

PRESS RELEASE

SHEED URGES STATE GOVERNMENT TO RECOMMISSION DOOKIE - SHEPPARTON RAIL LINE

Independent Member for Shepparton Suzanna Sheed has called on the Andrews Labor Government to reopen the Dookie – Shepparton rail line.

The line was suspended in 2007 following years of severe drought.

Ms Sheed asked the Minister for Public Transport to outline when the government plans to reopen the freight line.

“Would the minister advise what steps have been or are anticipated within government to reinstate the 28 kilometre rail line that was suspended in 2007 during the severe drought and has been called for by the Dookie Rail Group, GrainCorp and the Rail Freight Alliance?” Ms Sheed said.

A report to the Victorian Grain Logistics Task Force found that the re-opening of the rail line was supported by industry to enable the annual production of 120,000 tonnes of grain on the line to be transported by train rather than truck with reduced road damage and improved road safety.

Ms Sheed said reopening the line would provide a more efficient path to sale for farmers and ensure the sustainability of the Dookie GrainCorp site.

“Transport of grain via rail is important for keeping supply chain costs low for growers, ultimately increasing the competitiveness of Australian grain internationally,” she said.

“GrainCorp is trying to get as much grain moved by rail as possible, and as Dookie is no longer connected it is no longer considered a primary grain export site.

“It is therefore not a priority for investment, but that could change if the rail line was recommissioned.”

Reopening the rail line would also result in significant economic and social benefits to the community in reduced heavy vehicle traffic.

“Investing in rail will reduce truck traffic, which significantly compromises safety as roads are too narrow and not designed to accommodate the wide trucks required to transport grain. Trucks also add to existing traffic and damage roads at a faster rate,” Ms Sheed said.

Answers to constituency questions raised in the House are to be provided in writing within 30 days.

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