

# Media Release

**The Hon Philip Dalidakis MLC**  
Minister for Trade and Investment  
Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy  
Minister for Small Business



Getting Things Done.  
Making Things Fair.

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## REGIONAL PASSENGERS SAY GOODBYE TO MOBILE BLACK SPOTS

Passengers on Victoria's five busiest regional rail lines are set to see major improvements in mobile coverage following the successful testing of mobile signal repeaters, which will be used in Australia for the first time.

The successful pilot clears the way for the rollout of the \$18 million Regional Rail Connectivity Project, which will boost mobile coverage for passengers along the Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Traralgon and Seymour rail lines.

The Andrews Labor Government is partnering with the three major mobile carriers – Telstra, Vodafone and Optus – to construct up to 35 new mobile towers as part of the project. These towers will be combined with cutting edge in-train technology to significantly improve coverage for passengers.

Trains will begin to be fitted with the technology from early next year and the entire VLocity fleet will have a booster on board by the end of 2018.

The first mobile towers have already been built, and once boosters are installed passengers will notice a huge improvement in their mobile signal. Mobile coverage will improve on more and more trips as the technology is rolled out throughout 2018.

The pilot program demonstrated that the in-train technology coupled with the new towers will boost coverage from less than 50 per cent to almost full network coverage on the five rail lines, which see more than 15.5 million passenger trips annually.

As well as improving liveability in regional Victoria, the Regional Rail Connectivity Project will also boost productivity for regional business passengers, delivering an estimated \$20 million per year to the Victorian economy.

The Labor Government is improving connectivity in regional Victoria, delivering free public WiFi in Bendigo and Ballarat, building 166 new towers to fix mobile blackspots and announcing the new \$45 million Connecting Regional Communities Program in the *Victorian Budget 2017/18*.

More information about all the government's programs to improve digital connectivity for regional Victoria can be found at [economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/connecting-victoria](http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au/connecting-victoria).

### Quote attributable to Minister for Innovation and the Digital Economy Philip Dalidakis

*"In today's world, digital connectivity is crucial for people's lifestyles and for doing business – this program is making it fair for regional Victorian passengers by giving them faster, more reliable mobile coverage."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Regional Development Jaala Pulford

*"This program is just one of the many we're delivering to make sure regional Victorians have the service they need to be connected, do business and stay safe during emergencies."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Public Transport Jacinta Allan

*"We're investing billions of dollars in better services for regional passengers, and keeping people connected when they're on board."*

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