



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

MEDIA RELEASE

SUMMER HEAT NO LONGER A THORN IN RAIL'S SIDE

Extreme heat conditions no longer hold their sway over rail infrastructure on the majority of the line between Melbourne and Brisbane thanks to the massive concrete resleeper projects completed during 2009 Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) CEO David Marchant announced today.

"As the mercury pushes toward 40 degrees, ARTC would, in the past, often have to implement temporary speed restrictions on numerous sections of the North South corridor particularly in NSW."

"This was due to the potential for high summer temperatures to cause the steel rail to buckle. In the past ARTC could issue temporary speed restrictions on 50 days every summer which significantly increased transit time between the major capitals."

"Thanks to the \$400 million project to replace 2.2 million wooden sleepers with concrete sleepers on the North South corridor along with the \$100 million concrete resleeper project between the NSW border and Acacia Ridge QLD, temporary speed restrictions due to heat are for the most part a thing of the past," Mr Marchant said.

"By introducing concrete sleepers, ARTC has significantly increased the track infrastructure strength. The sheer weight of the concrete sleepers holds the track firmly in place and helps prevent heat related buckling."

David Marchant said the concrete resleeper showcased the overall upgrade of the Melbourne-Sydney-Brisbane rail line, which included new passing lanes and loops and signal upgrades.

"Along with the concrete re-sleeper project, the new passing loops, signal upgrades and track and bridge work on the North South corridor ushers in a whole new era of rail between Melbourne and Brisbane," Mr Marchant said.

"Overall, this upgrade is perhaps the largest rail project since the rail corridor was originally laid," he said.

"For ARTC it marks rail's resurgence as a realistic freight option."

"Once the re-sleepering, additional passing lanes, loops and signalling upgrades are completed, ARTC will be able 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."

"Rail will be more than competitive again and as each 1500 metre long train can replace 100 semi trailers we could see less trucks on our major roads," Mr Marchant said.

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