



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Media Release

PROJECT UPDATE – BALLAST REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Thursday 4 July

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has passed the eighteen month mark of its four and half year program of works to improve the track between Sydney and Melbourne, the Company said today.

Thousands of hours of hard work and investment in hundreds of kilometres of track have vastly improved the quality and performance of the rail corridor between Melbourne and Sydney since the Ballast Rehabilitation Program (BRP) started in early-2012.

The works in the first 18-month period have been focused on reducing the severity of track speed restrictions impacting on-time performance, improving the quality of ballast condition and drainage and getting trains running back to as-near normal journey times as possible, ARTC CEO John Fullerton said.

“While temporary speed restrictions remain in place on some sections of the line, we have been able to reduce a significant number of speed restrictions across the entire corridor with the works completed so far.”

“Most of our operators are already performing on or near timetable between Melbourne and Sydney, and while this is positive, the job is not over.”

“The West track between Seymour and Wodonga is one area that will receive further work and we have planned these to occur with pre-existing track closedowns due to the Regional Rail Link project so we minimise overall disruptions on customers in the North East.”

“We’d like to thank the North East Victorian community for their ongoing patience while these important works are being undertaken and particularly those customers that have had passenger train journeys replaced by coach as a result of the works,” said Mr Fullerton.

“We do expect the winter period to present some challenges and there may be some fluctuations in track conditions over coming months as a result. We also know that the community will be watching train performance very closely in the weeks ahead.”

“The track improvements are working, and progress has been positive, but we’re taking a long-term view and keeping both the safety of train operations and track worker safety at the core of the works being undertaken,” Mr Fullerton said.

“The track won’t be fixed overnight, but we are committed to the task of bringing this track to a standard consistent with the rest of the Interstate network.”

“Progress has been steady and we have been satisfied with the results of our \$134 million program to-date.”

Over the past few months the Ballast Rehabilitation Program (BRP) has:

- Shoulder cleaned ballast and resurfaced much of the track between Somerton and Benalla and works are currently underway between Benalla and Wodonga;
- Completed rail joint bending along the West track;
- Completed rail head track-grinding along the West track (this removes surface defects along the rail, and improves the ride quality for trains);
- Completed hundreds of metres of track undercutting and ballast sledding; and,
- Continued drainage improvements.

ENDS

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Contact: Bas Bolyn – 0477 340 658

Ballast Rehabilitation Program webpage: <http://brp.artc.com.au>