MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT - MARK II
REINSTATEMENT OF THE BALLARAT RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR & SEPERATING PASSENGER TRAINS (PLAN)

'This plan will substantially reduce the cost to complete the original Murray Basin Rail Project (MBRP)'

'Under this plan, a standard gauge freight train, up to 1,200 m long and travelling at an average speed of 40 kph, will be able to pass through the 'Ballarat freight - passenger overlap section' within 5 minutes. This will ensure no disruption to the increasing demand for passenger train services.'

MURRAY BASIN RAIL PROJECT - MARK II
REINSTATEMENT OF THE BALLARAT RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR & SEPERATING PASSENGER TRAINS (PLAN)

The challenge

The Murray Basin Rail Project (MBRP) was revised in 2020. Trains on one half of the Murray Basin Rail Network can no longer travel directly to the Port of Melbourne or Geelong via the Ballarat corridor but instead are detoured an extra 260 km for each return trip and an extra 43%+ further distance than trucks which makes trains far less viable. The other half of the Murray Basin Rail Network is still tethered to the obscure and antiquated Irish broad gauge rail system with ageing train rolling stock that will never be renewed, therefore making it unsustainable. This part of the network cannot access the Port of Portland with bulk cargoes of grain and mineral sands.

The objectives of this Plan

- Reinstate the direct rail freight route to the Port of Melbourne (PoM) and Geelong and pave the way for the completion of Stage 3 of the original MBRP i.e. for the Sea Lake and Manangatang lines to be converted to standard gauge.
- Ensure all seven of the benefits outlined in the MBRP final business case dated August 2015 are achieved (the current 'revised' plan will deliver only one).
- Reverse the increased carbon emissions associated with the greater dependence on road transport following the implementation of the 'revised' MBRP, and
- Reduce carbon emissions by getting a substantial amount of the freight in the Murray Basin Rail Network region onto rail.
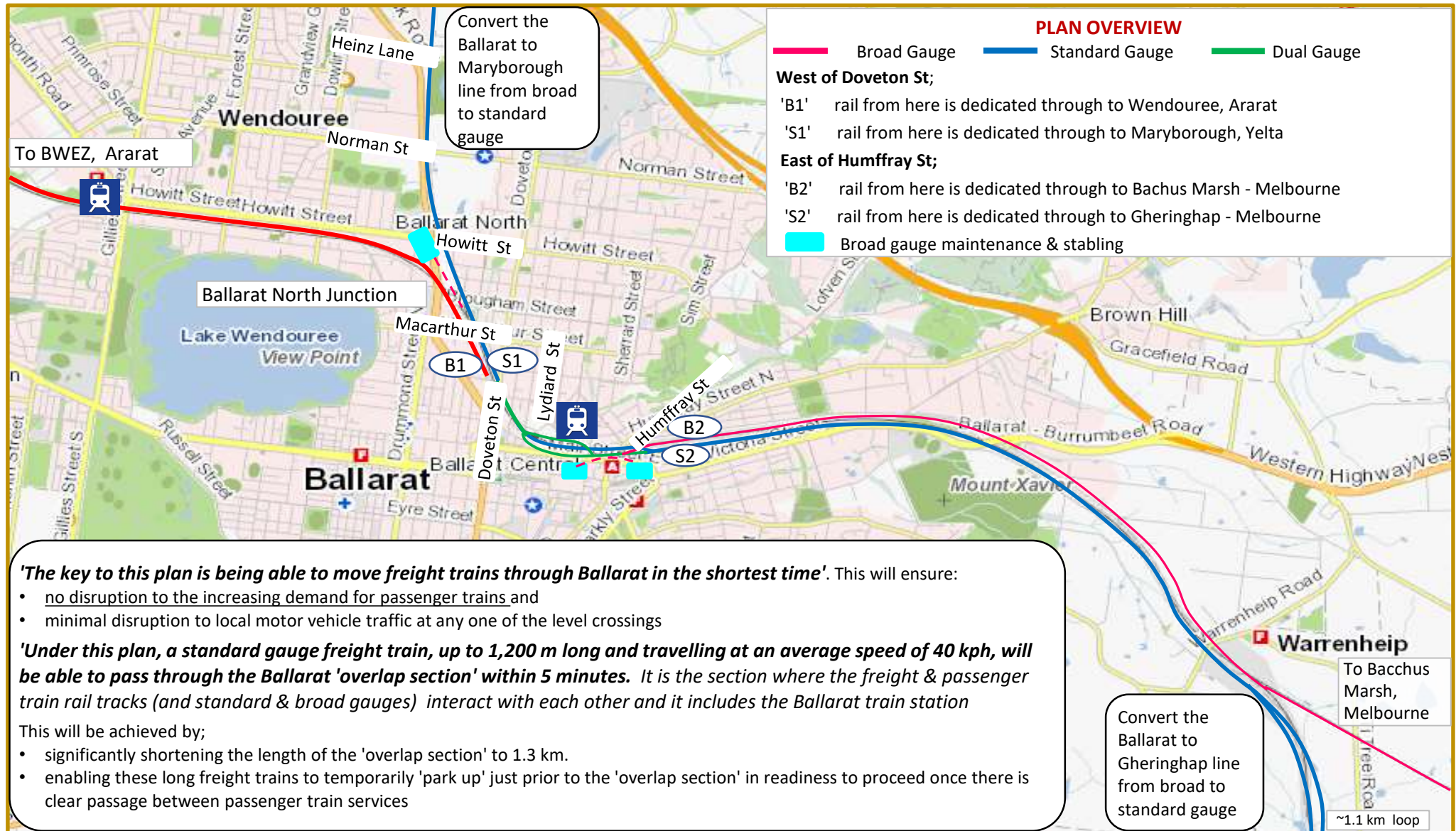
The key drivers of this Plan

- Substantially reduce the cost to complete the original Murray Basin Rail Project by converting the 130 km of rail between Maryborough and Gheringhap (North Geelong) to standard gauge instead of dual gauging (as outlined in the MBRP Aug 2015 Business Case and in formulating the 2020 'revised' MBRP).
- Be able to move standard gauge freight trains, up to 1,200 m long, through Ballarat in the shortest time, to ensure no disruption to passenger trains and minimal disruption to local motor vehicle traffic at any one of the level crossings.
- Continue the passenger train services between Ballarat and Maryborough.   Metropolitan passenger trains travelling to Ballarat for maintenance can do so via the existing passenger train route, i.e. via Bacchus Marsh during off peak passenger train periods

What needs to happen

- Convert the 68km Maryborough to Ballarat North Junction rail line from from broad gauge to standard gauge,
- Convert the rail from west of Lydiard St going through the middle of Ballarat train station from broad to standard gauge and continue it through to east of Humffray St and a further 66 km to Gheringhap,
- Convert the current Ballarat North Junction to west of Doveton St rail line from broad gauge to standard gauge and link to the Maryborough line,
- Recommission the 550 m of existing broad gauge rail west of Doveton St to Ballarat North Junction and link to Wendouree line,
- Convert the 350 m of single rail line from west Doveton St to east Armstrong St from broad gauge to dual gauge,
- Convert the rail from west Lydiard St to Ballarat train station platforms 1 & 2 from broad to dual gauge and install the latest rubber gap filler technology, if necessary, to overcome the train and platform gap issue and
- Remove the Macarthur St level crossing in Ballarat. This will allow a 1.2 km long freight train entering from the north to fit between Howitt and Doveton Streets to stop and wait for clearance to pass through the Ballarat station etc and without obstructing local road traffic.

PLAN OVERVIEW

Convert the Ballarat to Maryborough line from broad to standard gauge

Heinz Lane

To BWEZ, Ararat

Norman St

Wendouree

Howitt Street Howitt Street

Norman Street

Ballarat North

Howitt St

Howitt Street

Ballarat North Junction

Lake Wendouree View Point

Macarthur St

B1   S1

Lydiard St

Ballarat Central

Doveton St

Humffray St

Humffray Street N

B2

S2

Ballarat

Eyre Street

Brown Hill

Gracefield Road

Ballarat - Burrumbeet Road

Western Highway West

Mount Xavier

Warrenheip Road

Warrenheip

To Bacchus Marsh, Melbourne

Convert the Ballarat to Gheringhap line from broad to standard gauge

~1.1 km loop

PLAN OVERVIEW

——— Broad Gauge ——— Standard Gauge ——— Dual Gauge

West of Doveton St;

'B1'   rail from here is dedicated through to Wendouree, Ararat

'S1'   rail from here is dedicated through to Maryborough, Yelta

East of Humffray St;

'B2'   rail from here is dedicated through to Bachus Marsh - Melbourne

'S2'   rail from here is dedicated through to Gheringhap - Melbourne
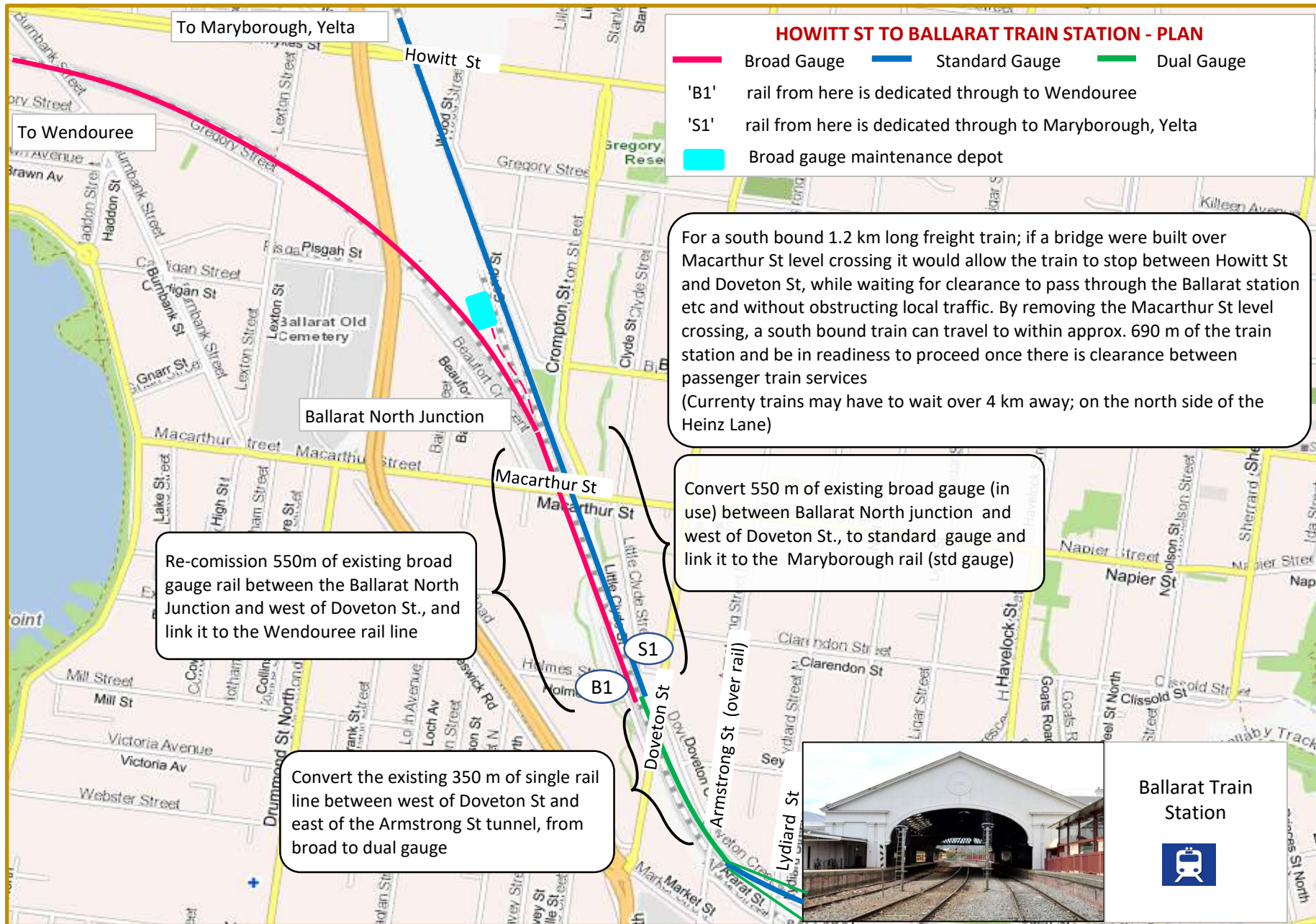
▮ Broad gauge maintenance & stabling

'The key to this plan is being able to move freight trains through Ballarat in the shortest time'. This will ensure:
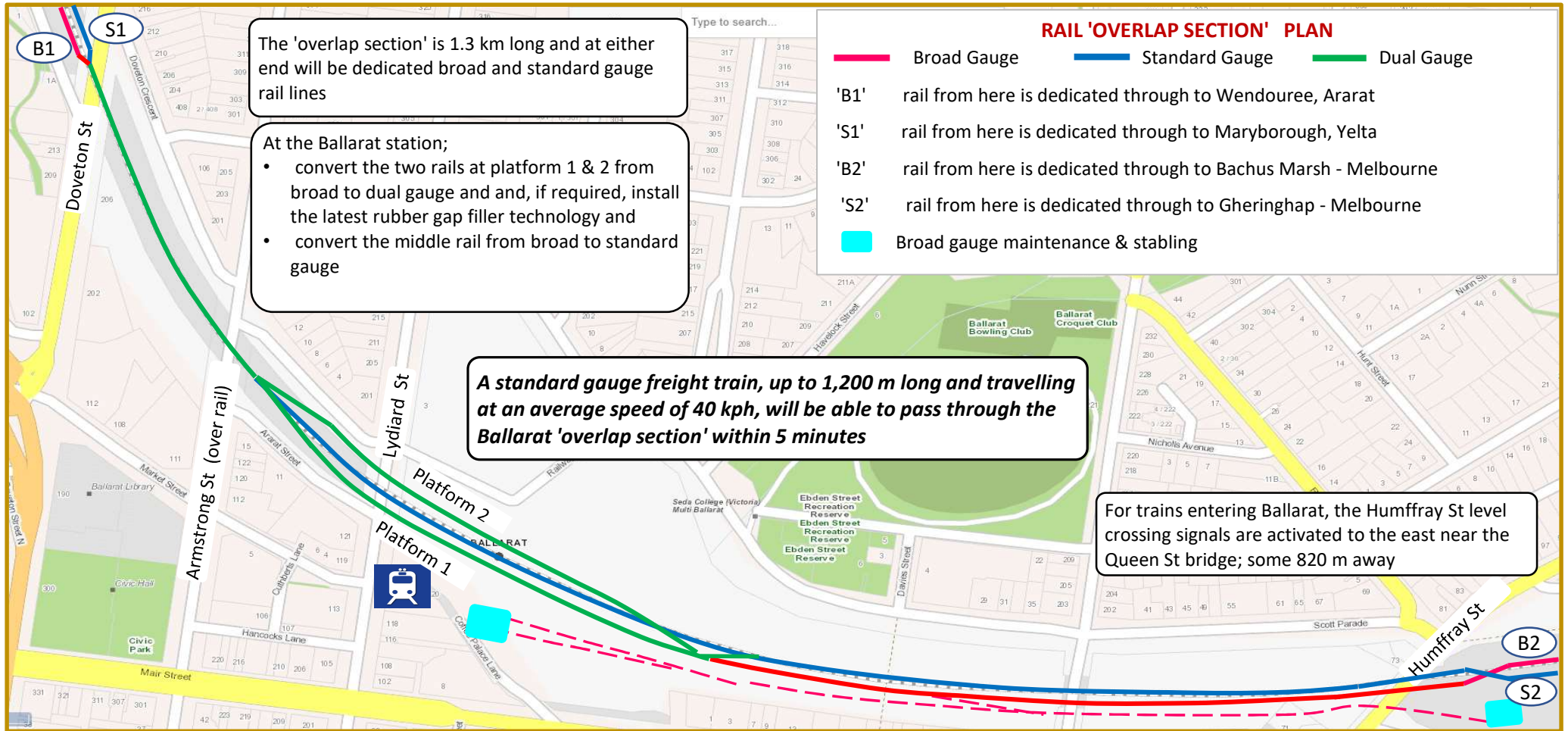
- no disruption to the increasing demand for passenger trains and
- minimal disruption to local motor vehicle traffic at any one of the level crossings

'Under this plan, a standard gauge freight train, up to 1,200 m long and travelling at an average speed of 40 kph, will be able to pass through the Ballarat 'overlap section' within 5 minutes. It is the section where the freight & passenger train rail tracks (and standard & broad gauges) interact with each other and it includes the Ballarat train station

This will be achieved by;

- significantly shortening the length of the 'overlap section' to 1.3 km.
- enabling these long freight trains to temporarily 'park up' just prior to the 'overlap section' in readiness to proceed once there is clear passage between passenger train services

HOWITT ST TO BALLARAT TRAIN STATION - PLAN

▬▬ Broad Gauge	▬▬ Standard Gauge	▬▬ Dual Gauge

'B1'   rail from here is dedicated through to Wendouree

'S1'   rail from here is dedicated through to Maryborough, Yelta

▮   Broad gauge maintenance depot

To Maryborough, Yelta

Howitt St

To Wendouree

Ballarat North Junction

Macarthur St

For a south bound 1.2 km long freight train; if a bridge were built over Macarthur St level crossing it would allow the train to stop between Howitt St and Doveton St, while waiting for clearance to pass through the Ballarat station etc and without obstructing local traffic. By removing the Macarthur St level crossing, a south bound train can travel to within approx. 690 m of the train station and be in readiness to proceed once there is clearance between passenger train services
(Currenty trains may have to wait over 4 km away; on the north side of the Heinz Lane)

Convert 550 m of existing broad gauge (in use) between Ballarat North junction and west of Doveton St., to standard gauge and link it to the Maryborough rail (std gauge)

Re-comission 550m of existing broad gauge rail between the Ballarat North Junction and west of Doveton St., and link it to the Wendouree rail line

Convert the existing 350 m of single rail line between west of Doveton St and east of the Armstrong St tunnel, from broad to dual gauge

S1

B1

Doveton St

Armstrong St (over rail)

Ballarat Train Station

RAIL 'OVERLAP SECTION' PLAN

Broad Gauge — Standard Gauge — Dual Gauge

'B1' rail from here is dedicated through to Wendouree, Ararat

'S1' rail from here is dedicated through to Maryborough, Yelta

'B2' rail from here is dedicated through to Bachus Marsh - Melbourne

'S2' rail from here is dedicated through to Gheringhap - Melbourne

Broad gauge maintenance & stabling

The 'overlap section' is 1.3 km long and at either end will be dedicated broad and standard gauge rail lines

At the Ballarat station;
- convert the two rails at platform 1 & 2 from broad to dual gauge and and, if required, install the latest rubber gap filler technology and
- convert the middle rail from broad to standard gauge

A standard gauge freight train, up to 1,200 m long and travelling at an average speed of 40 kph, will be able to pass through the Ballarat 'overlap section' within 5 minutes

For trains entering Ballarat, the Humffray St level crossing signals are activated to the east near the Queen St bridge; some 820 m away