



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Major Works Alliance Announced for Rail between Sydney and Melbourne

Rail freight transport times between Sydney and Melbourne will be slashed by up to two and a half hours and the line's capacity increased following the signing of an agreement today worth an estimated \$560 million.

A consortium lead by John Holland, MVM Rail and O'Donnell Griffin has been selected to upgrade the line to make rail freight transport more competitive between Australia's two largest cities.

Australian Rail Track Corporation's (ARTC) South Improvement Alliance contract with the Australian Rail Consortium will see the provision of about 220 kilometres of new passing loops, extensive upgrading of railway infrastructure and the modernisation of the line's signalling system.

The Australian Rail Consortium is made up of alliance leaders John Holland, MVM Rail and O'Donnell Griffin and sub-alliance partners KBR, GHD and CW-DC.

ARTC Chief Executive Officer, David Marchant, said the Sydney-Melbourne rail line upgrade was aimed at increasing line capacity, reducing transit time and increasing rail's share of the multi-million dollar interstate freight transport market.

"The works program which will commence early next year under this alliance and will dramatically increase rail's position in the transport market," Mr Marchant said. "The Sydney-Melbourne Line will have increased capacity underpinning rail's competitiveness."

"By constructing passing lanes at frequent locations along the track and improving rail infrastructure, transit times will be reduced. No longer will one freight train have to wait idling on a side line while another passes. The upgrade will mean a reduction in transit times from Sydney to Melbourne from 13 hours 10 minutes to 10 hours 40 minutes for 1500 metre super freighters and 11 hours 30 minutes for 1800 metre super freighters," Mr Marchant added.

The South Improvement Alliance contract was signed today in Sydney by Barry Murphy, Chairman and David Marchant, CEO of the ARTC with Janet Holmes à Court, Chairman of John Holland; Bill Wild, Group Managing Director of John Holland Group; Jim Matijasevich, Managing Director of MVM Rail and David Lee, General Manager of ODG.

Mrs Holmes à Court said she was enthusiastic about the alliance model which will help overcome many of the traditional challenges of rail line upgrades and deliver a

faster, more cost-effective upgrade with minimal disruption to the ARTC's existing business.

"Train lines are often more complex work 'sites' than most other construction projects with a single, fixed location," she said. "Railway upgrades like this traverse hundreds of kilometres, go through numerous communities, have many interface requirements to minimise the impact on normal freight and passenger services and affect many different stakeholders across two states. These challenges can only be efficiently met when all parties are equally motivated toward a shared goal, and that's what alliances do."

Mrs Holmes à Court also expected flow-on benefits to regional centres along the train line during the delivery of the upgrade program.

"John Holland and our alliance partners are committed to supporting local communities along the line by buying and hiring as much as possible from local regions to supplement our own skilled workforce.

"The ARTC is pleased with the alliance framework as it provides certainty with regards to the rates and availability of resources for a diverse range of projects and enables a partnership approach with the alliance provider in the delivery of a significant programme." Mr Marchant said.

The contract signing marks the second of the alliance relationships ARTC is developing for the rail upgrades. Following the signing of the Northern Signalling Alliance on 5 September between ARTC and Union Switch and Signal Pty Ltd, a third alliance contract is being finalised for works on the Sydney-Brisbane corridor which also includes the Hunter Valley Lines. In all, the ARTC will invest \$1.4 billion in upgrading the North South rail corridor over three years.

"ARTC will sequence and coordinate the roll out of the works efficiently and effectively, while ensuring there is no negative impact on current operations." Mr Marchant said.

Environmental assessment of the proposed works has begun and ARTC will undertake extensive consultation with local residents, communities and local government.

Media contacts:

- **Interviews with David Marchant, CEO of the ARTC**, please contact Prue Regan on 02 8259 0716 or 0419 297 004; and for
- **Comment from Janet Holmes à Court**, Chairman of alliance-leader John Holland, please contact Daniel Moloney on 0404 813 716.

FACT SHEET

Details of the works program include:

- The construction of 16 passing lanes consisting of double track sections of around 10 km to 15 km length of a standard configuration at approximately 10 minute running time intervals with around 220 kms total length of new line construction;
- New concrete sleepers on selected curves allowing trains to run at faster speeds. This will involve about 290,000 new sleepers and recanting to maximum superelevation to facilitate maximum train speeds;
- Ballast top-up and tamping of existing concrete sleepers over 130 kms to achieve maximum train speeds;
- Boosting capacity to the Dynon / Melbourne Port precinct by increasing to three the number of bi-direction tracks between Tottenham Junction to Dynon;
- Construction of a direct standard gauge connection between Brooklyn and Sunshine in Melbourne to provide direct access between the North-South and East-West corridors; and
- Installation of eight sets of facing cross overs to minimise operational delays during upgrading and future renewal projects.