

**5 November 2015**

## **ARTC HV NETWORK GETS MAINTENANCE ‘TUNE-UP’ NEXT WEEK**

More than a year of planning will come to fruition next week when the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) rail network in the Hunter Valley gets a regular, network-wide, maintenance ‘tune-up’.

The work, over four days and involving more than 1000 ARTC and contract staff is part of an annual program of maintenance worth more than \$100 million per year, critical to keep operations ticking over.

ARTC’s Executive General Manager Hunter Valley, Jonathan Vandervoort said he appreciated the work would be an inconvenience for community members living near the rail corridor, but it was a necessary part of keeping rail operations running safely and efficiently.

As a result, ARTC is asking the Hunter community to take extra care around the rail corridor as it undergoes the maintenance shutdown.

“We run tens of thousands of trains every year from passenger trains to general freight to coal trains, keeping the Hunter and NSW economies and people moving,” Mr Vandervoort said.

“That volume of trains, and the network’s importance to one of the biggest export industries in NSW, means we have a big responsibility to ensure the maintenance of the rail corridor is at a high level.”

Typical rail maintenance tasks like replacing sleepers, cleaning and compacting ballast, improving the condition of level crossings and technical jobs like signalling work, will take place throughout the Valley.

“Around \$20 million worth of work will take place in this shutdown, supporting local jobs, suppliers and industries in sectors ranging from hire equipment and labour providers, local accommodation providers, restaurants and supermarkets,” said Mr Vandervoort.

“By ‘closing down’ the network and with fewer trains running we can ensure we get the maximum amount of rail maintenance done efficiently in the safest possible environment for our people.”

The network will close down from 6am Tuesday 10 November to Friday morning, 13 November.

“These shutdowns are planned more than a year in advance to allow our customers to manage their throughput and production schedules and to ensure integration across the intricately managed Hunter coal chain,” Mr Vandervoort said.

“We would like to thank the community for their patience and understanding while the works take place as we appreciate it does cause inconvenience.”

There are changes to passenger rail services with some services being bussed, for specific service information, please visit [www.sydneytrains.info](http://www.sydneytrains.info).

Maintenance work will take place throughout the Hunter Valley from the Port of Newcastle to Narrabri and from Muswellbrook to Ulan.

**ENDS**

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