



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Media Release

Extension of Willow Tree Crossing Loop another boost for Hunter Valley Coal

Another milestone has been reached in meeting future demand for Hunter Valley coal with the completion of the extension of the Willow Tree crossing loop on the rail line between Muswellbrook and Werris Creek by Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC).

The loop extension is the first step in enabling significant growth from the Gunnedah region through an increase in train length from 42 wagons to up to 72 wagons.

The adoption of longer trains reduces above rail operating costs, and enables more coal to be transported in a more cost effective manner with fewer trains.

ARTC CEO, David Marchant, said the project is part of the 2007-2012 Hunter Valley Coal Network Capacity Improvement Strategy.

“Demand on Hunter Valley coal is set to increase dramatically by 2012. The extension of the Willow Tree crossing loop is part of the investment by ARTC to get more coal to port more efficiently and stay ahead of future demand,” Mr Marchant said.

“This sort of infrastructure investment is a boost not only to the immediate coal industry, but to the local economy of the Hunter Valley and to the nation as a whole.”

Construction commenced in February 2008 with completion on the 16th May 2008. The works involved the installation of new signalling and 1 kilometre of new track incorporating 1800 heavy duty concrete sleepers and 60kg/m head hardened rail.

Further loops are planned for completion in the coming months.

Sinclair Knight Merz provided the design and project management and the contract management was carried out by ARTC. The track and civil construction works were delivered by John Holland Rail and signalling works by the North Coast and Hunter Valley Signalling Alliance.

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