

**26 March 2019**

## **NORTH EAST RAIL LINE UPGRADE UNDERWAY**

- **Expressions of Interest released - next major milestone achieved**
- **Thousands of tonnes of ballast delivery underway**

Works are underway, and another major milestone reached, with the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) calling for Expressions of Interest in the largest construction contract on the North East Rail Line upgrade project.

The multi-million-dollar contract is to deliver track grinding, drainage upgrades, track improvements at level crossings, bridge upgrades and new ballast. Works will be carried out along the 316 kilometres of track from Melbourne (Spencer Street Junction) to Albury/Wodonga and will bring many benefits to local businesses and communities.

The \$235M North East rail line upgrade, which had funding approved in October 2018, will bring improved track reliability, smoother journeys and reduce causes of major delays to passenger services between Melbourne and Albury. This will be achieved by improving the performance of the North East line from an ARTC freight standard to that of other regional passenger lines in Victoria.

“ARTC has been hard at work ensuring all appropriate management, planning, procurement and approval processes are in place for the project,” John Fullerton ARTC CEO and Managing Director said.

“It’s important we get this project right and we are going through a staged, robust process ensuring that we find and procure the best available engineering companies to deliver the major packages of work along the North East line,” Mr Fullerton said.

“Calling for Expressions of Interest is an important milestone, following this a shortlist of companies will then be invited to proceed to a formal Request for Tender phase.”

Meanwhile, ARTC continues to progress other targeted works along the line.

500 metres of mudholes have already been removed as part of our priority mudhole removal program, employing local plant hire and skilled workers. Level crossing resurfacing to more than 100 level crossings has also commenced with Faithfull Street, Benalla and Gravel Pit Road, Wangaratta South recently completed.

“We are getting on with the task of improving the track condition and targeting the causes of service delay,” Mr Fullerton said.

Further works will take place over the weekend of 6-8 April, including bridge re-transoming works near Faithfull Creek, Euroa. A 20-day track tamping program using large track machines also continues. Tamping compacts the ballast around the track – to help provide a smoother journey for trains.

Community engagement has also been a key focus and will continue for the duration of the project. So far community events, pop-ups and meetings have been held at Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Euroa, Seymour, Benalla and Kilmore. ARTC also presents to U3A Seymour and Yea Rotary in coming weeks.

“We know improving rail services is important to the people of North East Victoria and we will continue providing opportunities for the community to provide us their feedback, ask questions and learn more about the upcoming works,” said Mr Fullerton.

**ENDS**

**Media contact:** Bas Bolyne, ARTC, 0477 340 658

**Media downloads including video and images of recent works available at:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zn55t4xbg4t18ek/AADPAZh7TaKyUMjKhaaSxzaNa?dl=0>

See <https://www.artc.com.au/projects/northeast/> for more details of the North East Rail Line upgrade or to sign up for electronic project updates.

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST:**

– Evaluation criteria will include company experience, suitability to the project and demonstrated ability to carry out upgrade works on an operational railway.

– Key features of the project will include:

- Ballast depth increase
- Mud hole removal
- Resurfacing
- Tamping and regulating
- Turnout upgrades
- Drainage improvements
- Rail grinding
- Replacement of existing under bridges
- Upgrading existing ballast top bridges and converting transom bridges to ballast-top
- Level crossing renewals

**HOW TO SUBMIT:**

Companies that satisfy the evaluation criteria are requested to access the EOI documentation and submit an EOI via the TenderLink website.

Any enquiries can be directed via TenderLink referencing the EOI Tender: *EOI-VIC-05854-00 – North East Rail Line Upgrade Project*.