



# Media release

**The Hon Dr Denis Naphine MP**

Premier

Minister for Regional Cities

Minister for Racing

Tuesday 8 April 2014

## **Coalition to fix mobile blackspots and deliver free Wi-Fi on VLocity trains**

- **Coalition Government to fix mobile blackspots and provide free Wi-Fi with \$40 million commitment across regional Victoria**
- **Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Seymour and Traralgon trains get free Wi-Fi**
- **Coalition Government building a better public transport network for Victoria**

Regional Victorians are set to receive better internet connectivity, with Premier Denis Naphine today announcing \$40 million to fix mobile blackspots and to deliver free Wi-Fi on a number of V/Line train services.

Joined in Geelong by Minister for Technology Gordon Rich-Phillips, Dr Naphine said a collaborative process with the Commonwealth Government and mobile infrastructure providers would soon commence.

An Expressions of Interest (EOI) process will secure Victorian Government-sponsored Wi-Fi aboard V/Line's VLocity carriages operating between Melbourne and Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Seymour and Traralgon.

"This announcement will be of enormous benefit to thousands of commuters, with more than 13 million passenger trips recorded between these regional centres and Melbourne each year," Dr Naphine said.

"Eliminating these blackspots along train lines means commuters will be able to access emails, social media and work.

"As part of the project, the Government will invest in a public Wi-Fi service on these trains to ensure that all commuters have uninterrupted access to the internet for the duration of their journey.

"Commuters travelling beyond these regional centres will also be able to access more reliable mobile services, with the Coalition Government also addressing mobile blackspots across Victoria more broadly.

"This funding will improve mobile coverage for regional towns affected by mobile blackspots. Around 40,000 Victorians live in areas where mobile coverage is poor or non-existent."

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Mr Rich-Phillips said the Coalition Government was committed to ensuring that more regional Victorians were connected and mobile in the digital age.

“There is more than 620 kilometres of track between Melbourne and these five regional centres, with commuters currently facing little or no mobile data coverage along approximately 40 per cent of this network,” Mr Rich-Phillips said.

“This announcement will see the construction of new towers to provide better coverage around the state.”

The Government will consider rolling out Wi-Fi services across the V/Line network more broadly following the successful implementation of these five initial services.

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