



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Media Release

ARTC WELCOMES FINAL ATSB REPORT INTO SAFETY OF RAIL OPERATIONS BETWEEN MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY

22 August 2013

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has today welcomed the release of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's (ATSB) report into the *Safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney*, ARTC CEO John Fullerton said.

The report concluded that a combination of factors led to the degradation of the track resulting in rough riding and mud-holes, issues that are currently being addressed by ARTC's Ballast Rehabilitation Program.

"While the ATSB has outlined some areas that require attention by ARTC, we are pleased that no systemic issues were found that might compromise the safety of rail operations where the track quality was below standard," Mr Fullerton said.

"The ATSB has indicated the program we are applying to the track will correct most fouled ballast and drainage problems, and ARTC will be reviewing the report to identify any further measures that might need to be considered or applied to our current program of works.

"The positive news is that train reliability and performance along this corridor has improved markedly over the last eighteen months and many temporary speed restrictions have been removed as a result of the sustained track improvement works ARTC has underway," said Mr Fullerton.

"Although temporary speed restrictions have had an impact on the reliability of services along the corridor, these have been imperative to maintaining safe operations, which will always be ARTC's first priority."

The report also found that it was unlikely that selecting an alternative method of re-sleepering to side insertion would have prevented deterioration in track condition or the development of mud-holes.

"The ATSB has undertaken a thorough investigation into the Melbourne – Sydney rail line, and we welcome the comprehensive analysis by the Bureau," said Mr Fullerton.

"It is in all of our interests to have the best performing track possible and ARTC looks forward to continue improving the quality and overall competitiveness of the national interstate rail network so we can grow rail's share of the national land freight task."

The ATSB's report can be found at the following address:

<http://www.atsb.gov.au/newsroom/news-items/2013/sydney-melbourne-railway-line.aspx>

To find out more on ARTC's Ballast Rehabilitation Program, please visit the following website: <http://brp.artc.com.au>

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