



FASTER TRANSIT TIMES BETWEEN SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) will invest \$186 million over the next five years to upgrade the 655 kilometres of track and signalling on the Main South Line from Macarthur and Unanderra to Albury. The Australian and NSW Governments have agreed that ARTC will lease the state's interstate and Hunter Valley rail networks for the next 60 years.

ARTC will invest a further \$54 million on the Victorian side of the border between Albury and Melbourne to improve rail infrastructure over the full length of the corridor. The investment - \$240 million in total - is part of the \$872 million that ARTC will invest over the next five years as part of the lease arrangements.

The corporation is owned by the Australian Government and the lease means that ARTC will now have the authority to sell track access to train operators over the full length of the interstate mainline from Perth to the Queensland border.



The Main South Line is double track for 430 kilometres south from Macarthur and then becomes a single track to Albury. Parts of the route have tight curves on an alignment that is more than 100 years old for much of its length.

The ARTC investment will assist in reducing travel times for intermodal freight trains between Sydney and Melbourne by 3 hours, from 13.5 hours to 10.5 hours. It will increase the average train speed to over 80 km/h by the end of the initial 5 year investment programme.

The programme will involve:

- The installation of resilient track fastenings and re-sleepering;
- Extending the length of some crossing loops to 1,500 metres to allow the increased operation of 1,500 metre trains between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane;

- \$9.6 million to upgrade entry/exit configurations for the crossing loops to improve speeds, which will help meet the target time reduction for the corridor;
- \$3.0 million to improve signalling sight distances;
- An accelerated catch up program of re-sleepering to correct deferred maintenance;
- Strengthening and upgrading of steel bridges;
- \$15.0 million over three years to replace the Wagga Wagga bridge;
- Rail grinding and straightening of welds to extend asset efficiency and reduce maintenance costs.

By 2010, intermodal rail freight tonnage on the Melbourne to Sydney corridor is expected to be over 5 million tonnes. It is expected to capture 20 percent of the intermodal freight market between Sydney and Melbourne, compared to its current market share of 11 percent. This increase in intermodal rail volume is equivalent to around 136,000 semi trailers per year, and is an essential part of the Government's plan to address the rapid growth in freight traffic that is forecast over the next twenty years.

Main South Specific Works

The installation of resilient rail fastenings and re-sleepering on this sector will provide improved track strength and dynamics, which will assist in extending rail and sleeper life, increase the load bearing capacity of the track and reduce future maintenance costs.

Macarthur to Moss Vale

- Track strengthening, curve improvements, re-sleepering and installation of resilient fastenings (\$6.2 million).
- Additional refuge sidings to improve capacity (\$3.8 million).

Moss Vale to Goulburn

- Upgrading communications and signalling systems. (\$3.5 million).
- Track strengthening (\$6.4 million).
- Re-railing and additional refuge sidings to enhance reliability and capacity (\$1.8 million).

Goulburn to Cootamundra

- Upgrading communications and [signalling](#) systems. (\$7.0 million).
- Additional sidings to improve capacity (\$2.0 million).
- Track strengthening (\$24.7 million).

Cootamundra to Junee

- Deviation and grade easing works (\$3.5 million).
- Train control consolidation (\$6.6 million).
- Upgrading crossing loop facilities at Junee to allow multiple crossing opportunities for 1,500 metre length trains (\$1.4 million).
- Track strengthening (\$10.1 million).

Junee to Albury

- Replacement of the Murrumbidgee Bridge at Wagga Wagga. The current structure is severely speed restricted to 20km/h and has severe axle load restrictions. The new bridge will be built during years 1 to 3 of the lease and will cost \$15.0 million.
- Track strengthening (\$9.0 million).