



Steve Hutchins
Senator for New South Wales

David Marchant
Chief Executive Officer

ANOTHER ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROJECT COMPLETED:
COOTAMUNDRA TO PARKES RE-SLEEPERING

A major milestone in the modernisation of the East West rail corridor has been reached with completion of the 201 kilometre Cootamundra to Parkes concrete re-sleepering project.

The \$91.5 million project – part of the Rudd Labor Government's **Economic Stimulus Plan** – replaced worn track as well as all the timber sleepers with 301,000 new concrete sleepers.

Present for the ceremonial laying of the last concrete sleeper just outside of Parkes, Senator Steve Hutchins congratulated the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for moving so quickly to put the Government's economic stimulus funding to work creating jobs and upgrading the nation's rail infrastructure.

“As well as supporting jobs and businesses during the global recession, our economic stimulus package is building the modern rail infrastructure vital to Australia's long term prosperity,” said Senator Hutchins.

“In fact, the Rudd Labor Government will invest more in rail over the next 12 months than our predecessors did during their entire 12 years in office.”

Up until now, the line between Cootamundra and Parkes – originally laid as a secondary line – has never been upgraded to interstate standard. As a consequence it could only carry trains operating under strict weight and speed restrictions.

ARTC CEO David Marchant said the upgrade of the line between Cootamundra and Parkes would improve the overall efficiency of the interstate network.

“Concrete sleepers have a significant advantage over timber sleepers, particularly considering Australia's rugged topography. They will greatly improve the track's capacity and reduced transit times,” said Mr Marchant.

“Their use will also reduce the need for temporary speed restrictions in the summer months. Whereas wooden sleepers tend to buckle on extremely hot days, concrete sleepers hold the rail firmly in place.

“The upgrade is good news for the wider community as well. Not only has the project generated jobs and provided a boost to the local economy, the new track will allow more freight to be transported by rail - which overtime will lead to fewer trucks on our roads.”

One 1,500-metre train can replace around 100 trucks.

ARTC partnered with Transfield Services to deliver the project. It supported around 120 jobs and took five months to complete using sleepers produced by Austrak's Wagga Wagga factory.

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Media Contacts:

For Senator Hutchins	Tom Pacey	0458 750 777
For Mr Marchant (ARTC)	Brad Emery	0419 297 004