ARTC

AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

ARTC Announces Ballast Cleaning Program in Hunter Valley

Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC) today announced it will spend $8.9 million this year on a ballast cleaning program on the Hunter Valley coal network.

The 5 year Plan approved by the ARTC Board this week will establish a regular planned maintenance and ballast cleaning cycle consistent with world wide heavy haulage practice.

The Hunter Valley Coal Network has not received any significant ballast maintenance or upgrade since the early to mid 1980's.

The ARTC program will provide customer benefits of improved reliability, significant reductions in unplanned maintenance, a reduced rate of resurfacing and track restrictions and will support increased capacity while reducing cycle times without customer service interruptions.

 "By proactively addressing areas of priority in the first year it will minimise the potential for unscheduled maintenance and associated interruptions to operations." David Marchant CEO of ARTC said today.

"This establishment of a long term Ballast Cleaning Plan will lead to increased efficiency of the line which has been seen already with ARTC's recent reintroduction of planned ballast cleaning where there are now no track restrictions as a result of poor ballast condition." David Marchant said.

ARTC is currently undertaking a $375 million investment program for the enhancement of the Hunter Valley Coal Network to ensure that rail capacity is ahead of demand. ARTC also has in place a $2 billion investment in the North South Melbourne- Sydney- Brisbane rail corridor to achieve rail's competitiveness in the interstate intermodal market.

The first 25.6 kms to be cleaned in the 2006/2007 financial year will be a range of locations on the coal lines being the Up Coal Line from Sandgate through Thornton to Maitland and the Up Main Line from Maitland to Singleton and Singleton to Camberwell in the Upper Hunter.

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