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CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES VIE FOR MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR NORTH EAST RAIL LINE UPGRADE CONTRACT

- **3 major construction firms shortlisted for tender**
- **Early works continue with major contract expected to commence later this year**

In another milestone for the North East Rail Line Upgrade, the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has announced the shortlisting of three construction firms to deliver the multi-million-dollar main works contract for the rail upgrade project.

The shortlisting follows a rigorous expression of interest process, which drew an extremely high standard of responses from local and interstate construction firms.

ARTC General Manager Projects Victoria, Ed Walker said the project's largest works package will be awarded to the very best available engineering company and ARTC are now entering a formal Request for Tender phase.

"The works contract is to deliver ballast depth improvements, track resurfacing, drainage upgrades, level crossing and rail bridge upgrades. We expect to award the contract and for main works to start by the end of the year, with project completion in 2021," Mr Walker said.

The \$235 million North East Rail Line Upgrade will bring improved track reliability, smoother journeys and help reduce causes of major delays to passenger services between Melbourne and Albury.

Once complete the works will improve the standard of the rail line to the equivalent of other long-distance regional passenger rail lines in Victoria and bring considerable benefits to rail passengers, local business and communities of North East Victoria.

Mr Walker said ARTC is continuing to progress other targeted works along the 316 kilometres of track from Spencer St Junction in Melbourne to Albury-Wodonga.

"So far this year over 1900 metres of priority mudholes have been removed, as well the completion of a 15-day track tamping program. Further mudhole removal works and tamping will be carried out in parallel with the main contract development," he said.

"We've also made a start to improving more than 110 level crossings and 120 rail bridges. These works are part of what's required to meet the class 2 track performance standard and so far eight bridges and nine level crossings have been completed."

ARTC is calling for feedback on the project and has recently attended farmers markets in Benalla and Avenel to give community members and local stakeholders an opportunity to meet with project teams, ask questions and provide comment on the project. Other community events have been held in Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Euroa, Kilmore and Seymour. Upcoming events are advertised on ARTC's website.

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Dropbox link to recent footage and pictures of early mud-hole removal works can be found here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/vo2gqi4rjq4hgcf/AABR7z7Tj5A34IHc-G1d4gn7a?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.

Background information:

The Australian Government has committed \$235M to the North East Rail Line Upgrade which will upgrade the rail line from Melbourne (Spencer Street Junction) to Albury-Wodonga. The improvements will bring the North East line up to a Victorian Class 2 track performance standard, in line with other long-distance regional passenger rail lines in Victoria.

The project will:

- improve passenger service reliability by upgrading track condition and addressing the main causes of delays
- improve ride quality and comfort for travelers by reducing bumps experienced during travel
- help reduce the causes of major delays that can impact services such as signal failures due to signal wire theft.

ARTC is delivering the project on behalf of the Australian and Victorian governments. We are working closely with Victorian transport agencies including V/Line, Public Transport Victoria, Transport for Victoria and Rail Projects Victoria to deliver the project in support of the Regional Rail Revival program, which is upgrading regional passenger train lines right across Victoria.

North East Rail Line Upgrade timeline:

March 2018	Funding announced
May 2018 – end 2018	Project planning and resourcing
October 2018	\$235M funding granted
Late 2018	Project scope confirmed and independently reviewed by Monash University's Institute of Railway Technology
	Commencement of community engagement
Early 2019	Start of early works
March 2019	Expression of Interest for main works contract
May 2019	Victorian government budget commitment for VLocity trains
June 2019	Request for Formal Tender to shortlisted contractors for North East Rail Line Upgrade main works
Nov/Dec 2019	Expected contract award and commencement of works by the end of the year
2021	Upgrade completion