



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

ARTC Further Boosts its Hunter Valley Coal Network Capacity

Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC) announced today that speed limits had been lifted from 60 kilometres per hour to 80 kilometres per hour for trains approaching the Minimbah and Nundah Banks on the Hunter Valley Coal Rail Network.

“The introduction of 80 km per hour approaches for loaded coal trains reduces the headway between trains by over 3 minutes on each of these steep grades. With current section times of 17 and 20 minutes respectively, this represents a capacity increase of between 15% and 20%.” David Marchant, Chief Executive of ARTC, said today

The headway between trains dictates the capacity of a section of plain track. Minimbah and Nundah banks represent the current headway limit between Antiene (just south of Muswellbrook) and the Newcastle ports. Reducing the headways on these steep sections therefore lifts the capacity of the network as a whole.

“This is a great efficiency gain for the rail network. This innovative solution to increasing capacity has cost less than \$1 million. As such it represents great value for money for the coal industry” Mr Marchant said.

The completion of these projects is an important achievement within ARTC’s \$387 million Hunter Valley Coal Network Enhancement Strategy announced in April 2006. More information on these and ARTC’s other projects in the Hunter Valley are described in the Hunter Valley Coal Network Capacity Improvement Strategy 2006 – 2011, available at www.artc.com.au under “Investment Strategies”.

The combined effect of the lifting of train speeds to 80 kilometres per hour at Minimbah and Nundah banks and the new Sandgate grade separation will be to lift coal capacity of the Hunter Valley rail network to about 115 million tonnes per year.

ARTC’s \$80 million Sandgate Grade Separation became operational in November 2006 allowing coal trains to cross to the Port of Newcastle without interruption from passenger and general freight trains.

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