



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

PRESS RELEASE

ARTC Announces \$10.5 million Hunter Valley Coal Network Project at Muswellbrook

ARTC Board of Directors have approved rail works worth \$10.5 million in the Muswellbrook yard to improve the junction between the Ulan and Main North lines and to provide an extended passing loop to further increase capacity in the Hunter Valley rail network.

With the existing crossing loop at Muswellbrook being too short for the standard 1550 metre train on the Ulan Line, the project will extend the existing crossing loop to 1800 metres. This work requires the installation of new signalling infrastructure, new track work and improvements to the existing goods siding.

“This work is a key project to enable ARTC’s Hunter Valley rail network to handle the projected haulage demands from increases in existing mine production and from new mine projects currently being planned.” David Marchant Chief Executive of ARTC said

“The new infrastructure will eliminate a major constraint in the network by removing delays of an hour or more for coal trains on the Ulan line joining the Main North at Muswellbrook.” Mr Marchant said.

Approximately 15 million tonnes of coal presently passes through Muswellbrook a year and significant growth is expected as new mines on the Ulan line and in the Gunnedah basin commence production.

The project also represents the first stage of the Muswellbrook to Antiene duplication project in ARTC’s \$389 million Hunter Valley Coal Capacity Improvement Strategy.

The delivery of the works to provide an 1800 metre loop is scheduled to commence in March 2007, signalling infrastructure in May 2007 with the commissioning of the fully operational works proposed for June 2007.

A further \$2.33 million will be spent subsequently on the second stage of the project which will improve the track geometry to increase track speed through the northern end of the yard.

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