



FIRE MANAGEMENT

We operate over 8500kms of track across the country, and manage fire risk around our network in multiple jurisdictions and environments.

PREVENTION FIRST

As with many landowners, we have a responsibility to manage the vegetation around our network. We remove and manage vegetation as far as practical by slashing, pruning or spraying vegetation as part of an annual program.

We typically clear up to five metres of vegetation from either side of the track (where conditions, the environment, location and topography allow). In densely vegetated or other 'high-risk' areas, fire breaks are also graded, involving the depositing of a dirt mound alongside the track. These fire breaks are established on an as-needed basis and prioritised to critical areas. In some areas, we also conduct bushfire training drills with emergency services. This not only ensures emergency services are familiar with our rail corridor, but also verifies all track maintenance is up to date and meets acceptable standard.

Fire risk has also been significantly reduced by advanced, high-tech trackside monitoring systems across the network,

in particular, a system of acoustic bearing detectors (or RailBAMs), which detect faults in the wheel set and monitor rail wheel condition and defects. These acoustic monitors listen for internal defects as the equipment moves past a trackside detector. These are very sensitive and can detect problems before the bearing fails.

THE ROLE OF ARTC STAFF

Our staff are trained to closely observe conditions and will call 000 immediately should they see a fire or signs of a fire.

In the event of a bushfire, or high bushfire risk, ARTC work closely with fire authorities and other local emergency services to ensure appropriate operational actions are taken. This includes providing fast and safe access to the rail corridor should emergency service vehicles and personnel require access, or holding or not running trains to avoid the activation of level crossings (if activating level crossings would impede resident evacuation from an area).

FIRE DANGER DAYS

Our staff actively monitor fire ban advice on days of high fire risk. During fire danger season, ARTC Network Control monitor fire service danger ratings and in the event of a catastrophic fire declaration, will issue a Notice to operators advising them of the declaration. This note also requests rail operators to undertake additional pre-departure checks to focus on areas such as exhausts and braking systems.

Train crews are also asked to be especially vigilant and observe both the operations of the train and any activities around the corridor that are suspicious, and report these back to Network Control.

OTHER PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

While we don't operate trains, rail operators take a number of steps to reduce risk such as inspecting all trains prior to departure, testing to ensure brakes are working properly and roll-by inspections during a train's journey.

Prior to fire danger season, operators check locomotives and rolling stock conditions (especially exhausts and brakes) as a pre-summer precaution, or as part of normal service schedules. Train crews are reminded to be vigilant on pre-departure checks and during the journey, following advice from us on catastrophic fire days.

We also have local teams undertake regular track inspections right across the rail corridor.

TRACK MAINTENANCE

While track maintenance is important all year round, it is particularly critical during high temperature conditions. Days of extreme heat can have an impact on the track, such as causing signal faults, circuit breaks or track buckling due to intense heat conditions. We are extra vigilant during these periods and undertake spot maintenance as required, to ensure the safety and reliability of the track.

There are limitations to the type of work that can be conducted on days of high bushfire risk. As an example, we will avoid conducting or scheduling 'hot works' on these days, such as welding or rail grinding. At other times, when 'hot works' need to be performed, a permit is required to be submitted to the relevant fire authority.

We prevent the threat of bushfire through routine track maintenance, slashing of vegetation, and general upkeep of railway land. However, on occasion will be requested by local residents, council or fire authorities to clear vegetation that may have grown rapidly.

We frequently engage with local authorities to collaborate on fire-prevention actions. This may include the notification of a fire breaking out, the rapid development of a fire posing risk, or providing fast and safe access to the rail corridor for emergency services if required.



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