

**7 March 2017**

## **MAJOR MARCH MAINTENANCE SHUTDOWN FOR NORTHEAST VIC**

- **Work planned nearly a year in advance**
- **Over \$3 million invested by ARTC**
- **Maintenance targeting locations for passenger and freight customers**

Preparations are nearly complete as the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) is set to deliver the biggest package of rail maintenance works for the year through North East Victoria in March.

The 'major maintenance shutdown' will see more than \$3 million invested into more than 30 separate projects from 11 to 13 March.

"Planned nearly a year in advance, a 'track shutdown' allows for a large amount of work to be delivered efficiently and safely," ARTC's General Manager Asset Management – Interstate, Brian Green said.

"It is important we approach maintenance in a careful, staged and planned manner in the context of all rail operations and the needs of the entire network," said Mr Green.

"This is particularly relevant for North East Victoria which serves valuable freight and passenger services operating across the national interstate rail freight network, from Melbourne to Albury and beyond."

We work closely with V/Line when approaching these kinds of works and this included recently travelling with a driver to confirm the planned works are as targeted as possible and continue to work with V/Line regarding their customer needs and service requirements.

"The March shutdown will allow ballast cleaners, excavators and diggers on hi-rail equipment, rail tampers and other specialist equipment access to the track to deliver everything from track undercutting to ballast cleaning, rail grinding and drainage improvements," Mr Green said.

"The team will also invest in bridge and level crossing replacements and other rail infrastructure upgrades during the March shutdown – improvements the taxpayer doesn't pay a cent for.

"Additionally we delivered a range of rail maintenance tasks – similar to the flood recovery work taking place to local roads and other infrastructure in the region – since November."

In January ARTC delivered new capacity works supporting increased rail freight demand in the region with new freight trains servicing Brisbane and Melbourne markets out of North East Victoria.

**ENDS**

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***Further details and background on page 2.***

## Background

- The North East Victorian section of the Melbourne-Sydney railway line is a critical part of the national freight network; carrying valuable freight to destinations around the country.
- More than 20 freight and passenger trains run across this network every day
- ARTC's network operations and maintenance is funded commercially. The vast proportion of revenue used to pay for the management of the line is through rail freight services.
- The Ballast Rehabilitation Program (BRP), a \$134m program funded by ARTC, finished in late 2015. It delivered on its objectives and improved the track condition significantly, reducing mud hole length by over 90%, reducing speed restrictions to levels far below ARTC lease requirements and delivered track performance in line with the rest of the interstate network.
- The maintenance work we do between Melbourne and Sydney is in line with the rest of the network, and is based on a planned, annual maintenance program. ARTC allocated additional maintenance budget over forward years for NE Victoria at the conclusion of the BRP.
- Just like other infrastructure in North East Victoria, the rail network was impacted by the widespread flooding in Spring 2016. It is not unusual to experience a reduction in track condition from when weather incidents of this nature occur.
- In response, since November nearly 1 kilometre of targeted sections of track has been undercut and tamped before more major works planned this weekend are delivered.
- A range of factors can influence train punctuality, including: passenger disturbance and other related passenger delays, vandalism (e.g. signal wire theft), weather conditions (extreme heat, lightning strikes, flooding), trespassing, signal failures and/or telecommunications faults, delays on adjacent networks.
- ARTC confirmed it is able to publish its Victorian quarterly lease KPI reports last week and these will now be published on our website along with the lease agreement.

## March Maintenance Shutdown:

Essential rail maintenance works will be delivered at a number of sites from 6am Saturday 11 March through to 6pm Monday 13 March including:

- The single line section of track between Craigieburn and Seymour
- East track between Seymour and Wodonga
- West track between Seymour and Wodonga
- We have over 30 projects planned for the super possession, these include:
  - 4 Bridge Replacements (Concrete Deck Upgrade)
  - 2 Level Crossings (Full upgrade)
  - 20 Locations of Turnout Grinding
  - 2 Turnout V-Crossing Repairs
  - 2 Full replacements of V-Crossing & components.
  - Track undercutting / mud-hole removal
  - Steel Bridge Repairs / Upgrade
  - 2 Level Crossing road surface repairs
  - Track resurfacing
  - Drainage improvements.

We would like to ask the community and motorists to be cautious and patient with the major maintenance works – particularly around work sites and level crossings as there will be additional movements of trucks in these areas leading up to, during and after the works.