



The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Minister for Infrastructure,
Transport, Regional Development
and Local Government
Leader of the House

Media Statement

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE: KEY RAIL PROJECTS GET UNDERWAY

Work on laying 658,000 new concrete sleepers along two critical sections of the interstate freight rail network has started with funding provided under the Rudd Labor Government's Economic Stimulus Package.

The two projects getting underway are:

- A \$100 million upgrade of the **line between Maroona and the South Australian border**: a project that will replace the existing wooden sleepers with 433,000 new concrete sleepers; and
- A \$45 million upgrade of the **line between Albury and Seymour in Victoria**: a project that will replace the existing wooden sleepers with 225,000 new concrete sleepers.

Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese, congratulated the ARTC for moving so quickly to put its economic stimulus funding to work creating jobs and modernising the nation's rail infrastructure.

"As well as putting in place the modern rail infrastructure vital to Australia's long term prosperity, our economic stimulus package is supporting jobs and businesses during the current global economic recession," said Mr Albanese.

"These two projects alone are expected to employ up to 240 jobs. They are also supporting some 140 jobs in three factories around the country that manufacture the new concrete sleepers.

"The Rudd Labor Government is investing more in rail over the next 18 months than our predecessors did during their 12 years in office."

ARTC CEO David Marchant explained the upgrade to the two lines would improve the efficiency on the interstate network.

"Consistency in rail sleepers may not sound significant. But it means better efficiency from the track and reduced transit times," said Mr Marchant.

"The use of concrete sleepers will also reduce the need for temporary speed restrictions in summer due to the effects of heat on the rail. Concrete sleepers will hold the rail firmly in place, whereas wooden sleepers tend to buckle on extremely hot days.

"This upgrade is good news for the wider community as well. Not only does installing this new infrastructure provide a boost to local economies, but it also allows more freight to be moved by rail, meaning fewer trucks on our roads. One 1500m train can replace around 100 trucks."

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