



## AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

### MEDIA RELEASE

### **3 MILLIONTH CONCRETE SLEEPER USHERS IN RESURGENCE IN FREIGHT RAIL**

Australian Rail Track Corporation has reached a major milestone in Australian construction history at Stawell in Victoria today, with the laying of the 3 millionth concrete railway sleeper in succession since 2006.

The laying of the 3 millionth concrete sleeper is benchmark construction feat that surpasses the laying of the Trans-Australian line from Adelaide to Kalgoorlie in the 70's by 30km.

ARTC has been working with four alliance partners to upgrade major sections of the ARTC interstate network over the past three years.

Today in the town of Stawell in Western Victoria a brand new concrete sleeper made in Bomen New South Wales was laid as the 3 millionth since the resleepering campaign began in September 2006.

ARTC CEO, David Marchant, outlined the importance of the concrete resleepering projects to the Australian freight transport market.

"As Australia recovers from the Global Financial Crisis, demand from the market for efficient freight transport will increase significantly. The resurgence we are seeing in freight rail is vital for the growth in our transport logistics industry and for the Australian economy as a whole," Mr Marchant said.

"Consistency in rail sleepers may not sound significant," Mr Marchant said, "but it will mean a more reliable track and reduced transit times between the main eastern State demand centres."

"Concrete sleepers will also dramatically reduce the need for temporary speed restrictions in summer due to the effect of extreme heat on the rail."

"Overall the concrete resleepering upgrades that have been rolled out across the network will help restore freight rail as a value adding asset as part of the national transport logistics network," he said.

The most significant concrete resleepering project was as part of the \$2.6 billion upgrade to the main line between Brisbane and Sydney which will allow ARTC to offer the freight industry transit times as low as 10 hours 40 minutes between Sydney and Melbourne and 15 hours 35 minutes between Sydney and Brisbane.

The concrete resleepering between Brisbane and Melbourne is scheduled to be completed in February 2010.

Other projects which were brought forward as part of the Australian Government's stimulus investment included: \$45 million concrete resleepering project on the North

East Victorian lines; \$51 million concrete resleeper project between Cootamundra and Parkes; \$62 million concrete resleeper project on the Western Victorian lines.

In the month of October 2009, 195,667 concrete sleepers were installed. This equates to the laying of 130km of completed track in one calendar month.

The total program is scheduled to deliver into the network approximately 3.2 million concrete sleepers overall. The amount of pre-tension wire that would go into the production of the sleepers would be enough to wrap around the earth more than six times.

In addition 912,000 tonnes of sand and cement will be used as well as thousands of tonnes of steel for the sleeper fastenings.

The need for such a large number of concrete sleepers has seen a new concrete sleeper factory established at Bomen near Wagga Wagga with further supply of concrete sleepers coming from Braemar near Mittagong NSW, Geelong in Victoria and Grafton on the North Coast NSW. These plants have been vital in keeping up the constant supply of concrete sleepers to our Alliance partners for installation.

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