



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

10 June 1999 - no embargo

ARTC Announces \$20.5m investment in Nation Track

The Adelaide based Australian Rail Track Corporation (**ARTC**) is making a major \$20.5 million investment in the interstate rail network over the next two and a half years. Approximately half the project will be funded from the Commonwealth Government's \$250 million four-year investment program in the national track that is being managed by **ARTC**.

- **ARTC** Chief Executive, **David Marchant** says that this program will:
- Assist in providing more reliable, faster and heavier trains to run over the interstate rail network.
- Extend the life of the track.
- Assist in reducing wheel noise in the Adelaide Hills.
- Enable a significant improvement in the condition of the interstate track in Victoria, including the Melbourne to Adelaide corridor.

The \$20.5 million rail rectification program will also reduce wear and tear on rail wagons and on the track. This will result in reduced wagon maintenance costs for rail operators and extend the life of the track infrastructure in South Australia and Victoria. Combined with other Commonwealth and **ARTC** investment projects in the national track the rail rectification program will ultimately allow the operation of heavier and faster trains.

The rail rectification program includes rail straightening (also known as rail bending), tamping of the ballast and rail grinding. The process starts with the removal of dips and bumps that build up in the track over time from the constant passage of heavy freight trains over the rail - in a similar fashion to corrugations in road surfaces. After ballast is repacked under the affected track, a program of computer guided rail grinding follows.

This latter process is carried out by the LORAM RG7 rail grinding machine, which will be based in South Australia and Victoria over the next two and a half years. At 50 metres in length and standing 4.5 metres tall and weighing in at 160 tonnes, the RG7 is one of the largest machines to have ever been seen on Australian rails. When grinding the track the RG7 creates a spectacular fireworks display as it grinds layers of metal from the rail as thin as one twentieth of a millimetre from the rail-head.

The grinding provides a much smoother rail surface which resulting in better rail/wheel contact for the heavy wagons carrying freight around the country. The rail operators benefit from less wear and tear on their rolling stock and a reduction in maintenance costs. The improved profile of the track and the grinding away of damaged metal results in reduced track maintenance costs and an extension of rail life.



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

David Marchant says, *"The rail rectification and grinding program is an important stage in improving our management of this vital national asset. Over the next three years **ARTC** and the Commonwealth Government will be investing some \$200 million in a range of infrastructure projects to further upgrade the interstate rail network."*

"Our aims are to ensure the running of more reliable, faster and heavier trains by the various train operators. South Australia and Victoria will be the major beneficiaries from this project. Improved transport links are a key factor in the economic success of both states."

The **Australian Rail Track Corporation**, based in Adelaide, is responsible for the management of and provision of access to over 3500 kilometres of interstate track between Albury (NSW) - Melbourne - Adelaide - Perth as well as tracks to Broken Hill and Alice Springs. The Commonwealth and the States agreed in 1997 that the **ARTC** would provide a one-stop shop for rail operators seeking access to the national track between Brisbane and Perth.

For further information contact Mark Carter on 0408 800 903