

March 15, 2010

The Hon. Martin Pakula, MLC
Minister for Public Transport
Parliament House
Spring Street
MELBOURNE Vic 3000

Dear Minister

Re: Broadband Wireless Access and VLine Rail Services

On behalf of Ballarat ICT Ltd I wish to communicate our appreciation of the efforts that the current State Government has, and is making in relation to rail services between Ballarat and Melbourne. The improvements to rolling stock, infrastructure and services are very much appreciated by the Ballarat community. An opportunity exists for the State Government and VLine to make a further improvement to regional rail services, specifically in relation to the provision of wireless broadband services to the travelling public.

Over the past 12 months the numbers of people travelling between Ballarat and Melbourne has increased significantly. A large percentage of the weekday travelling public attend Melbourne for employment, hence access to wireless broadband would enable these persons to utilise the travelling time in a productive manner. Further, the travelling general public have access to Lap Top computers and a range of hand held electronic devices requiring access to the Internet. At the current time it is virtually impossible to access any form of consistent and reliable wireless coverage when travelling between Ballarat and Melbourne.

The Board of Ballarat ICT Ltd contends that should VLine make the modest investment in fitting all regional trains with a wireless broadband capacity then patronage levels on regional services would be significantly boosted. A possible option might be to undertake an initial 3 month trial on the Ballarat – Melbourne line (with the support of one of the major telecommunications providers) and then evaluate. I am very confident that the anticipated results would impress the State Government and VLine.

Representatives of Ballarat ICT Ltd would be prepared to meet with you (either in Ballarat or Melbourne) to discuss these matters. I look forward to your positive consideration of this request and an early response.

Yours sincerely



MAL VALLANCE
CHAIR