



Anthony Albanese
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

John Fullerton
Chief Executive Officer

FIRST SOD TURNED ON MAITLAND TO MINIMBAH THIRD TRACK

Construction has commenced on the last of the seventeen major rail projects commissioned as part of the Gillard Labor Government's **Economic Stimulus Plan**, the Maitland to Minimbah Third Track.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said the \$362.8 million project will lay two new sections of track (Branxton to Minimbah and Telarah to Greta) totalling 23 kilometres in length, recondition 9 kilometres of existing track (Branxton to Greta), erect six bridges and upgrade one station.

"As part of this Government's successful efforts to prevent Australia going into recession like every other major advanced economy, we provided the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) with \$114 million in stimulus money to progress this long overdue project," said Mr Albanese.

"Once completed in late 2012, the new and upgraded infrastructure will double the capacity along the rail corridor between Minimbah and Maitland to 200 million tonnes a year.

"In its totality, the record infrastructure program now rolling out across the region – which also includes the new \$1.7 billion Hunter Expressway – is all about reversing more than a decade of neglect and positioning the Hunter to take full advantage of the next resources boom."

Representing the Minister at today's sod tuning near Belford, Hunter MP Joel Fitzgibbon said the Maitland to Minimbah Third Track will stand as a real and lasting legacy of economic stimulus.

"Today represents another major milestone in the most extensive upgrade of the Hunter Valley rail network in generations, an investment which will allow even more of our region's resources to be transported to the Port of Newcastle and then onto markets overseas," said Mr Fitzgibbon.

"Importantly, as well as helping to build a modern, more prosperous Australia, this project will create new commercial opportunities for local suppliers and over 250 full time local jobs during construction."

ARTC CEO John Fullerton said the Maitland to Minimbah Third Track project is a key part of the ARTC's ongoing plan to keep rail capacity ahead of market demand for Hunter Valley coal.

"At present, the capacity of the Hunter Valley rail network averages around 146 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). However industry forecasts indicate that demand on the network will increase to over 200 MTPA by 2014," said Mr Fullerton.

“The ARTC is therefore implementing a strategy of line improvements endeavouring to keep system capacity ahead of industry demands. The design and construction of the Maitland to Minimbah Third Track is central to meeting the strategy’s objectives.”

The project will be delivered in two stages by the Hunter 8 Alliance comprising the ARTC, John Holland Pty Ltd and GHD Pty Ltd as well as the AANCSA Signalling Alliance, a partnership between the ARTC and Ansaldo STS.

Friday, 27 May 2011

Media Contacts:

For Mr Albanese	Jeff Singleton	0410 476 890
For Mr Fullerton (ARTC)	Brad Emery	0419 297 004