

2 August 2016

SEVERE SERVICE DISRUPTIONS AS A RESULT OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) expects hundreds of freight, coal and passenger rail services to be delayed and disrupted in NSW and North East Victoria from tomorrow morning as a result of expected industrial action starting at 7am.

ARTC operates the national Interstate rail network and the Hunter Valley coal rail network. Over 450 trains operate across its network daily carrying valuable freight and people to work and home.

The Government Business Enterprise is currently in negotiations for an enterprise agreement that covers around 580 staff in NSW.

ARTC has been notified that union members plan to take up to 16 forms of protected action - including two 24 hour work stoppages – from Wednesday 7am through to Sunday 7am and again for two hours on Monday 8 August.

“We’re working closely with our customers to manage this process safely but at this stage we expect the Hunter coal network to come to a halt over the next four days, and widespread passenger disruptions particularly later in the week,” ARTC CEO John Fullerton said.

Union members have notified the intention to stop work on Thursday (for 2 hours) and all day Friday and Saturday. Specific actions in the Hunter Valley mean coal operations are unable to operate from tomorrow morning.

Delays and congestion will likely be felt across the ARTC network from Wednesday 3 to late Monday 8 August and it will take time to return operations to normal.

“We are disappointed these disruptions are being forced upon our customers and we apologise to them for the impacts, loss of custom and loss of freight this potentially means.

“We urge passenger train customers to plan ahead, check with their passenger operator and consider arranging alternative transport, particularly if they have any important appointments like Doctor visits.”

ARTC provided a draft agreement to the NSW bargaining committee today which proposes a 2 per cent wage increase each year over three years and no loss of conditions.

ARTC is currently facing low interstate freight volumes and low coal prices – this was reflected in a recent downgrade of ARTC’s public credit rating by Moody’s rating service.

“We are committed to reaching a fair and sustainable agreement.” Mr Fullerton said.

ENDS

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Impacts on train services in background in pages overleaf (p2-3)

BACKGROUND

Employees Covered by the NSW 2012 Agreement:

- 582 employees in NSW, with 115 of those staff working in two NSW based network control centres.
- The Broadmeadow (Newcastle) centre manages the Hunter Valley network (coal, passenger, freight) and the North Coast section of our Interstate Network (freight and passenger).
- The Junee centre manages the Interstate network within NSW and North Eastern Victoria
- The remaining staff are in a variety of roles in locations across NSW including Sydney, Newcastle and Wagga Wagga supporting the Interstate and Hunter Valley rail networks.

SERVICE IMPACTS

Hunter Valley

Wednesday 3 August

- We expect severe disruption to coal and other freight services operating to Kooragang, Port Waratah or Hexham terminals. This is a result of a 24 hour ban on the operation of signalling equipment area which is likely to mean a 24 hour either full stoppage or significant disruption
- No expected impact to Hunter passenger services

Thursday 4 August

- All coal, passenger and intermodal services will be impacted leading into and after a planned 2 hour stoppage starting at 12pm. Services will be impacted before and after this period in order to safely stop and then recommence operations.

Friday 5 August and Saturday 6 August

- Two consecutive 24 hour stoppages combine to a 48 hour stoppage of work commencing from 7am Friday 5 August ceasing the movement of all rail traffic.
- Hunter line passenger services are unable to operate all day Friday and Saturday (to be bussed)

Sunday 7 August

- Hunter passenger services recommence at 7am
- The impact of notified protected action to take place on Sunday 7 and Monday 8 August is still being assessed

Interstate

Wednesday 3 August

Freight:

- Freight services largely expected to continue operations as planned; Northern services may encounter congestion and delays/disruptions via Hunter Valley network

Passenger:

- Southern regional NSW TrainLink passenger services will be bussed (Sydney – Melbourne and Sydney – Canberra)
- Northern (Brisbane, Grafton), North West (Moree, Armidale) and West (Dubbo) passenger services likely to continue to run as planned
- Southern Highlands: Sydney/Campbelltown to Moss Vale will continue as planned, but from 7am all Moss Vale to Goulburn services will be replaced by buses
- NE Victoria V/Line services will be bussed

Thursday 4 August**Freight:**

- Freight services largely expected to continue as planned but will be delayed by 2 hour stop work disruption between 12pm and 2pm;
- Northern services may encounter congestion and delays/disruptions via Hunter Valley network

Passenger:

- Northern (Brisbane, Grafton) and North West (Moree, Armidale) services will be cancelled and replaced by buses.
- Southern regional NSW TrainLink passenger services will be replaced by busses (Sydney – Melbourne and Sydney – Canberra)
- West (Dubbo) passenger trains will transfer to buses at Wellington
- Southern Highlands: Sydney/Campbelltown to Moss Vale will continue as normal, but from 7am all Moss Vale to Goulburn services will be replaced by buses
- NE Victoria V/Line services will operate as scheduled

Friday 5 August and Saturday 6 August:**Freight:**

- Melbourne – Sydney freight services will be cancelled
- Sydney-Brisbane or North Coast freight train services will be cancelled
- Cancellation of all ad hoc services
- Port Botany /Metropolitan Freight Line local services are operating but some regional services are cancelled
- East-West freight services (i.e. Sydney-Perth) expected to operate as planned

Passenger:

- All Hunter, Southern Highlands, and regional NSW TrainLink services (Northern, Southern and North West) to be replaced by buses
- West (Dubbo) NSW TrainLink passenger services will terminate & commence at Wellington and transferred to buses
- NE Victoria V/Line services to be replaced by buses

Sunday 7 August**Freight:**

- Northern and Southern freight services to restart up and operate as planned after 7am, residual delays and congestion likely to affect train running times
- Port Botany/Metropolitan freight services to operate as planned

Passenger:

- Most Southern services to resume with two or three services to be bussed
- Northern Services: All services replaced by bus except the Casino – Sydney service
- Northwest services – interchange at Muswellbrook to then bus to/from Sydney
- West services to Dubbo to operate as scheduled
- NE Victoria services likely to operate as scheduled after 7am