



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

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\$85 million Next G™ deal sees 77 new base stations in regional Australia

Seventy-seven new Next G™ regional base stations will be built as part of an \$85 million communications deal signed today between the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and Telstra.

The agreement will see Telstra's leading Next G™ network used to replace nine separate communications systems across 10,000km of rail tracks.

Replacing a series of old technologies, such as two-way radios and CDMA devices, the new network will provide telecommunications coverage for the interstate rail network – from Brisbane to Perth (via Melbourne and Broken Hill) and in the Hunter Valley. The agreement improves coverage in tunnels and across the Nullarbor Plain, introduces new communications equipment for more than 700 locomotives, and is backed up with Satellite if necessary.

Chief Executive Officer of ARTC, Mr David Marchant, said once completed all trains and train controllers would be able to use the one system to communicate with each other across the entire national rail network from Brisbane to Perth, as well as the Hunter Valley Coal Network, eliminating the inefficient nine different communications systems for train operators.

“ARTC is breaking new ground in Australian rail communications,” Mr Marchant said. “A single national communication system will greatly improve operational efficiency and reduce costs associated with managing multiple platforms.

“This national rail network communications backbone will be the envy of the North American and European rail networks. ARTC's approach is to contract our communications delivery, which in itself is a major shift for the rail industry.

“ARTC has chosen Telstra because its Next G™ network provides depth and breadth of high speed coverage coupled with reliable performance - a framework for continuous updating and improvement,” Mr Marchant said.

Telstra Chief Executive Officer, Mr Sol Trujillo, said the ARTC decision was a strong endorsement of Telstra's world leading Next G™ network.

“What better way to bring the rail community into the 21st century than via Telstra's turbo-charged Next G™ mobile broadband network which is the fastest and largest of its kind in the world,” Mr Trujillo said.

“Not only does today's agreement provide the best possible communications system for ARTC's national rail network, it also provides Next G™ mobile coverage for the first time in some remote and regional towns such as Rawlinna (WA), Cook and Nackara (SA), and Loadstone and Telegraph Point (NSW).”

Telstra Group Managing Director, Enterprise and Government, Mr David Thodey, said businesses were flocking to the Next G™ network given its incomparable national coverage and high speed voice and data services.

Media Release



“Currently reaching 98.8 per cent of the Australian population or 1.9 million square kilometres, the expanded Next G™ network will also provide additional mobile broadband coverage to businesses and consumers located in or travelling to these areas,” Mr Thodey said.

General Manager Strategy Development and Chief Information Officer for ARTC, Mr Leon Welsby, said the new communications network will provide train controllers with real time GPS location of all trains, wherever they are between Brisbane and Perth.

Australian government funding under the Auslink National Transport Plan has been made available to provide this common communications system for the national rail network.

“This agreement assists in delivering on our program to revitalise interstate rail through a growth strategy of track investment and better asset management, while promoting operational efficiency and the uniformity of technical and safety standards and practices,” Mr Marchant said.

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