



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

3 June 2001

Rail Safety – SA leads the way

From midnight tonight a major step in reversing "the break of gauge" mentality in rail safety will take place with the adoption for the first time of a national operations and safe working code of practice.

The Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC) will implement the national code of practice for operations and safe working on its interstate rail track in Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales.

David Marchant, Chief Executive Officer, said "With the implementation of the national code of practice, it is appropriate that in Australia's Centenary year we are finally making strong progress in establishing greater harmonisation across the nation's various rail jurisdictions."

"The major track owners and train operators, Queensland Rail, Rail Infrastructure Corporation (NSW), Australian Railroad Group (WA), National Rail Corporation, FreightCorp, Freight Australia and ARTC have all agreed to implement a nation wide rail operation and safe working code of practice." David Marchant said. ARTC is first to implement this code with its introduction to rail operations from midnight Sunday.

Just over a week ago in Darwin, the Australian Transport Council (Federal and State Transport Ministers) endorsed the code impact statement.

The code has been under development for the last 3 years under the auspices of the Australasian Railway Association, the Commonwealth Government and each of the State and private rail operators.

David Marchant said "This is major step in gaining a safer and consistent Australian rail transport network. As each jurisdiction moves to the national code the rules will become consistent for train operators on the interstate mainlines."

ARTC is hopeful that it will gain regulatory approval from the Victorian Regulator to commence implementation, over the next 12 months of the national code on the Victorian mainline track.

David Marchant said "It has been a major effort by the train operators, National Rail, Australian Southern Railways, Great Southern Railways, Freight Australia, SCT, TOLL and Patrick to have their staff trained in the new rules. The track maintainers Transfield and Rail Services Australia have also had to retrain all staff in the new safe working codes."



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The national code of practice in operations and safe working prescribes rules with regard to signal compliance, train control communication protocols, track worker safety, train configuration, and the rules of the road for train operations.

"Many of these rules differed from State to State and the code is aimed to gain operational consistency from Brisbane to Perth thereby increasing the overall safety and efficiency of the rail network" David Marchant said.

ARTC is initially implementing the code from the Victorian border to Kalgoorlie and from Crystal Brook to Broken Hill.

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Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) was incorporated in July 1998 following an inter-governmental agreement between the Commonwealth and all mainland States to establish a one-stop shop for access to the interstate rail network. Currently, ARTC has responsibility for the management of 3600 kilometres of the interstate rail network from Albury to Kalgoorlie via Melbourne and Adelaide and from Broken Hill to Crystal Brook. ARTC also manages access to the Tarcoola to Alice Springs Line on behalf of the Asia Pacific Transport Company and to Appleton Dock on behalf of the Melbourne Ports Corporation. ARTC provides equitable access to this network to train operators on a non-discriminatory basis.