

12 August 2016

3 DAY TRAIN PAIN NEXT WEEK, 24 HOURS THE WEEK AFTER ARTC urges Unions to call off damaging action

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has today called for Union representatives to call off all of their irresponsible industrial action which is unquestionably damaging the rail industry.

“The Unions seem intent to proceed with three back-to-back days of train pain next week and have just notified of a further 24 hours of work stoppages on Tuesday 23 August. This brings total train stoppages to nearly 200 hours,” ARTC CEO John Fullerton said.

“This is madness.

“With every notice of industrial action the unions are proving they don’t care about the community, they don’t care about rail workers and they don’t care about rail.

“Every additional notice of industrial action also shows this has nothing to do with ARTC – this is the unions prosecuting some hidden agenda and using ARTC and our staff as the punching bag.

“Every train impacted, every train cancelled, means less revenue into our business, less wages for staff - as every protected action leaves them out-of-pocket, and higher costs for everyday Australians.

“The unions must live in a parallel universe – how do they think we pay for our staff and maintenance work and run the trains that their members also drive?

“We are asking the Unions to please call off this damaging train pain – all it does is hurt the rail industry, our staff and NSW businesses and communities,” said Mr Fullerton.

The Unions intend to begin work bans from Wednesday 17 August and a 48 hour stoppage from Thursday 18 August, resulting in 72 hours of major disruption. They have today notified of a further 24 hours of work stoppages on Tuesday 23 August.

“We urge them to reconsider the value of proceeding with this unnecessary and irresponsible action,” Mr Fullerton said.

“In the meantime we would like to ask passengers and businesses to please plan ahead with the disruptions on the cards. We are working hard with our customers to ensure we plan and manage this as safely and best as possible.”

The stoppages will likely bring the cost of this dispute to the NSW economy to more than \$50 million* and will cost rail jobs as many customers have already shifted their freight to road.”

The Unions are able to continue to take rolling industrial action indefinitely until a new Enterprise Agreement is registered.

ARTC staff are currently voting for a new enterprise agreement, voting opened yesterday at 6am and closes on Monday afternoon.

ENDS

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BACKGROUND

- *ARTC estimates every 24 hour work stoppage to cost the NSW economy around \$10m.
- Various forms of indefinite industrial action ranging from operational restrictions, to no out-of-hours' work and no overtime currently continue.
- ARTC was targeted by four days of continued and cumulative industrial action last week including 50 hours of work stoppages. This affected over a million tonnes of freight and up to 10,000 commuters.
- Union members have been taking up to 16 forms of industrial action - including two 24 hour work stoppages – since Wednesday 3 August.
- 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
- 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
- The Unions are able to continue to take rolling industrial action indefinitely until a new Enterprise Agreement is registered.