

The Hon Lindsay Tanner MP
Minister for Finance and Deregulation
Federal Member for Melbourne

David Marchant
Chief Executive
ARTC

The Hon Richard Marles
Federal Member for Corio

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

MAJOR RAIL UPGRADE COMPLETE BETWEEN MELBOURNE AND SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BORDER

The Rudd Government today announced the completion of the final stage of the \$105 million upgrade of the rail link between Melbourne and the South Australian border today.

Lindsay Tanner, Federal Minister for Finance and Deregulation and Member for Melbourne said the project was brought forward thanks to the Australian Government's \$1.2 billion stimulus investment in December 2008.

"The completion of this major infrastructure project is an example of the Rudd Government's stimulus package in action and will lead to significant improvements in efficiency and reliability of the rail link between Melbourne and South Australia."

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) completed the final stage of the upgrade of the dual gauge track between Melbourne and Geelong with new rail and concrete sleepers. Completion of the \$6 million final stage project involved laying 26,500 sleepers over 8km of track between Tottenham and Newport and 10km of track between Gheringhap and North Geelong.

The overall project saw \$105 million invested in inserting concrete sleepers on the entire rail link between Melbourne and the South Australian border. The programme involved laying 401,000 standard gauge sleepers between Maroona and Serviceton, approximately 270km in length.

David Marchant, Chief Executive Office, ARTC explained that the major upgrade of the line between Melbourne and Adelaide to concrete sleepers will lead to increased capacity on the corridor.

"This upgrade is one of the key projects made possible by the Australian Government's stimulus package. Consistency in rail sleepers may not sound significant, but it means better efficiency from the track and reduced transit times and therefore increased capacity on one of the country's most significant rail links.

"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; the concrete sleepers will hold the rail firmly in place, where as wooden sleepers can tend to give and allow the rail to move.

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

Richard Marles, Member for Corio said boosting the capacity of the line was good news for Geelong.

"There are huge benefits for the local economy in having a project as important as this on our doorstep. Now the track upgrade is complete, we'll see more trains coming through and that will generate local jobs. Not only that, more freight moved by rail means fewer trucks on our local roads."

ARTC partnered with Downer EDI Works to complete the project and the sleepers were produced in Austrack's Wagga Wagga and Geelong factories and Rocla's Mittagong NSW factory.

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