

4 August 2016

**CUSTOMERS WARNED TO PREPARE FOR MAJOR DISRUPTION
Further action planned Friday and Saturday, could continue next week**

Thousands of passengers and hundreds of train services are set to continue to be impacted as a result of industrial action by Union members affecting the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) network this week.

The most severe impacts will be felt tomorrow morning from 7am as 48 hours of continued work stoppages begin. Hunter Valley services are undergoing up to four continuous days of disruption due to protected action which commenced on Wednesday.

“We remain very disappointed that the combined unions are continuing with this action and causing the extensive disruptions that our customers are experiencing,” ARTC CEO John Fullerton said.

“The major harm is to everyday commuters and their travel plans and it harms the industries that rely on trains. It also harms the reputation of rail as the best form of freight movement; and the goal of everyone— including the Unions – is to attract more freight to rail.

“Every day we are getting feedback that the public are being frustrated unnecessarily by this action, missing important family events, having their holidays ruined and arriving late to work because they have been caught up unfairly,” Mr Fullerton said.

“The action is hurting passengers and the industries that rely on us and we are immensely apologetic.

“We continue to urge the community to plan ahead and be across all the potential impacts on their travel,” Mr Fullerton said.

“ARTC tabled an offer earlier this week and staff will be voting on that offer next Thursday, but the unions proceeded with this action anyway.

“We are offering a 2 per cent pay increase, per year, over three years and no loss of conditions. This is fair and sustainable in today’s economic environment,” said Mr Fullerton.

“Our customers are major steel, coal and resources companies as well as intermodal or containerised freight and grain that travels by rail, who will all suffer losses. Every one of these sectors is facing very difficult times, people have been losing jobs – and that impacts the revenue ARTC earns.”

“Unions have raised claims about privatisation and offshoring roles. The Australian Government advised as part of the 2016 Budget that in light of the Inland Rail project, *“the government will retain the ARTC in Australian government ownership”*. There has also never been any discussion or plans to outsource roles – this is misleading and fear mongering, plain and simple,” Mr Fullerton said.

ENDS

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Background and further details on impacts to train services provided page 2 & 3 overleaf

BACKGROUND

- 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
- 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 – that started yesterday (Wednesday 3 August) at 7am through to Sunday 7am and again for two hours on Monday 8 August.

Employees Covered by the NSW 2012 Agreement:

- About 580 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

Current service impacts for the weekend remain in with line with those outlined on 2 August.

Hunter Valley

Friday 5 August and Saturday 6 August

- Two consecutive 24 hour stoppages from 7am Friday 5 August will stop the movement of all rail traffic.
- Hunter line passenger services unable to operate all day Friday and Saturday (to be bussed)

Sunday 7 August

- Hunter passenger services recommence at 7am
- Delays and congestion likely for all train services

Interstate

Friday 5 August and Saturday 6 August:

All non-metropolitan passenger services in NSW on ARTC's network will not be running as well as Albany Line V/Line services in NE Victoria. These services will be replaced by buses.

Freight:

- Melbourne – Sydney freight services will not run
- Sydney-Brisbane or North Coast freight train services will not run
- Cancellation of all ad hoc services
- Port Botany /Metropolitan Freight Line local services are able to operate but some regional services cancelled
- Some 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
- 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 return as scheduled
- NE Victoria services likely to operate as scheduled

Dependent on the nature of the protected industrial action there is potential for further disruptions or delays through Monday 8 and Tuesday 9 August. ARTC will continue to provide further advice regarding this to customers.