



Anthony Albanese
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport



David Marchant
Chief Executive Officer

WORK KICKS OFF THIS WEEK ON PARKES TO BROKEN HILL UPGRADE

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and its industry partner Transfield Services today held a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony in Broken Hill ahead of the start of work on the most extensive upgrade of the rail line to Parkes since it first opened in 1927.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the \$253 million project to replace all the old timber and steel sleepers with new concrete sleepers will kick off in earnest in three days time on Thursday, 27 January.

"Over the next 15 months, more than one million new concrete sleepers will be used to rebuild the 691 kilometre line between Broken Hill and Parkes, with this material being sourced from factories in Wagga Wagga, Grafton and Braemar," said Mr Albanese.

"This is one of the biggest projects to be funded under the Gillard Labor Government's \$3.4 billion capital works program. All up, we're modernised more than a third of the nation's interstate rail network – the most extensive upgrade since Fisher Labor Government built the transcontinental railway almost a century ago.

"From the outset, the modernisation of this piece of infrastructure has been central to our broader efforts to lift national productivity, curb harmful carbon emissions and take the pressure off the nation's highways."

In the years ahead the demand for the transport of goods on this vital section of the network is expected to rise exponentially.

ARTC CEO David Marchant said the upgrade of the line between Broken Hill and Parkes forms part of his organisation's ongoing efforts to improve the reliability and efficiency of the Whyalla-Sydney and Sydney-Melbourne corridors.

"The project will enable increased train axle loads from 25 tonnes at 80km/h or 23 tonnes at 100km/h, reduce maintenance and train operating costs, cut transit times and eliminate the need for temporary speed restrictions during the hotter summer months," said Mr Marchant.

"The work will involve a team of about 100 workers and a mobile plant spread over an 8 kilometre stretch of track on a daily basis, progressively installing the new sleepers.

"Some 200,000 new concrete sleepers have already been delivered and have been stored in stacks along the rail corridor.

“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 means fewer trucks on our roads.”

Other improvements to be undertaken as part of this multi-million upgrade include new turnouts, safer level crossings, improved drainage, and upgraded bridges and culverts.

Monday, 24 January 2011

Media Contacts

For Mr Albanese:	Jeff Singleton	0410 476 890
For Mr Marchant (ARTC):		(08) 8217 4367