

2020–21 Highlights

Introduction

In 2020–21 VicTrack has maintained its position as an important partner in Victoria's transport sector. We have contributed our expertise to a range of government initiatives from the Big Build to helping to preserve the state's rail history, maintained critical telecommunications infrastructure and launched a new commercial joint venture to better monitor the structural health of bridges.

Preserving our rail history

Preserving our rail history – a blueprint for the future was launched in March 2021. VicTrack put together the Tourist and Heritage Railway Blueprint in partnership with transport, tourism and heritage stakeholders. It sets out a way forward for the Tourist and Heritage (T&H) railway sector to flourish into the future while continuing to preserve the state's railway history. Under the blueprint, the Victorian Government allocated \$1 million in funding to 15 groups to help them bounce back from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Network performance targets exceeded

VicTrack's vital telecommunications network performed above expectations in 2020–21. With telecommunications infrastructure managed remotely for the first time, network reliability exceeded expectation and achieved 99.88 per cent against a KPI target of 99.5 per cent across our transport operator connections network.

Transport and Government Secure Network (TGSN)

Work on our biggest ever project – the Transport and Government Secure Network (TGSN) – has forged ahead. Network design is complete and the rollout of new infrastructure is well underway. At the end of the financial year, 80 per cent of the Optical Transport Network technology (OTN), which forms the backbone of TGSN, is complete with the project on track to complete OTN construction in late 2021. Rollout of the new infrastructure continues.

Level Crossing Removal Project

VicTrack has continued its role as an important partner in the Victorian Government's Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP), providing essential telecommunications services at each project site that enable the crossing to be removed and reinstall Operational Control System (OCS) equipment, often as part of a new station build. Over the past financial year, we supported the removal of level crossings across metropolitan Melbourne.

Eloque successfully launched

The Victorian Government in partnership with Xerox, is delivering new technology that will revolutionise the management and maintenance of bridge assets, through a joint venture called Eloque. Through the installation of advanced fibre-optic sensing technology on rail and road bridges, the technology enables the remote monitoring of asset structural health in real time, allowing for early detection and addressing of issues to keep traffic and trains moving.

In May 2021, the Victorian Government announced that it will invest \$50 million to roll out the new Eloque technology on priority bridges across Victoria.

The technology is the result of the VicTrack-led FiBridge project that saw successful trials carried out through a partnership between VicTrack and Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center (PARC). VicTrack's Chief Executive has been appointed to the dual role of inaugural Eloque Chief Executive Officer to drive its establishment.

Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings

VicTrack is restoring 10 more of Victoria's historic station buildings through the Victorian Government's Community Use of Vacant Rail Buildings Program after \$9 million funding was announced in the 2020–21 State Budget. Under the program, disused station buildings in regional towns, some of which have been vacant for decades, are restored so they can be used by local community groups. All works are scheduled to be delivered by the end of 2022.

Car Parks for Commuters program

As part of the Victorian Government's Car Parks for Commuters program, VicTrack is building new and upgraded car parks at stations across the state. The projects also include delivering new bicycle parking and installing lighting and CCTV for safety. In 2020–21 we completed car park projects at Epping and Sandown Park, with construction underway at Craigieburn and planning for the multi-level car park at Belgrave well progressed.