](#)¹ at a trial site at North Shore station in the last reporting period. During the current reporting period V/Line has monitored the VeloSTRAIL with positive reports from track maintainers thus far. Whilst this product is not suitable for use in all locations across the regional rail network due to the high-speed lines that V/Line operates V/Line will further explore appropriate rail crossings that VeloSTRAIL can be installed during planned upgrade works and inclusion into crossing standards.

In addition, V/Line will continue to collaborate with ACRI to identify technologies that are suitable in high-speed environments.

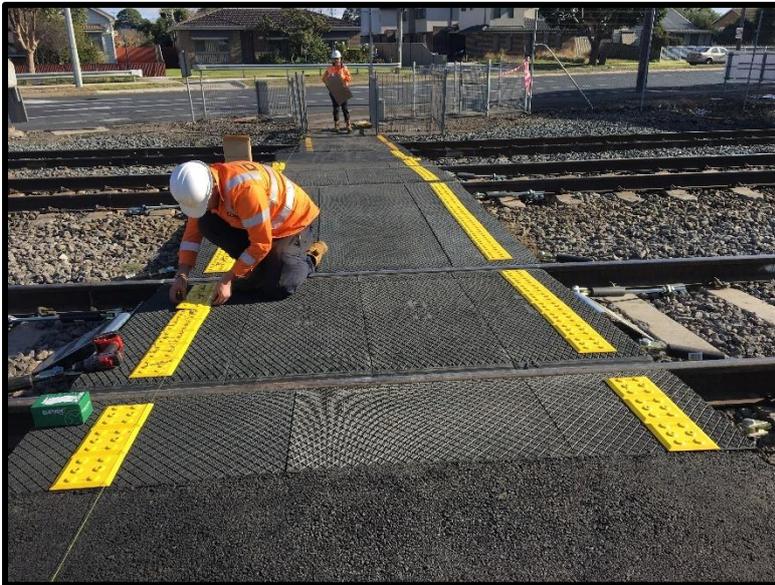


Figure 4: VeloSTRAIL at North Shore station

¹ Source:

http://www.strail.de/fileadmin/content01/INTERNET/5.0%20%20S%20e%20r%20v%20i%20c%20e/5.3%20%20Download/STRAIL/englisch/Broschueren%2BFlyer/veloSTRAIL_Brochure.pdf

2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, an access path is required to provide entrance and exit only at a single boundary point for existing rail stations where providing access at each entrance would require significant structural building work or not be feasible due to space, topographical or heritage reasons.

Reporting Requirement: Rail stations that have inaccessible entrances

For the purpose of this report, a station with an 'inaccessible entrance' is a station which is 'only accessible by steps'. All V/Line stations have a step free accessible entrance.

During the reporting period V/Line has collaborated with the Department of Transport, Metro Trains Melbourne and Yarra Trams to collate and update functional accessibility information for stations. V/Line will be working to update the information available to customers on our website in the early stages of the next reporting period to reflect this information.

2.4 Access paths – Minimum unobstructed width

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure:

1. where the 1200mm minimum unobstructed width for access paths cannot be met due to structural and technical constraints, an access path with a minimum unobstructed width of 1000mm may be provided;
2. the 850mm minimum unobstructed width (applicable to doorways and gateways) is also permitted on access paths for the purposes of passing an obstruction limited to less than 800mm in length; and
3. platform edge warning TGSIs are permitted to intrude into access paths.

Reporting Requirement: Rail stations which have restricted paths of travel within station precincts

The following regional stations have restricted paths of travel:

Bacchus Marsh
Bairnsdale
Beaufort
Benalla
Birregurra
Castlemaine
Clarkefield
Donnybrook

Drouin
Kyneton
Lara
Marshall
Melton
Morwell
North Geelong
Pyramid Hill
Swan Hill

Terang
Violet Town
Wandong
Wangaratta
Warragul
Warrnambool
Wendouree
Woodend

Source: PTV Railway Stations Audit, December 2014

V/Line has not received feedback regarding the reported matters during the relevant reporting period. Monitoring and consultation will continue.

During the reporting period significant works have been occurring as part of the Victorian Government's Ballarat Line Upgrade (BLU) project. Rockbank Station reopened on 25 August 2019 with upgraded access paths. Other improvements include upgraded platforms, carparks, hearing loops and an overpass including stairs, ramps and lifts.

Other stations that are part of the BLU project that will be finalised in the next reporting period include Bacchus Marsh, Benalla and Wendouree stations.

In addition, works will commence for the Shepparton Line Upgrade (SLU) and the Gippsland Line Upgrades (GLU) in the next reporting period. This will include improvements to access paths at Donnybrook and Morwell stations.

2.6 Access paths – conveyances

Temporary Exemption: existing rail conveyances

For a period of five years, an access path is only required at a single door rather than all doors of existing rail conveyances, subject to the following conditions:

- equivalent access is provided at an alternative door of the rail conveyance in the following circumstances:
 - if an allocated space is not available;
 - to ensure access to unique facilities; or
 - to ensure a passenger can both board and alight the rail conveyance;

Reporting requirement: Measures taken to ensure that staff and passengers are adequately informed of both the access paths available at the doors of existing rail conveyances and the equivalent access measures available.

Boarding

Customers can board at any door of V/Line trains.

Doors identified by the international symbol for access lead to on board accessible facilities including toilets and allocated spaces.

All V/Line stations, and the dedicated regional platforms at metropolitan stations, have a Boarding Assistance Zone where customers can choose to wait for V/Line staff if they need assistance to board.

All V/Line frontline staff have completed comprehensive disability awareness training and conductors are trained on how to deploy the portable boarding ramp for customers who require assistance to board.



Figure 5: Boarding Assistance Zones on platforms

Communication Access

V/Line staff on trains and at stations were accredited in the international symbol for Communication Access which means:

- V/Line frontline staff are able to communicate successfully with customers who have communication difficulties.
- V/Line frontline staff are welcoming and treat people with dignity and respect.
- Communication tools are available to help customers get their message across and understand what people are telling them.



Figure 6: Communication Access Symbol

Virtual Tours

During the reporting period V/Line released online Virtual Tours of all fleet types to customers. These tours enable customers to view the trains prior to travel to identify the accessible areas within the different types of trains and plan how they will access V/Line services. [Virtual Tours](#) can be accessed via the V/Line website.



Figure 7: Virtual tours available on V/Line's website

4.2 Passing areas – Two-way access paths and aerobridges

Temporary Exemption: existing rail platforms

For a period of five years, for existing rail platforms, a passing area every 9 metres along any two-way access path that is less than 1800mm wide is permitted where it is not possible to provide one every 6 metres due to structural or heritage constraints.

Reporting Requirement: Rail station platforms which do not provide passing spaces every 6 metres where any two-way access path is less than 1800mm wide

Station	Platform
Macedon	Platform 2
Seymour	Platform 3
Trafalgar	Platform 2

V/Line has not received feedback regarding the reported matters during the reporting period. Monitoring and consultation will continue.

As part of the Victorian Government's Ballarat Line Upgrade (BLU) project Rockbank station was fully upgraded to meet DSAPT requirements. Opening in August 2019 Rockbank now has a new platform and the existing platform was upgraded to meet DSAPT requirements.

5.1 Resting points – When resting points must be provided

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, compliance with clause 5.1 is not required for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure to the extent that site constraints prevent compliance (rather than only added expense or difficulty).

Reporting Requirement:

a. Outcomes of consultations and locations where a resting point with a seat is not provided every 60m

During the reporting period additional shelters and seating were installed at Deer Park Station to improve the availability of resting points along the platform. Similarly, improvements at Traralgon Station included the improvement of coach bay shelters and seating as well as seating on the platform. As part of BLU Rockbank Station upgrades appropriate resting points have been provided throughout the station.

No feedback has been received during the reporting period. V/Line will continue to monitor and consult on these locations.

b. Locations where a resting point with a seat is not provided every 60m

The following station precincts do not have resting points with a seat every 60m:

Ararat
Ardeer
Avenel
Ballarat
Bendigo
Clunes
Colac
Corio
Creswick
Dingee
Elmore
Gisborne
Kilmore East

Lara
Little River
Longwarry
Marshall
Maryborough
Melton
Morwell
North Geelong
North Shore
Riddells Creek
Seymour
Sherwood Park
South Geelong

Swan Hill
Talbot
Tarneit
Trafalgar
Traralgon
Violet Town
Wallan
Wangaratta
Warragul
Wendouree
Woodend
Wyndham Vale
Yarragon

During the reporting period upgrades and improvements made to the availability of resting points as Rockbank and Deer Park Stations. Further works are planned or are currently being delivered at Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Wendouree, Donnybrook, Eaglehawk and Wallan stations.

6.4 Slope of external boarding ramps

Temporary Exemption: rail conveyances

For a period of five years, where the relationship between the platform and rail carriage means that an external boarding ramp can only be provided at a gradient greater than 1 in 8 and less than 1 in 4, ARA members are not required to provide staff assistance in ascending or descending the ramp.

Reporting Requirements

a. Number of locations where boarding ramp slopes of one in eight or better cannot currently be achieved

Due to legacy platform standards and resulting platform heights, the height and width of rolling stock that use the regional rail network, including freight trains, and the current design of V/Line boarding ramps, all platforms in the regional rail network cannot achieve a boarding ramp slope of 1 in 8 or better.

b. Measures to be taken to increase the number of locations where external boarding ramp slopes of one in eight or better will be achieved

In 2018 V/Line completed a comprehensive assessment of Platform Geometry to identify platform height and clearance determination for DDA compliance in unassisted boarding. This assessment considered V/Line's current rolling stock and infrastructure with reference to initiatives undertaken by other operators, Metro and Transport for New South Wales. This assessment has resulted in a number of recommendations that are being considered in the development of a revised V/Line platform standard. Further exploration of boarding technology will occur over the next three years.

d. Results of examination of alternative methods of achieving accessible boarding

V/Line is revising its platform standards to reflect the results of the Platform Geometry assessment completed in 2018. In addition, V/Line is exploring the recommendations from this assessment and will be doing further investigation into innovative boarding solutions over the next three years.

V/Line accepts the Companion Card issued by the Department of Health and Human Services to people who may require the assistance of a companion. It provides free travel for the carer/companion of the card holder on all public transport services^[1] to support customers boarding V/Line services.

11.2 Handrails and grabrails – Handrails to be provided on access paths

Temporary exemption: rail platforms

For a period of five years, rail platforms are exempt from clause 11.2.

Reporting requirement: where a request is made but the installation of a handrail does not proceed, report on the request and the reasons for not taking action

V/Line has not received any requests during the reporting period.

^[1] Victorian Fares and Ticketing Manual, Effective 1 January 2018, Public Transport Victoria.

Part B – Exemptions from the Premises Standards

H2.2 Accessways

- **Temporary exemption: rail premises and rail infrastructure**

For a period of five years, flange gaps of up to 75mm are permitted where a level crossing forms part of an access path on rail premises or rail infrastructure.

Reporting Requirements:

- a. action taken to improve safe use of level crossings where they form part of an access path;**
- b. progress made in the removal of level crossings; and**
- c. any developments in research into possible technical solutions for bridging flange gaps**

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage.

- **Temporary exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure**

For a period of five years, an access path is required to provide entrance and exit only at a single boundary point for existing rail stations where providing access at each entrance would require significant structural building work or not be feasible due to space, topographical or heritage reasons.

Reporting Requirement: rail stations which have inaccessible entrances

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage.

- **Temporary exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure**

For a period of five years, for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure:

- where the 1200mm minimum unobstructed width for access paths cannot be met due to structural and technical constraints, an access path with a minimum unobstructed width of 1000mm may be provided;
- the 850mm minimum unobstructed width (applicable to doorways and gateways) is also permitted on access paths for the purposes of passing an obstruction limited to less than 800mm in length; and
- platform edge warning TGSIs are permitted to intrude into access paths.

Reporting Requirement: rail stations which have restricted paths of travel

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.4 Access paths – Minimum unobstructed width.

- **Temporary exemption: existing rail platforms**

For a period of five years, for existing rail platforms, a passing area every 9 metres along any two-way access path that is less than 1800mm wide is permitted where it is not possible to provide one every 6 metres due to structural or heritage constraints.

Reporting Requirement: Rail station platforms which do not provide passing spaces every 6 metres where any two-way access path is less than 1800mm wide, and provides an updated version of that report every 12 months, and that these reports include a description of any measures taken by the ARA member to address any impacts this may have on users

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 4.2 Passing areas – Two-way access paths and aerobridges.

H2.4 Handrails and grabrails

- **Temporary exemption: rail platforms**

For a period of five years, rail platforms are exempt from clause H2.4(2).

Reporting requirement: where a request is made but the installation of a handrail does not proceed, report on the request and the reasons for not taking action

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 11.2 Handrails and grabrails – Handrails to be provided on access paths.

Dated: 17 September 2019



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Paul D'Alessio
Acting Chief Executive Officer
V/Line Corporation