



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

Media Release

NEW PASSING LOOP AT MINDARIBBA ANOTHER BOOST FOR NORTH SOUTH CORRIDOR

Investment in the rail corridor between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne continues unabated with the opening of a new passing loop today at Mindaribba between Maitland and Dungog in NSW.

The \$13.6 million passing loop constructed by Australian Rail Track Corporation and funded through the Australian Government's stimulus package replaces an obsolete 700m passing loop with the new infrastructure long enough to cater for 1500m trains passing through.

The loop will enable trains to pass each other efficiently as one train enters the loop and waits for a short period while the other train passes at regular speed.

As a testament to the efficiency of ARTC crews, the loop was completed three months earlier than planned. Specifically the construction included the laying of new track, two new turnouts with entry speeds of 50kph, an overbridge and new signalling infrastructure.

The new passing loop complements loops recently constructed at Dungog, Nana Glen, Tamrookum and Greenbank just over the Queensland border and will lead to increased efficiency and capacity on the line.

ARTC Chief Executive Officer David Marchant said the new passing loop at Mindaribba builds on the work already completed and will result in increased capacity and shorter transit times between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

"ARTC is pushing forward with our plans to upgrade the Brisbane-Sydney-Melbourne corridor and make rail transport more competitive. This passing loop is another important milestone in the north-south strategy to cut the transit time from Melbourne to Sydney to as low as 10 hours 40 minutes and 15 hours 35 minutes between Sydney and Brisbane," Mr Marchant said.

"The passing loops ARTC is constructing along the rail corridor, the new concrete sleepers, and the signal upgrades are, combined, perhaps the biggest rail project since the track was originally laid," Mr Marchant said.

"The investment in this corridor upgrade will see rail becoming competitive, and as each 1500 metre long train can replace 100 semi trailers we could see less trucks on our major roads," Mr Marchant said.

The work was undertaken by ARTC's Northern Alliance partners TEJV, AANCSA and Downer EDI Works.

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