

Proposed Ambleside Rail Crossing Loop

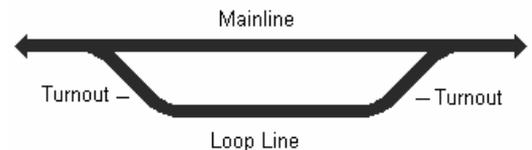
Frequently Asked Questions

At the end of 2008 the Australian Government announced that it planned to invest up to \$1.2 billion into the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to facilitate a range of major projects to upgrade the nation's rail freight network. In South Australia, the ARTC is undertaking upgrade works to extend existing train crossing loops and to build new loops on the interstate rail network. This investment falls under the Government's Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan

The Adelaide–Melbourne corridor, between existing loops at Belair and Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills, has been identified as a key location for improving train crossing capacity because of the current length of this section and the corresponding waiting time for crossing trains. Enhanced train crossing capacity on the rail network will help maintain reliable transit times for the existing 1500 metre trains which use the track, and also allow 1800 metre trains to use the track in the future.

What is a crossing loop?

A crossing loop is a place on a single line railway where trains in opposing directions can pass each other. A crossing loop is double ended and connected to the main track at both ends. A crossing loop should be a bit longer than any of the trains that might need to cross at that point.



In operation, one train enters the crossing loop through one of the turnouts and idles at the other end, while the opposing train continues along the mainline track to pass the now stationary train. The time required to complete the crossing is typically about 10–15 minutes.

Why is a crossing loop needed at Ambleside?

The travel time through the section of track between loops at Mount Barker and Belair is the longest on the Adelaide–Melbourne rail corridor. By adding a crossing loop at Ambleside, the time a train has to wait at either end of this section to allow for another train to pass is reduced. This means that freight rail travel times are shorter and more efficient and freight capacity increased.

Are there are other crossing loops near Adelaide?

Between Adelaide and Murray Bridge, there are crossing loops at Mile End, Belair, Mt Barker, Monarto (for trains up to 1500 metres); Mt Lofty, Balhannah, Petwood (for trains shorter than 1000 metres); and Callington – under construction (for trains up to 1800 metres)

What would the crossing loop at Ambleside consist of?

A new crossing loop would include:

- A new second track long enough for 1500 metre trains and, in time, 1800 metre trains to pass.
- Associated earthworks involving cut and fill.
- An additional single-track bridge over the Onkaparinga River.
- Some alignment alterations to the mainline track within the corridor.
- Drainage and culvert extension work.
- Signalling works for the loop.
- Retention of the existing access track provisions in the corridor.

How many trains currently pass through the Adelaide-Melbourne corridor each day?

The number of through trains varies on a day to day basis, but there are typically between nine and 16 through trains per day currently.

How many train crossings would take place at Ambleside?

Existing train schedules plan for a total of 13 crosses per week split between current long loop sites at Belair and Mt Barker. With the construction of the loop at Ambleside, the crosses would be evened out between the three locations, with four scheduled crossings anticipated weekly.

Is the purpose of the loop to allow more trains to pass through the corridor?

The crossing loop itself will not increase the number of trains. Its purpose is to allow trains to move through the area more efficiently. However, freight transport is expected to grow nationwide at up to 4% annually and some of this demand will be met by rail. Thus, some increase in freight rail movements can be expected to occur, not just on the Adelaide to Melbourne route, but right across Australia.

What is the current status of the development proposal?

The Ambleside location in Verdun, SA has been selected by the ARTC for a comprehensive planning study, including design development, detailed environmental investigations and community consultation. These studies are currently underway and will examine the potential impacts of the development and how these can be mitigated.

Why this location and not between Mattner and Altmanns Road where there are fewer residential properties?

The Mattner and Altmanns Road location is immediately adjacent to the existing Mt Barker loop (which is the other side of Altmanns Road). As a result, there is no operational benefit provided by constructing a loop at this location.

Would there be more noise and vibration as a result of trains passing via the loop?

The crossing loop will have no effect on the level of noise and vibration produced by trains passing directly through Verdun.

To estimate the level of noise that would be produced by crossing trains, an acoustic consulting firm has been engaged to undertake an assessment. The assessment will include measurement of existing train-related noise and vibration levels in the area, measurements of noise and vibration levels at a similar loop in the Adelaide Hills, and a prediction of noise and vibration levels at sensitive residential and heritage locations.

If the noise exceeds Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) standards for day and night time levels, mitigation measures will be implemented where required. ARTC will liaise with individual landholders to discuss a range of practical available treatments, including double glazing of windows or physical barriers.

Would dust and noise generated during construction be a problem?

If the approval is given to construct the crossing loop, the ARTC would prepare a comprehensive construction environmental management plan. The plan would specify how construction activities are to be undertaken to minimise dust, noise and other impacts. In addition, the ARTC will continue to maintain the hotline number (1800 118 638) for residents to call with any enquiries or concerns during construction and all complaints will be promptly followed up.

Will there be any impacts to the environment caused by construction and use of the crossing loop?

A number of environmental assessments such as flora, fauna, noise and air quality are being undertaken as part of the planning study. This information will assist to determine a preferred alignment for the crossing loop and if required mitigation measures to reduce or offset any impacts to the environment will be identified as part of the development application submitted to the Development Assessment Commission (DAC) for their approval consideration.

Would access be maintained for emergency vehicles along the corridor when the crossing loop is constructed?

Existing access to and through the corridor will be maintained; specifically, an access track will be provided from the Spohers Road end of the loop through to the Onkaparinga Bridge, accessed via the old Ambleside station location from Onkaparinga Valley Road. There is currently no vehicle access along the corridor from the Onkaparinga Bridge to the Beaumont Road end of the proposed loop, and this arrangement will remain.

Would ARTC compulsorily acquire properties to construct the crossing loop?

No, ARTC will not compulsorily acquire properties. The crossing loop is planned to be built within the existing rail corridor and therefore acquisition of private property is not required to build the crossing loop.

What if access to the corridor through privately owned land is required during construction?

Access to private property to construct the crossing loop is not essential. However if gaining access to the rail corridor through private property in some locations would improve the construction methodology, then ARTC would contact those individual landholders to discuss what opportunities may exist for this to occur.

What happens next?

Once the planning study is completed in June /July 2010, an application to the Development Assessment Commission (DAC) under Section 49 of the Development Act to construct the crossing loop at Ambleside will be made. A public advertisement inviting interested persons to make submissions on the proposal will be sought through the approvals process.

Enquiries about the Ambleside Crossing Loop can be made to 1800 118 638

or visit www.artc.com.au for general information.