

GUIDE TO V/LINE JOURNEYS

V/Line is the Victorian state government agency responsible for rural railways. V/Line operates a very intensive service of trains within a large commuting distance of Melbourne, Train services within a large circumference of Melbourne seem just like a gigantic suburban system. Further afield, V/Line operates long-distance trains within the state of Victoria. V/Line is also responsible for the operation of a comprehensive network of rural buses. Most of these connect with V/Line trains, but a few operate through to/from Melbourne. The buses are operated by franchisees.

Most V/Line trains are composed of modern Diesel Multiple Units, but some are locomotive-hauled trains.

There is seamless interchange between V/Line trains and buses, with integrated fares and timetables (and even colour scheme).

On its long-distance trains, as well as the ordinary economy class, V/Line provides First class. This is for flat-rate supplement of just a few dollars. First class on V/Line offers a considerable improvement in comfort and space. It is very worthwhile considering.

The long-distance trains also have buffets. The food is pretty ordinary. The food is taken back to your seat.

V/Line's operations are centred on the large, modern Southern Cross station in Melbourne.

V/Line is also responsible for most rural railway lines in Victoria, other than the interstate mainlines, which have been transferred to the Australian Rail Track Corporation, a Federal government body. V/Line is not responsible for the operation of freight trains. All freight trains in, to or from Victoria are operated by various private companies.

V/Line is, therefore, the extreme example of the complexity of current Australian railway ownership and operational structure. That is, most V/Line trains operate on V/Line lines, but some V/Line trains operate over non-V/Line lines, and some V/Line lines only have non-V/Line trains operated over them.

MELBOURNE – GEELONG – WARRNAMBOOL

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
Melbourne Southern Cross	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		The interstate standard gauge line is quite separate from the lines used by suburban and regional trains. Soon after departure it goes over the North Melbourne viaduct spanning all the other tracks. The Regional Rail Link (opened 21 June 2015) then junctions off.

<i>Dynon</i>	4	Dynon locomotive depot and Dynon freight yards. There are lots of nice areas in Melbourne, but you sure don't see them along this route. There is lots of light industry, rail yards and dreary suburbs.
<i>West Dynon Junction</i>	7	Bridge over Maribyrnong River, followed by short tunnel.
<i>West Footscray Junction</i>		Six running tracks – 2 (broad gauge electrified) belong to Metro Trains Melbourne, 2 (broad gauge) belong to V/Line for regional passenger trains, 2 (standard gauge) belong to the Australian Rail Track Corporation for interstate trains – these are the lines the XPT uses. Also the Tottenham Marshalling yard – main freight yard for Melbourne.
Footscray		Stop to pick up or set down only.
Sunshine	12	Stop to pick up or set down only. Parallel to electrified suburban / regional line
Ardeer	16	The line continues as two tracks.
Deer Park	18	
<i>Deer Park Junction</i>	19	This section of the Regional Rail Link, from Deer Park Junction to Manor Junction, is a completely new line opened in 2015. It was designed to both provide Geelong line passenger trains with entry to Melbourne clear of suburban trains, and to provide two new stations in this extremely fast growing area of Melbourne.
Tarneit	29	These suburbs are the fastest growing area of Australia.
Wyndham Vale	40	
<i>Manor Junction</i>	47	Junction with the traditional line from Melbourne.
Little River	55	
Lara	65	
Corio	72	Start of the northern suburbs of Geelong. A heavy industrial area. Yet, ironically, nearby is Geelong Grammar, one of the most exclusive and expensive schools in Australia.
North Shore	75	Followed by large freight yard.
North Geelong	78	Followed by locomotive depot.
Geelong	81	Roofed station. Train / bus interchange.
		Short tunnel
South Geelong	83	Geelong football ground nearby.
Marshall	88	
Waurin Ponds	93	Final southern suburb of Geelong. End of the frequent passenger service.
Colac	153	Significant town. The countryside can be described as typical of a great deal of Victoria, that is, not spectacular scenery, but pleasant, fertile, and well-settled.
Camperdown	199	Significant town.
Warrnambool	267	Significant city. Train / bus interchange.

MELBOURNE – BALLARAT – ARARAT & MARYBOROUGH

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
Melbourne Southern Cross	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		The interstate standard gauge line is quite separate from the lines used by suburban and regional trains. Soon after departure it goes over the North Melbourne viaduct spanning all the other tracks. The Regional Rail Link (opened 21 June 2015) then junctions off.
<i>Dynon</i>	4	Dynon locomotive depot and Dynon freight yards. There are lots of nice areas in Melbourne, but you sure don't see them along this route. There is lots of light industry, rail yards and dreary suburbs.
<i>West Dynon Junction</i>	7	Bridge over Maribyrnong River, followed by short tunnel.
<i>West Footscray Junction</i>		Six running tracks – 2 (broad gauge electrified) belong to Metro Trains Melbourne, 2 (broad gauge) belong to V/Line for regional passenger trains, 2 (standard gauge) belong to the Australian Rail Track Corporation for interstate and standard gauge trains. Geelong trains use the new Regional Rail Link lines. Also the Tottenham Marshalling yard – main freight yard for Melbourne.
Footscray		Stop to pick up or set down only.
Sunshine	12	Stop to pick up or set down, only.
Ardeer	16	
Deer Park	18	
<i>Deer Park Junction</i>	19	
Caroline Springs	20	New station. End of double track.
Rockbank	30	The railway is currently being duplicated between Caroline Springs and Melton. It is likely to be electrified in future. The countryside is flat and uninteresting.
Melton	37	
Bacchus Marsh	51	The line dips into a valley to serve the town of Bacchus Marsh. After leaving Bacchus Marsh, it turns south to the head of the valley. As you go along this section you can see the railway up

		the hill on the western side of the valley – where you will be in a couple of minutes. At the head of the valley there is a bridge and the line turns abruptly in the opposite direction to climb steeply up a severe escarpment. As you climb this escarpment, you can see the railway in the valley below – where you were a couple of minutes ago.
Ballan	80	
		At the site of the former Warrenheip station, the railway from Geelong comes in and runs alongside. This is a freight line, soon to be converted to standard gauge. It is mainly used now for wheat traffic. Warrenheip to Ballarat to North Ballarat Junction was originally double track, and is likely to be re-converted to double track and dual gauge.
Ballarat	114	Substantial, roofed station. Indeed, this is a substantial city. It was the premier gold town of Victoria during the nineteenth century gold rushes. It was very prosperous then and many substantial buildings were built – hotels, town hall, post office, churches, etc. These remain and give the city a real character. The main street, Sturt St, has a median strip of such exceptional width that, in effect, it is linear park going through the centre of the city. This median strip is filled with beautiful gardens and with sculptures. The park around Lake Wendouree is also filled with many sculptures and beautiful gardens, especially begonias, which give rise to Ballarat’s annual Begonia Festival. Ballarat was formerly served by a tramway system, including a line around Lake Wendouree. The tramway next to Lake Wendouree has been preserved by a tramway preservation society and is well worth a visit. Ballarat is highly recommended!
		Ballarat railway workshops are now leased to a private engineering company. They maintain Melbourne suburban trains.
North Ballarat Junction	116	Ararat line
Wendouree	119	End of the Ballarat suburbs, and end of the very frequent passenger trains service.
Beaufort	183	
Ararat	207	The standard gauge, interstate mainline – from Melbourne via a longer route via North Geelong - intersects our line just before Ararat platform. Train / bus interchange.
North Ballarat Junction	116	Maryborough line
Creswick	137	Old goldmining town.
Clunes	155	Old goldmining town.
Talbot	170	Old goldmining town.
Maryborough	184	An amazing station. It is extremely ornate. The exterior has complicated brickwork ornamented by intricate plasterwork. The interior has ornate timber beams, parquet flooring, ornate windows and carved timber ticket windows.. There used to be a large refreshment room. This is now leased as a private

		restaurant. This overbuilt station is for a fairly small town. Admittedly, when the station was built Maryborough was the centre of an important goldfield. But, it was still a grand station to have been built, far better than any Melbourne station at the time. The American author, Mark Twain, visited and aptly described Maryborough as a “station with a town attached”.
--	--	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

MELBOURNE – BENDIGO – SWAN HILL & ECHUCA

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
Melbourne Southern Cross	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		The interstate standard gauge line is quite separate from the lines used by suburban and regional trains. Soon after departure it goes over the North Melbourne viaduct spanning all the other tracks. The Regional Rail Link (opened 21 June 2015) then junctions off..
<i>Dynon</i>	4	Dynon locomotive depot and Dynon freight yards. There are lots of nice areas in Melbourne, but you sure don't see them along this route. There is lots of light industry, rail yards and dreary suburbs.
<i>West Dynon Junction</i>	7	Bridge over Maribyrnong River, followed by short tunnel.
<i>West Footscray Junction</i>		Six running tracks – 2 (broad gauge electrified) belong to Metro Trains Melbourne, 2 (broad gauge) belong to V/Line for regional passenger trains, 2 (standard gauge) belong to the Australian Rail Track Corporation for interstate and standard gauge trains. Geelong trains use the new Regional Rail Link lines. Also the Tottenham Marshalling yard – main freight yard for Melbourne.
Footscray		Stop to pick up or set down only.
Sunshine	12	Stop to pick up or set down only.
		Train now on line controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne, along with electric, suburban trains. The interstate, standard gauge line is parallel for a short distance to Albion.
Sunbury	38	End of suburban, electric trains. Revert to line controlled by V/Line. The scenery gradually improves to become hilly.
Woodend	78	Macedon Ranges to the east.

		The railway was the first rural railway built in Victoria. It was built to high standards – double track, substantial stone station buildings, impressive viaducts and tunnels. The result still looks impressive. However, the young colony of Victoria decided that it could not afford such high standards for subsequent railways.
Kyneton	92	The line becomes, in theory, single track. When this line was upgraded in the early 2000s for fairly high-speed and for additional trains, the unfortunate decision was made to save money on the project by singling the railway beyond Kyneton, despite the fact there are almost as many trains beyond Kyneton as there are as far as it. Nevertheless, the result has not been too bad, because the crossing loops are both frequent and lengthy.
	107	Taradale viaduct, then tunnel.
Castlemaine	126	Significant former gold mining centre.
Bendigo	162	Bendigo almost matched Ballarat as an important gold mining centre in the nineteenth century. It also is a substantial city. It was very prosperous and many substantial buildings were built – hotels, town hall, post office, churches, etc. These remain and give the city a real character. The annual Easter Chinese Festival is significant. Bendigo was formerly served by a tramway system. Portion of the tramway has been retained by local interests. It connects tourist attractions, such as a restored underground gold mine and a restored Chinese temple. The preserved tram line runs through the very centre of the city. The old trams running next to the old buildings are magic! Bendigo is highly recommended!
North Bendigo Junction	164	Swan Hill line
Eaglehawk	170	A Bendigo suburb. End of the very frequent passenger train service.
Pyramid	249	The line is now traversing the northern plains of Victoria. Not of scenic interest, but of importance for wheat growing. Indeed, wheat silos can be seen at every station.
Kerang	269	A shire owned railway used to run from here to Koondrook on the Murray River.
Swan Hill	345	Train/ bus interchange. Site of a good historical museum.
North Bendigo Junction	164	Echuca line
Epsom	170	A Bendigo suburb. End of the very frequent passenger train service.
Echuca	248	On the Murray River. In the days of the river paddle steamers this was a very important inland port. There are many historic buildings and places of interest.

MELBOURNE – SEYMOUR – SHEPPARTON

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
-------	----------------	-------

Melbourne Southern Cross	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		North Melbourne flyover overhead is used by most V/Line trains exiting Melbourne, but not for this route.
North Melbourne	2	Busy interchange station. Four passenger lines.
Kensington	4	Four tracks reduce to two lines.
Newmarket	5	Junction for the branch to the Showgrounds and Flemington Racecourse. This branch on most days has no public trains (but does have many empty suburban, electric trains between the peaks to sidings), but on some days – during the Royal Melbourne Show in late September, and on race-days, including the Melbourne Cup in early November, it is exceptionally busy.
Essendon	8	
Broadmeadows	17	Stop to pick, or set down, only. The standard gauge line which comes from Melbourne via Albion has crossed over our line via flyover just before Broadmeadows and now runs parallel on the eastern side – used by interstate and V/Line Albury trains.
Somerton	22	Industrial area.
Craigieburn	26	End of the electrified, suburban train service.
Donnybrook	33	Our line continues as double track. The standard gauge line alongside is single track, but has such long crossing loops that a new name was invented to describe them – “passing lanes”- so, at times, it looks like a four track railway.
Wallan	48	The hills commence. These are the Great Dividing Range which goes along the entire east coast of Australia. However, at this point the Great Dividing Range has nearly petered out.
Heathcote Junction	54	Junction for a former branchline. The top of the range.
Wandong	55	Attractive country continues.
Tallarook	90	Junction for a former branchline. Soon after here, the line reduces to one track for the series of bridges over the Goulburn River and its anabranches.
Seymour	99	Significant town. End of the frequent passenger train service. A railway preservation group is active in the former locomotive depot, after the station.
Mangalore	109	Former station. This is where the Goulburn Valley line (our line) moves away from the North East line.

Nagambie	125	The Goulburn Valley is flat, but with irrigation, very fertile, with much fruit growing.
Mooroopna	177	Over the Goulburn River for the third time.
Shepparton	181	Significant town. Train / bus interchange.

MELBOURNE – ALBURY (STANDARD GAUGE)

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
Melbourne Southern Cross, platform 1 or 2.	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		The standard gauge line is quite separate from the lines used by suburban and regional trains. Soon after departure it goes over the North Melbourne viaduct spanning all the other tracks. The Regional Rail Link (opened 21 June 2015) then junctions off. The line is controlled by Centralised Traffic Control (CTC) situated at Junee.
<i>Dynon</i>	4	Dynon locomotive depot and Dynon freight yards. There are lots of nice areas in Melbourne, but you sure don't see them along this route. There is lots of light industry, rail yards and dreary suburbs.
<i>West Dynon Junction</i>	7	Bridge over Maribyrnong River, followed by short tunnel.
<i>West Footscray Junction</i>		Six running tracks – 2 (broad gauge electrified) belong to Metro Trains Melbourne, 2 (broad gauge) belong to V/Line for regional passenger trains, 2 (standard gauge) belong to the Australian Rail Track Corporation for interstate trains – these are the lines the standard gauge passenger trains use. Also the Tottenham Marshalling yard – main freight yard for Melbourne.
<i>Sunshine</i>		Parallel to electrified suburban / regional line
<i>Albion</i>		Double track dual gauge line, including two high bridges.
Broadmeadows	Ap.28 (the km. posts show different distances as	Pick up stop only. Parallel to electrified suburban / regional line.

	they have a different route).	
		<p>Parallel to regional line. This appears to be a three track mainline. It is not. The XPT is on the single track standard gauge (1.435metre, 4 ft 8 1/2 inches) line used for interstate trains. The two lines alongside are broad gauge (1.6 metre, 5 ft 3 inches) line used by Victorian intrastate trains.</p> <p>On the standard gauge there are crossing loops which have recently been extended to provide for running crosses. These are so long that the ARTC devised a new name for them – “Passing Lanes”. At these Passing Lanes, it appears to be a four track railway.</p> <p>(Railways built to different gauges in the different states is one of the great bugbears of Australian history. When the first railways were being built in the 1850s the various colonies did agree to build them to the same gauge. But then NSW reneged on the agreement - not once, but twice.)</p>
<i>Craigieburn</i>	Ap.41	<p>The big ugly building to the east of the line is where Australian banknotes are printed, and banknotes of many other countries. The Australian invention of polymer banknotes has been a great export success.</p> <p>Craigieburn is the end of Melbourne electric suburban trains.</p> <p>To generalise: Most place names in the areas first settled by Europeans in Australia are British derived names. Place names in areas settled later are more usually the original Aboriginal names. Although it looks like you are traversing a plain, in fact the line is climbing</p>
<i>Heathcote Junction</i>	Ap.63	<p>The major geographical feature all along the east coast of Australia is the Great Dividing Range, with a small coastal plain to the east and endless plains to the west. Here you cross the Great Dividing Range, but at a point where it is petering out and hardly noticeable.</p>
		The country is now pleasantly hilly. After crossing the Goulburn River, you pass through -
Kilmore East		
Seymour	110	<p>Pick up stop only.</p> <p>The line now becomes a double track standard gauge line. The northbound XPT is usually routed via the West line, but both lines are signalled for two-way running.</p> <p>The countryside is now fairly flat, but very productive.</p>
Avenel		
Euroa		
Violet Town	181	
Benalla	206	Junction station.
<i>Glenrowan</i>	230	The summit of a small range.

Wangaratta	245	
Springhurst		
Chiltern		
Wodonga	Ap. 298	Wodonga is on a bypass line opened a few years ago. Across the Murray River, the border between Victoria and New South Wales. Bizarrely, the border is not in the middle of the river, but goes along the southern bank of the river. The Murray River with its many tributaries is a major feature of Australia as they drain an enormous area of SE Australia. However, here the river is disappointingly small.
Albury	646	Large city.

MELBOURNE- TRARALGON – BAIRNSDALE

The history of this line is peculiar in that it was not built outwards from Melbourne, but inwards from Sale, and in a series of disconnected sections.

Place	Km. from Melb.	Notes
Melbourne Southern Cross, platform 1	0	This is a large and distinctive station. It was completely rebuilt from 2002 to 2006. There is one point near the main Spencer/Collins Streets entrance where, without moving, you can watch the regional diesel trains arriving and departing every few minutes, the electric suburban trains passing through every few minutes and the trams outside every few seconds. Alternatively, use the upstairs passage ways – one at each end – as vantage points for the trains. The curvy roof is not only for appearance, but also to disperse the diesel fumes. The portion of the station for regional trains is controlled by V/Line. The portion for suburban trains is controlled by Metro Trains Melbourne. More details at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Cross_railway_station
		Six track viaduct between the south west corner of the CBD and the Yarra River.
Flinders Street		The main suburban station. This is an extraordinary-looking building. The exterior looks like a cross between a railway station, a Moorish castle and a Medieval city hall. The exterior is very often used as an iconic illustration of Melbourne. There are currently 11 through platforms in use.
		Leaving Flinders St station, there are 12 running lines. This is a big land footprint right next to the central city. So, not surprisingly, the lines are gradually being covered over.
<i>Jolimont Junction</i>		Halfway between Flinders St and Richmond stations, the running lines reduce from 12 to ten, but then they are joined by two parallel tram lines.
Richmond		Ten platforms. A very busy interchange stations. Four tracks now veer off for the eastern suburbs line, leaving six tracks in the next section.
South Yarra		Another busy interchange station, in a trendy shopping and residential area.

		Two tracks now go off for the Sandringham line, leaving four tracks in the next section.
Hawkesburn	5	Four platform station.
Toorak	7	Four platform station. Not the station for the famous up- market part of the suburb – that is Heyington on the Glen Waverley line.
Armadale	7	Four platform station.
Malvern	9	Four platform station,
Caulfield	11	Four platform station. Junction station. Caulfield Racecourse is adjacent. Along parts of the next section of line, substantial portions have recently been raised onto viaducts to eliminate level crossings, a major problem in Melbourne.
Westall	21	Unimportant station, but suburban train depot adjacent.
Dandenong	30	Junction station and bus interchange.
Pakenham	56	End of suburban train working, and of electrification.
		The Gippsland line was substantially upgraded in the 1950s, in anticipation of heavy coal traffic from the Latrobe Valley, which in fact did not come up to expectations. With the development of natural gas fields, the coal traffic has now almost entirely disappeared. The upgrading involved duplication, regrading, re-signalling and electrification – now removed beyond Pakenham.
Bunyip	79	The Bunyip-Longwarry section is the only remaining single track section between Melbourne and Moe. This is not because there were any engineering obstacles, but simply because it was the last section scheduled to be done, and by then it was clear that the anticipated coal traffic was not up to expectations. However, it means that with today's frequent passenger trains, the timetables all have to be written around this short section of track.
Longwarry	84	
Drouin	92	Before the 1950s upgrading, up trains faced steep gradients in this section. With the upgrading and duplication, there are substantial differences in the height of the up and down tracks in this section.
Warragul	100	
Moe	130	The first of the series of Latrobe Valley towns. End of double track.
Morwell	144	
Traralgon	158	The third of the series of close Latrobe Valley towns. End of the frequent passenger service.
Sale	206	The present station replaced a dead-end station, which required trains to reverse. This reflected the fact that Sale was the starting point of the Gippsland line.
Stratford	222	Preceded by bridge over Avon River.
Bairnsdale	275	Train / bus interchange station.