

18 April 2016

HUNTER VALLEY SET FOR BIG CASH BOOST NEXT WEEK

The Hunter Valley economy is set for another cash injection next week, as the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) undertakes around \$20 million worth of rail maintenance work along the coal chain's rail corridor.

ARTC's annual maintenance program in the Hunter Valley pumps more than \$100 million into the local Hunter economy every year, Executive General Manager – Hunter Valley Jonathan Vandervoort said.

“That benefits everyone from local hoteliers, restaurants and the corner store to quarries, equipment hire and contract labour companies,” Mr Vandervoort said.

“A lot of people don't know this, but the maintenance work we do is not funded by the taxpayer – including improvements to Hunter passenger lines.

“Everything is paid for by the revenue we earn from our customers and almost all of the important maintenance work we deliver next week will involve or support local Hunter businesses.”

Over 100 individual projects to keep the rail network safe and reliable will take place during the network shutdown from 6am Wednesday 27 April to late Friday evening 29 April.

Typical rail maintenance tasks like replacing sleepers, cleaning and compacting ballast, welding rail and technical jobs like signalling work, will take place throughout the rail corridor.

“By ‘closing down’ the network and with fewer trains running we create a safer environment for our people and provide the opportunity to get the maximum amount of rail maintenance done in an efficient amount of time,” Mr Vandervoort said.

“It's the most efficient and safe way to package the vast amount of work needed rather than spread over many nights and in-between live running rail traffic.”

Maintenance work will take place throughout the Hunter Valley from the Port to Narrabri and from Muswellbrook to Ulan.

“These shutdowns are planned more than a year in advance and we closely work with the Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator and our customers to make sure we minimise impact on the Hunter coal chain,” Mr Vandervoort said.

“We would like to thank the community for their patience and understanding while the works take place as we appreciate it does cause inconvenience.”

The next major, network-wide maintenance shutdown will be 19-21 July.

ENDS

Media Contact: Bas Bolyn, ARTC, 0477 340 658

Scone/Parkville Works:

There will be a range of projects around Scone during the shutdown including works at:

- Scone passenger line upgrade adjacent to the Scone station platform
 - Upgrade of Scone passenger loop replacing existing track (which is currently 53kg/m rail on timber sleepers) with 60kg/m rail on heavy duty concrete sleepers. They are also improving the track foundation with new ballast to a depth of 300mm.
 - About 2500T of new material is being stockpiled along St Aubin's Street and in the park prior to the works commencing.
 - Minor drainage works.

- Common Lane, Scone
 - Essential maintenance and upgrade work from 6:00pm Tuesday 26th April to 6:00am Saturday 30th April inclusive of night works. Traffic control will be in place.

- Mareeba Road, Parkville
 - Work will involve upgrade of the rail loop including rerailing, resleepering and ballasting from 6:00am Wednesday 27th April to 8:00pm Friday 29th April inclusive of night works. Preparatory work will be undertaken before and after the project during daylight hours

Heavy machinery including excavators, dump trucks, front-end loaders and large track resurfacing machines will be in use during this period.

Heavy trucks will be moving in and out of the site carrying spoil material and ballast.

Traffic control will be in place and there will be supplies delivered to the worksite from 7 April. There may be some road closures.

Site clean-up and material removal will take place from 29 April until mid-May.

Unfortunately it will be noisy and dusty work and light towers will be used for night time work. So we apologise for the inconvenience and will minimise impact as much as possible and thank the community for its patience.