

Upfield rail duplication and extension



What we need

Key rail investments are needed now to resolve critical constraints on train services in the Merri-bek, Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell municipalities to unlock the potential of Melbourne's north. The actions required are:

- duplicate and upgrade the Upfield rail line between Gowrie and Upfield Stations to improve train frequency, accessibility, passenger experience and station amenity
- re-configure the City Loop to separate the Upfield and Craigieburn lines, removing ongoing constraints and improving capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers along both lines
- extend and electrify the Upfield line to Wallan with new stations, including at Beveridge and Cloverton, to support the rapidly occurring residential, commercial and industrial development in the region.

Why

The Upfield rail line services the growing populations of Merri-bek and southern Hume, ending at Upfield Station. Yet beyond that station are Melbourne's booming northern suburbs, which stretch across Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell.

The Upfield rail line has one of the least frequent peak-period services in Melbourne's rail network. Trains run every 15–20 minutes during peak periods and every 20–30 minutes outside peak. Single track service between Gowrie and Upfield stations, and the Upfield and Craigieburn train lines sharing City Loop tracks, create significant bottlenecks and constraints to improved capacity, frequency and reliability for passengers.

Growth communities in Mitchell, Whittlesea and Hume are currently serviced by diesel V/Line, with only five services in the morning peak. Electric line and metropolitan train services terminate at Craigieburn. This cuts capacity, as V/Line trains carry about 40 per cent of the passengers of a comparable electric metropolitan train. Many services already run at or over capacity, with passengers regularly required to stand on journeys that can last over 80 minutes. Without an electrified Upfield extension, communities will increasingly rely on the already-busy Hume Freeway.

Residential development in Mitchell, Hume and Whittlesea is unlikely to provide sufficient local jobs for the community. Efficient, accessible rail services will ensure residents have equitable access to a range of employment opportunities. Greater connectivity will also support improved access to State Significant Industrial Precincts in Merrifield, Craigieburn, Somerton, Campbellfield and the future Beveridge Intermodal Precinct, and the Cloverton Metropolitan Activity Centre (which will be the major activity, employment and service precinct for over 400,000 people).

Extension and electrification of the Upfield line to Wallan will increase capacity at Wallan and Donnybrook Stations, along with future stations at Beveridge and Cloverton.

Currently parts of Merri-bek, Hume, Whittlesea and Mitchell experience high levels of socio-economic disadvantage and unemployment. Frequent, reliable public transport will ensure these residents have access to jobs, education and health services.