



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

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Melbourne – Adelaide Rail Corridor more efficient

Commencing this month, faster transit times, greater reliability and improved competitiveness for rail between Melbourne and Adelaide are being delivered. A major engineering review and the raising of permissible track speeds in Victoria and the Adelaide Hills is breathing new life into the Adelaide to Melbourne rail corridor.

These initiatives combined with a recent \$20 million infrastructure investment program funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, are delivering dramatic reductions in transit times and improved corridor reliability for freight and passenger train operators on this important rail link.

Australian Rail Track Corporation CEO, David Marchant said "Twelve months ago, sections of this corridor were seen as some of the worst parts of the interstate rail network. To assist both interstate and state-based rail operators provide a better service to their customers between Melbourne and Adelaide we have been able to significantly increase maximum speeds and enhance the reliability of this corridor."

"Interstate freight operators have benefited on average from over an hour's reduction in transit times and **ARTC** has been working closely with Great Southern Railway to assist them in achieving a 10.5 hour running time for the Overland."

David Marchant continued, "**ARTC** has been conducting a fundamental review of engineering standards applied to the track on this corridor and has challenged many of the standards that applied to a past era of rail transport."

"By more careful monitoring and husbandry of our track asset, **ARTC** has been able to lift the maximum permissible speeds from 80 km/h to 115 km/h over most of the corridor and also increase permissible axle loads without having to rely on costly infrastructure improvements."

Over the last 12 months, since **ARTC** took over the lease and management of the interstate track in Victoria, speed restrictions have been reduced from 28% to an all time low of 0.8%.

The improvements on this corridor and the introduction of the new higher speed limits will see more consistent standards for train operators applied across the **ARTC** network.

A 21-tonne axle load will soon apply across the entire interstate network from Brisbane to Perth and over most sections of the **ARTC** network a maximum speed of 110 km/h now applies for such trains. A maximum speed of 115 km/h will apply to trains with a 19-tonne axle load.



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Mr Marchant said, "These improvements have raised the average speed for an interstate freight train between Melbourne and Adelaide to 80 km/h. With additional **ARTC** and Commonwealth funded works being carried over the next two years we hope to raise this further.

ARTC has also been undertaking a review of train lengths and maximum trailing loads on the Adelaide to Melbourne corridor. Trailing loads have been increased from 3300 tonnes to 5000 tonnes on a trial basis and a restricted number of 1500 metre trains paths (previously 1300 metres) have been provided.

This latter initiative has been made in anticipation of the crossing loop extension program, which is taking place in Victoria and South Australia. To accommodate longer trains, two completely new 1500 metre long crossing loops will be constructed between Melbourne and Adelaide, and a further five loops extended to 1500 metres.

The interstate rail network will be enhanced through more efficient corridor operations and greater crossing opportunities for maximum length trains. Increased corridor capacity will also assist in ensuring that rail becomes more competitive on this corridor and provide the industry with the ability to grow market share in relation to other transport modes.

David Marchant concluded, "Rail is a viable choice for freight movements on this corridor. These initiatives will greatly assist rail in increasing its competitiveness against road transport."

"Greatly reduced transit times, the ability to run heavier, longer and faster trains combined with overall improvements in corridor reliability provides a winning base for the regeneration of this important transport link."

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