



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Media Release

RECORD BREAKING EFFORT AS NORTH SOUTH RAIL UPGRADE STEAMS AHEAD

Records continue to tumble as the upgrade of the North South rail corridor by Australian Rail Track Corporation continues.

Figures released today by ARTC indicate that in February crews working on the massive concrete resleeper project between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne broke the Australian record for continuous sleeper laying.

Crews working south of Wodonga laid 131,166 new concrete sleepers in just 19 days, breaking the old record set in 2008.

ARTC has allocated \$400 million to replace wooden and steel sleepers on the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane rail corridor with around 2.2 million new concrete sleepers.

The record breaking sleeper drive coincides with the laying of the 2 millionth concrete sleeper between Brisbane and Sydney in February.

ARTC CEO David Marchant said the achievement of the crews working on the project was an outstanding effort and testament to ARTC's commitment to the resurgence of freight rail in Australia.

"The upgrade of the North South rail corridor between Brisbane and Melbourne is the largest since the line was originally laid and one of the most important infrastructure improvements for the Australian economy."

"As demand on Australia's transport logistics network increases, rail must step up to the plate as a value adding link in the transport market," he said.

"Once the re-sleepering, additional passing lanes, loops and signalling upgrades are completed, ARTC will be able to offer the freight industry transit times as low as 10 hours 40 minutes between Sydney and Melbourne and 15 hours 35 minutes between Sydney and Brisbane."

"Rail will be more than competitive again and as each 1500 metre long train can replace 100 semi trailers we could see less trucks on our major roads," Mr Marchant said.

"This program has been an economic boost to regional and rural Australia with new employment opportunities that have been created along with ARTC local purchases and equipment hire," he said.

The project is being completed in conjunction with the Southern Improvement Alliance.

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Contact: Brad Emery 0419 297 004