

Enhanced Regional Bus Services



The Problem:

Passenger rail services to Hamilton ceased in 1993, making regional bus services critical links for our community to access medical care, education, jobs and connection with family. Existing services from Hamilton to key regional centres such as Ballarat, Mt Gambier and Warrnambool are ineffective and inadequate and do not meet community needs. The level of service is inconsistent with the needs of a regional town of Hamilton's size, especially one without a passenger rail service, and with its aging population and strong secondary education sector, but a lack of post-secondary education options.

Access to Ballarat is critical for residents to effectively access to the Ballarat rail hub. Access to Warrnambool is critical for hundreds of Deakin University and South West TAFE students who rely on being in Warrnambool for lectures or workshop/technical training. Southern Grampians has one of the lowest educational attainment rates in Victoria, and this is directly related to the lack of transport options. There are only two return services daily from Hamilton to Ballarat, and with the only option to attend daily appointments in Ballarat requiring people to leave Hamilton at 6:35am, and return at 10:45pm. The service to Warrnambool is even more limited, with only one daily service that leaves Hamilton mid morning, forcing parents of post secondary students to drive the two hour return trip, twice daily, or share the cost of a taxi with other families.

For residents in our small towns outside of Hamilton, this disadvantage is amplified.

Current Services

Hamilton to Ballarat: 6:35am and 4:55pm
Ballarat to Hamilton: 10:11am and 8:21pm
Hamilton to Warrnambool: 10:23am

Priorities Addressed:



Economic Growth



Education



Community Health and Wellbeing

Enhanced Regional Bus Services



The Solution:

Strengthened regional bus links with additional daily bus services on the Hamilton - Ballarat route, as well as the Hamilton - Warrnambool route.

These services should be scheduled to allow post-secondary students to attend classes in Warrnambool, and community members to attend appointments in Ballarat and return to Hamilton in the late afternoon or evening, or connect with train services to Melbourne.

The Ask:



Minimum one and preferably two additional services daily, seven days per week on the Ballarat-Hamilton-Mt Gambier route.

An additional week day service to Warrnambool from Casterton/Coleraine through Hamilton. This would arrive in Warrnambool before 8:30am and depart at 4:30pm back to Hamilton.