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MEDIA RELEASE

NorthWest Rail Alliance Welcomes MP Ali Cupper's Tourist Train Commitment.

NorthWest Rail Alliance was pleased to read of State MP Ali Cupper's commitment to a tourist train provision on the Mildura Corridor.

In the short term, NorthWest Rail Alliance (NWRA) has formed the viewpoint that a slow train provision, on a weekly basis, is a good starting point for a future full-scale reintroduction of passenger rail along the corridor. Such a service could be introduced after the Murray Basin Rail Project has been completed to an acceptable standard to allow for safe conveyance of passenger trains along the line.

The 'slow' train would ideally run between Maryborough or Ballarat and Mildura, completing the journey to Ballarat in around 6.5 to 7 hours, where passengers can connect to the Regional Fast Rail and Vlocity services into Melbourne. This would bring the train trip to around 8 hours, which is comparable to the current provision via Swan Hill.

This journey time assumes an average speed of 75km/h between Maryborough and Mildura. Rolling stock, such as the Overland train stock, would be an ideal fit for our corridor, and would wholly run in Victoria. We note that for semi-protected crossings, as is the case on the Swan Hill Line, locomotive hauled passenger trains do not have to slow for each individual crossing.

A weekly service would run in place of the Swan Hill bus-train option on the given day, (and vice versa) to reliably measure patronage. We would expect tweaking of the bus timetable to favour the train.

This is a fantastic proposal for an initial first step towards full introduction. Once it is there, we believe it will be used, not only by locals, but also by tourists, at a time when tourist stimulus is of prime importance to the local economy, encouraging the government to ramp up services, which will also keep the line in good condition to transport our primary produce to port without service interruptions.

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