

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015
Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 92

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Australian Rail Track Corporation

Topic: Service disruption following derailment at Kankool

Proof Hansard Page: 69 (24 February 2015)

Senator Williams, John asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: How many services were disrupted and held up—do you know?

Mr Fullerton: I would have to take that on notice in particular, but certainly there were the coal trains that operate for Indemitsu and Whitehaven were not able to run for that period so there was loss of product being moved through the supply chain.

Answer:

Train Cancellations

- 25 general freight and non-coal train services were cancelled.
- 8 coal train services were cancelled.
- Daily passenger services to Moree and Tamworth were replaced by buses for part of their journey between Muswellbrook and Werris Creek.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 93

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Australian Rail Track Corporation

Topic: Safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney

Proof Hansard Page: 75 (24 February 2015)

Senator Rice, Janet asked:

Senator RICE: Was there any written documentation that you might be able to make public? I am responding for constituents who are concerned about potential ongoing problems and they would like to be assured, as you obviously are, that it is not going to be an ongoing problem. Would there be documentation that you would be able to make public?

Mr Fullerton: I might have to take that question on notice. I do not think there is any specific documentation about that other than our—all our conditions of the track are in our asset maintenance system. We formed a view about how much damage to the formation there was. We believed there were other problems that were causing it and we are dealing with it.

Answer:

Following release of the ATSB Report on 22 August 2013, ARTC wrote to Council representatives and Members of Parliament in North East Victoria, along with our customer VLine, and Victoria's Transport department and the Minister's office on 27 August 2013. The letter is attached at [Attachment A](#).



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27 August 2013



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

A full copy of the report is available at the following website address:
<http://www.atsb.gov.au/newsroom/news-items/2013/sydney-melbourne-railway-line.aspx>.

The report investigated the condition of the track and measures put in place to maintain safe operations, the actions undertaken by ARTC to rehabilitate the track, safeworking practices and a systemic review of the safety systems in place.

As part of this scope, the report considered aspects such as the application of temporary speed restrictions, development of mud-holes along the track and the use of the side insertion method to lay concrete sleepers.

Importantly, the ATSB report finds that while there are some areas that require attention by ARTC, there were no systemic issues found that might compromise the safety of rail operations where the track quality has been below standard.

The ATSB has also indicated the Ballast Rehabilitation Program (BRP) we have underway will correct most fouled ballast and drainage problems and that it was unlikely that selecting an alternative method of re-sleeping to side insertion would have prevented deterioration in track condition or the development of mud-holes. However there have been lessons learnt by ARTC and we have taken steps to improve our quality assurance process.

The BRP is delivering promising results, with mud-hole length continuing to be reduced, speed restrictions significantly down and the overall performance, transit time and reliability of the corridor improving.



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The number of mudholes on the corridor has been halved and most train services are now running on, or near timetable. The West Track between Melbourne and Albury is affecting services and does require further targeted attention to address its ballast shortfall and ARTC will be addressing this.

The release of the report is a timely reminder that safety must always be the first priority in what we do – and I would like to thank you for your patience over the last few years while ARTC has worked to bring the track up to standard. We understand this has been a critical issue for passengers and the community in North East Victoria.

There is a lot of work still to be done and we know that current customer confidence in the network will only improve when trains are returning to regular journey times. I have enclosed over the page a summary of some of the progress the Ballast Rehabilitation Program has made and to reflect the current impact that the works are having on V/Line services.

To that end, please also be aware that while we expect improvements to continue, there may be some variability in these improvements over the upcoming winter months.

I encourage you to visit our dedicated web page at <http://brp.artc.com.au> for regular updates on how the project is progressing and invite you to contact **Tony Fraser, General Manager of our North South (Melbourne to Brisbane) corridor for any information about the works on 02 4941 9642.**

Yours sincerely,

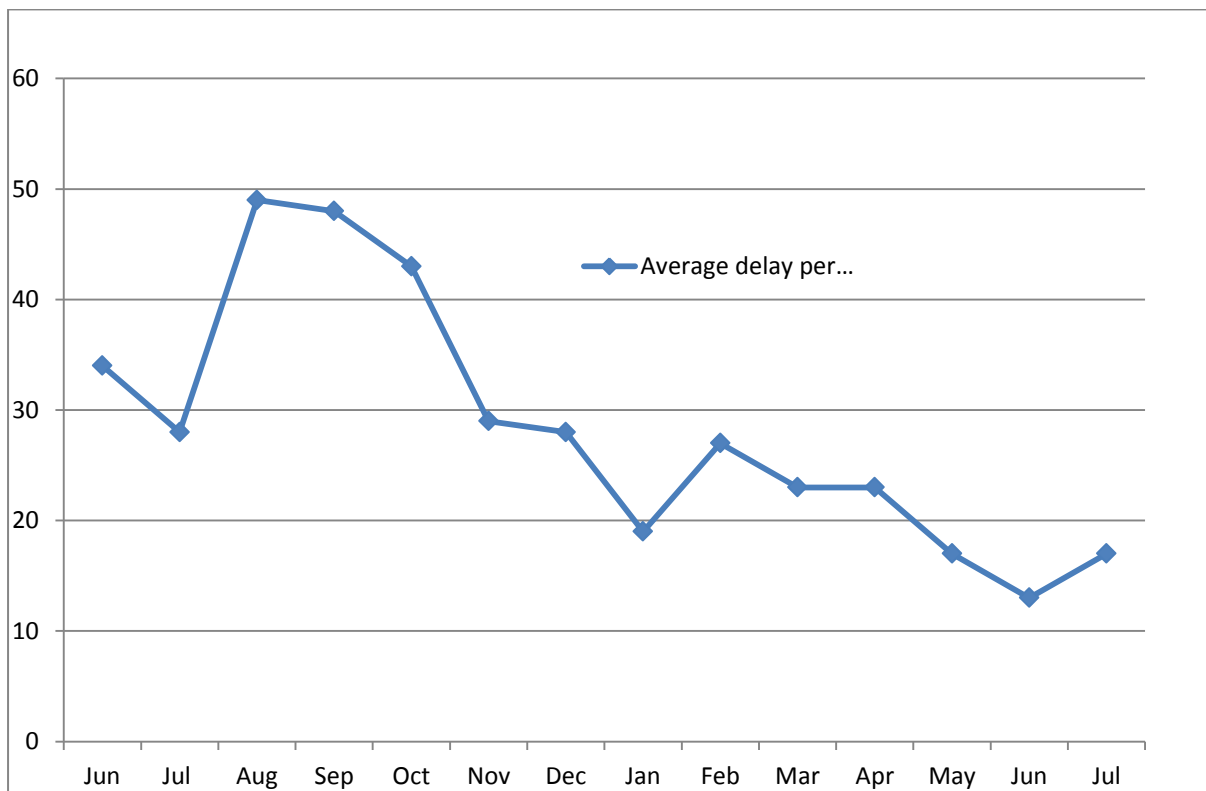
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Fullerton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Fullerton
Chief Executive Officer



Ballast Rehabilitation Program: Update on progress in North East Victoria

- V/Line service punctuality has improved from a low of 2.8% in August 2012 to 43.8% in July 2013.
- The average delay per V/Line service as a result of speed restrictions has halved from 34 minutes to 17 minutes as at July 2013.
- Figure 1:
Average Minutes Delay V/Line services June 2012 – July 2013

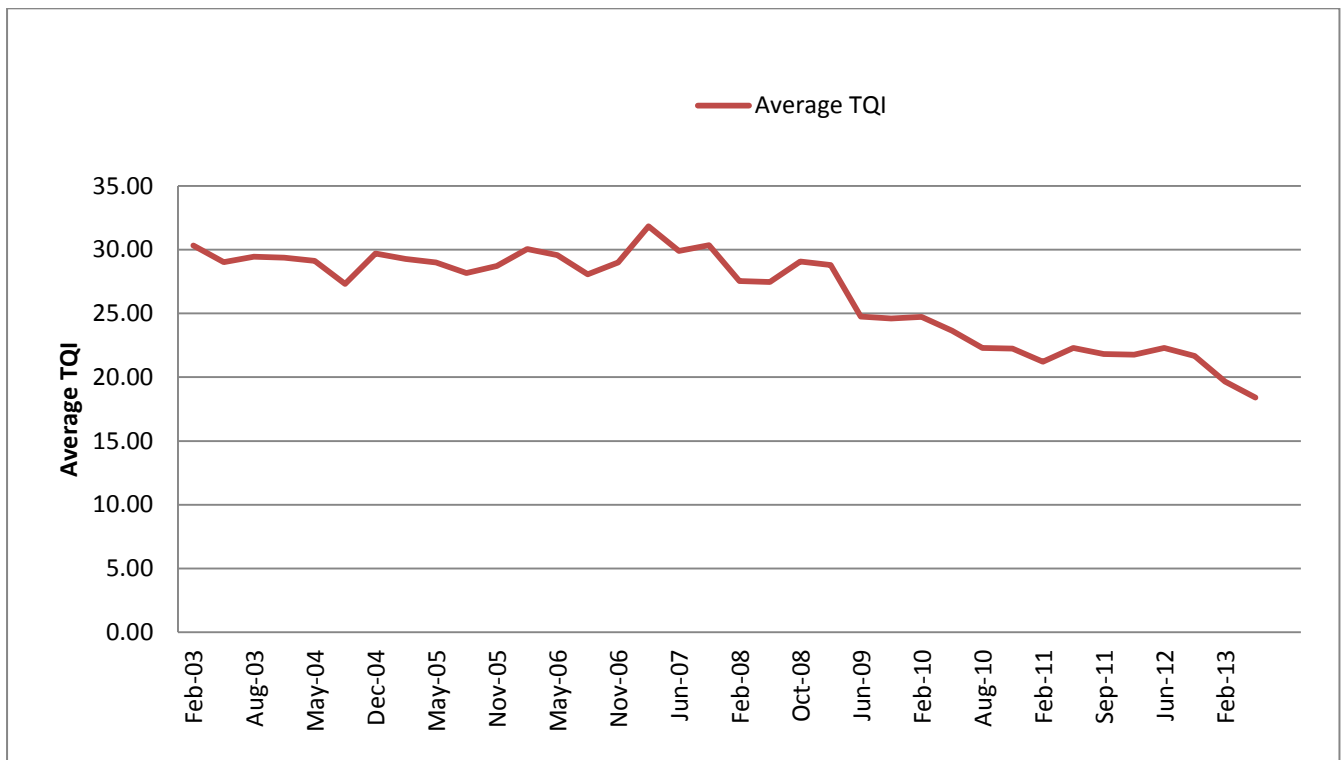


- The theoretical time lost as a result of track speed restrictions is at a level that still allows each operator to safely meet their timetabled journey time. The Melbourne to Albury V/Line service in this direction is slightly more affected as it runs on the West track where there is still some more work to do.



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- On average from January to end June 2013, approximately 50 per cent of total delays to V/Line services were a result of ARTC track speed restrictions.
- V/Line services between Southern Cross and Albury are highly variable, and some are, on a weekly basis arriving earlier than timetabled. This variability exists, despite ARTC speed restrictions remaining relatively stable.
- Any replacement bussing of V/Line services since 1 July has *not* been the result of ARTC track works and is due either to Regional Rail Line works or an operational decision by V/Line.
- Track testing shows that ride quality has improved, demonstrated by track quality index results (see graph below). This represents three important rail measurements (gauge, line and twist) that influence the quality of ride over that track. In February 2003 the average index was 30, as of June 2013, it has reduced to 18.
- **Figure 2:
Track Quality Index Melbourne to Wodonga 2003 – 2013**



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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Question no.: 94

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Australian Rail Track Corporation

Topic: Albury Rail Line capacity to carry double-stacked freight on rail and form part of the Inland Rail Line

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Rice, Janet asked:

What consideration has been given to the problems with the formation of the Albury rail line, in terms of its capacity to take heavier (e.g. double stacked) freight on rail and form part of the Inland Rail line?

Answer:

The Australian Rail Track Corporation has considered the issue of track condition of the Melbourne – Sydney line as part of the Inland Rail project.

The final Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) report into the *Safety of rail operations on the interstate rail line between Melbourne and Sydney* did advise we may encounter formation issues.

ARTC's view does differ from the ATSB's in that we see the predominant issue relating to track condition as that of fouled ballast and not in the main, formation issues. ARTC views formation failure as a more localised issue that can occur in certain discrete sections of the track, whereas inferior quality ballast has been the main catalyst leading to poor track condition.

We are confident this is the case based on the progress of our works to-date, engineering assessments and ongoing and extensive monitoring of track performance and track quality.

It is important to note that many locations where we have identified poor track formation have already seen track reconstruction activities take place through the Ballast Rehabilitation Program. This has included discrete sections of the North East Victorian section of the Melbourne-Sydney corridor, and locations at Cootamundra, Goulburn and along the Main South railway line.

On this basis ARTC is confident that its Ballast Rehabilitation Program, and our annual maintenance activities more generally, continues to bring the Melbourne – Sydney track to a standard consistent with the wider Interstate railway network (which already carries double stacked trains East-West) and will be capable of managing the greater volumes associated with Inland Rail.

Our ongoing and future maintenance programs will also ensure the track is at equivalent serviceable levels that sustainably maintain these volumes over time.