AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW COMPARISON PROVES SUMMER HEAT NO LONGER A THORN IN RAIL'S SIDE

A comparison of temporary speed restrictions on the Brisbane – Sydney – Melbourne rail link over this summer season with past summers prove that the impact of extreme heat conditions has reduced significantly..

In past years blanket speed restrictions could be placed in heat affected areas of the North South corridor for days on end.

This summer the number of heat related speed restrictions on the rail link between Sydney and Brisbane has fallen to zero on the upgraded track, with only localised restrictions on the Sydney to Melbourne link on fewer than 10 days.

ARTC CEO, John Fullerton, explained that due to the conversion of the North South Interstate Rail Link from wooden sleepers to concrete sleepers, temporary speed restrictions due to heat buckling the line have dramatically reduced.

"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 resleepering 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 Fullerton said.

"By introducing concrete sleepers, ARTC has significantly increased the strength of the track. The sheer weight of the concrete sleepers and their

connection to the steel rails holds the track firmly in place and helps prevent heat related buckling."

John Fullerton said the concrete re-sleepering is just another component of 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-sleepering project, the new passing loops, signal upgrades and track and bridge work on the North South corridor it demonstrates the commitment we have to build the freight volumes on rail between Melbourne and Brisbane," Mr Fullerton said.

"For ARTC this upgrade is part of our strategy to handle a larger proportion of the freight task on the eastern seaboard of Australia and it marks rail's ongoing resurgence as a realistic freight option for all transport users."

"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 Fullerton said.

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