

7 August 2016

STRIKE ACTION TAKES RAIL BACKWARDS

- **Industrial actions continue, uncertainty for commuters, business**
- **ARTC calls on unions to rule out further action**

Union strike action over the last week will set the rail industry back years and may well cost jobs in the future as a result, ARTC CEO John Fullerton said today.

“There’s a host of initiatives that ARTC is delivering to build growth in rail – a stated objective of the RTBU – yet they have decided to put a hole in the NSW economy and an even bigger hole in rail’s reputation, with this strike action,” Mr Fullerton said.

NSW commuters and businesses need certainty, and while the unions have withdrawn two one hour work stoppages planned for Monday 8 August, indefinite industrial actions continue.

“The unions have said today that ARTC has agreed to return to negotiations. This is categorically incorrect. I have agreed to meet with Union officials to discuss the industrial action.

“ARTC is proceeding to a vote on Thursday and the offer of a 2 per cent pay increase per year, over three years, and no loss of conditions, is fair and reasonable.

“The action over the last week has cost the NSW economy millions, set rail back years and with further action still underway and additional action possible, the damage is not yet over.

“We have spent the last decade building and modernising our rail network, but the unions seem determined to take us backwards.

“Instead of talking about the range of exciting things underway in the national rail industry– we are instead focusing on irresponsible and unnecessary strike action by the unions,” Mr Fullerton said.

“We have had a stable industrial relations environment at ARTC since our inception in 1997. But, for whatever reason, the unions are damaging future growth prospects – essential to creating more jobs in rail – through this action.

“At a time our customers are hurting financially, people are losing jobs in the industry, the unions have reserved the right to notify and take further industrial action in the future so there remains a high level of uncertainty,” Mr Fullerton said.

“This is in an environment where many of our major customers have had to either sadly let people go, or staff have been offered 0 per cent wage increases in order to save jobs.

“We continue to urge the unions to call off its industrial action and encourage its members to vote yes for what is a fair offer in today’s economy when voting for the new enterprise agreement opens on Thursday.

“The strike action is costing the NSW economy millions and freight and passenger rail customers may continue to face disruption,” Mr Fullerton said.

“We again apologise to our customers and the thousands of rail customers and NSW businesses that have been delayed and disrupted over the last week and urge commuters to stay across any changes and plan their travel arrangements in advance.”

ENDS

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Please see accompanying pdf for table of ARTC response to union claims

Service Impacts

While 48 hours of consecutive stop work action concluded at 7am this morning (Sunday 7 August) rail services will continue to be impacted through the week and a number of passenger services will be replaced by bus.

Notice of other restrictions on work activities such as no overtime or work out of hours, means further delays, disruption and replacement buses for passenger services are still possible, particularly as the hours of replacement ARTC staff are being exhausted.

The Combined Unions have said they reserve the right to notify and take further industrial action in the future so there remains a high level of uncertainty.

As at Sunday 7 August:

Hunter Valley

- Coal trains heavily delayed and will take some time to return to normal operations
- Some grain services delayed until tomorrow
- A number of passenger services replaced by bus

Interstate

- Freight services gradually returning to service, but heavy delays and congestion across network
- A number of passenger services replaced by bus

Passenger service impacts

Sunday 7 August

- Northern regional intercity services (Sydney-Brisbane, Sydney-Casino and Sydney-Grafton) replaced by bus for a portion or the entire journey
- Northwest regional intercity services (Sydney-Armidale or Moree) replaced by bus at Muswellbrook or Werris Creek. Delays of up to 45 minutes.
- Southern regional intercity services (Melbourne – Sydney and Sydney-Griffith) replaced by bus

Monday 8 August 2016

- Northern services: Sydney to Casino XPT service will terminate at Taree and is replaced by a road coach service from Taree to Casino. Casino to Sydney XPT service is replaced by a road coach service from Casino to Grafton where passengers will join XPT service for the remainder of their journey.
- Brisbane to Sydney XPT service will terminate at Grafton and is replaced by a road coach service from Grafton to Sydney.
- Northwest: 09:30 Sydney to Armidale and the 09:30 Sydney to Moree service have replaced by bus. The 08:40 Armidale to Sydney and 08:05 Moree to Sydney service replaced by bus.
- Southern regional intercity services (Melbourne – Sydney and Sydney-Griffith) replaced by bus at Albury
- Sydney-Canberra services replaced by bus
- Western region regional rail services (to Dubbo) replaced by bus at Wellington