



Appendix D

Community Updates



MINIMBAH BANK THIRD TRACK FACT SHEET (1)

This fact sheet is intended to introduce the proposed Minimbah Bank Third Track project to property owners around the project site. The fact sheet addresses the reason for the project, an overview of engineering and other tasks completed to date, future milestone dates and impacts to the surrounding community.

The project has been commissioned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) as part of their Hunter Valley Capacity Improvement Strategy.

WHY THE NEED FOR A THIRD TRACK AT MINIMBAH?

On 5 September 2004, ARTC commenced a 60 year lease of the interstate and Hunter Valley rail lines of New South Wales. Since commencing this lease, the Hunter Valley network aspects have been reviewed and updated by ARTC in light of rapid growth in coal demand. This has resulted in the development of the Hunter Valley Corridor 2007 – 2012 Capacity Strategy Consultation Document (the Strategy).

At present, export coal capacity of the Hunter Valley rail network averages around 107 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). Current industry forecasts indicate demand on the Hunter Valley rail network will increase to 165 mtpa by September 2009. ARTC is therefore implementing a strategy of line improvements endeavouring to keep the rail system capacity ahead of industry demands. Design and construction of the Minimbah Bank Third Track is a key component in meeting the objectives of the Strategy.

WHERE IS THE THIRD TRACK TO BE LOCATED?

The Project site is located within the Singleton Local Government Area (LGA) adjacent to the existing Main

Northern Railway. It commences in an area known as Minimbah approximately 16km south of Singleton and continues north for approximately 10.8km to an area known as Whittingham.

The project consists of a third track on the eastern side of the main line.

HOW WAS THE PREFERRED ROUTE IDENTIFIED FOR MINIMBAH?

An earlier options review study identified nine possible routes for a third track at Minimbah Bank. These options were workshopped with ARTC and project stakeholders with 3 preferred options being agreed. Additional studies on the 3 preferred options were undertaken and further workshops were held with ARTC to facilitate the selection of single option. This resulted in the selection of the above alignment as the preferred option.

WHAT WILL THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE THIRD TRACK INVOLVE?

At this stage, based on the information available as part of developing the concept design, the following elements are anticipated as part of the Project:

- Approximately 10.8km of track alignment design, earthworks and drainage;
- Signalling;
- Services relocations;

- Treatment of level crossings including:
 - Closure of Range Road level crossing to be replaced with a bridge over the rail line;
 - Closure of a private level crossing and provision for new private access;
- Bridges at Golden Highway and Mudies Creek;
- Partial realignments of Range Road and the Golden Highway; and
- Provision for a new maintenance access track on the western side of the existing mainline.

WHEN WILL THE THIRD TRACK BE COMPLETED?

Based on the engineering completed to date, it is estimated the Project will be completed by March 2010.

Key program dates are summarised in the table below.

PROGRAM	TARGET DATE	WHERE ARE WE UP TO?
<i>Identification and assessment of possible third track alignments</i>	February 2007	Complete
<i>Identification of preferred third track alignments</i>	March 2007	Complete
<i>Assessment of preferred third track alignments and selection of a preferred option</i>	October 2007	Complete
<i>Preliminary Environmental Assessment</i>	October 2007	Complete
<i>Concept design of preferred option including identification of affected property owners</i>	January 2008	Complete
<i>Environmental Assessment (Part 3A approval)</i>	Commenced December 2007. Approval by the Minister of Planning estimated as December 2008	Commencement of environmental studies such as flora and fauna, noise and vibration, aboriginal heritage etc Discussions with landowners and other stakeholders
<i>Construction of Third track</i>	Start date – January 2009 Estimated completion date – March 2010	Detailed design for construction works due for completion by December 2008

WHAT DID THE PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT IDENTIFY?

A Preliminary Environmental Assessment was undertaken for the Project. The main environmental issues are identified below:

- The potential to increase noise and vibration levels at a number of locations, during both the construction and operation phases.
- Currently there are a number of recorded Aboriginal sites within close proximity of the Project site. There is potential for Aboriginal sites to be present within remaining undisturbed topsoils.
- The Project site and its surrounds have been subject to non-indigenous activity and settlement since the early 19th Century, with five historical homesteads and non-indigenous heritage items registered on local or state heritage registers located within approximately two (2) kilometres of the Project site. There is potential for these items to be indirectly impacted by the Project.
- A flora and fauna assessment found that the Project would lead to a relatively low ecological impact.
- The Project would involve widening of the existing corridor. While operation is unlikely to result in an increase in air emissions (improved operation efficiencies may decrease emissions), construction works could potentially generate dust from earthworks and emissions from construction machinery.
- The Project could generate social impacts to some local residents, as the Project requires acquisition of private land, the closure of a private rail crossing, and temporary and permanent alterations to vehicle access. The Project could create an overall positive economic impact, as its operation would allow increased line coal carrying capacity, while its construction would result in direct employment opportunities and benefit local and regional goods and services providers.
- The improved train efficiency would result in a long-term decrease of greenhouse gas emissions associated with a reduction in fuel demands by the trains.

WHAT WILL THE DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT INVOLVE?

GHD has been commissioned by ARTC to undertake the necessary environmental assessment and assist ARTC in achieving the necessary environmental and planning approvals for the Project.

Under Clause 6 of the State Environmental Planning Policy: Major Projects (Major Projects SEPP) “development that has a capital investment value of more than \$30 million for the purpose of heavy railway lines associated with mining, extractive industries or other industry” (as listed in Clause 23 of Schedule 1) qualifies as a major project requiring determination the Minister for Planning under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act). As the Project is a heavy rail line project associated with the mining industry with a value of approximately \$100 million, the Project qualifies as a major project requiring approval under Part 3A of the EP&A Act.

The assessment will further investigate and report on the following:

Project Justification

Land Use and Property

Noise and Vibration

Indigenous Heritage

Flora and Fauna

Hydrology and Flooding

Visual Amenity

Contamination

Social and Economic

Air Quality

Non-Indigenous Heritage

Planning and Zoning Issues

Energy and Greenhouse

Resource Conservation and Waste Management

Groundwater

WILL PRIVATE PROPERTY NEED TO BE ACQUIRED?

It is anticipated that some private land will need to be acquired. Discussions with landowners will be undertaken to identify the land required and negotiate compensation.

HOW WILL COMPENSATION FOR LAND BE DETERMINED?

ARTC is fully committed to open, honest and respectful engagement with landowners and other interested parties who may be affected by this project. It is ARTC's objective to work together and achieve a satisfactory outcome for all parties. The acquisition of land required to facilitate the new third track will be governed by the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 ('the Act').

Any person entitled to claim Compensation will be compensated and Part 3 of the Act deals with this and sets out a framework of relevant matters to be considered when determining the amount of Compensation. The Act sets out the items that the Authority must have regard to including:

- ▶ the market value of the land and compensation;
- ▶ special value of the land to the person;
- ▶ any loss attributable to disturbance;
- ▶ any loss attributable to severance; and
- ▶ any increase or decrease in the value of any other land of the person which adjoins or is severed from the acquired land by reason of the carrying out of, or the proposal to carry out, the public purpose for which the land was acquired.

These matters will be discussed and explained in more detail with landowners as the project progresses.

WHERE TO GO TO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

If you require further information or wish to advise the Project Team of any information that you may have that would assist in the Environmental Assessment, please contact the Community Information Line on 1800 810 680 (free call).

Members of the Project Team are available to meet with you to discuss this project further. To arrange a meeting please call the number above.



MINIMBAH BANK THIRD TRACK

Community Newsletter No.1

A third railway track at Minimbah Bank has been commissioned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) as part of their Hunter Valley Capacity Improvement Strategy. The project is referred to as the Minimbah Bank Third Track. The proposed third track is to be located on the Eastern side of the Main Northern Railway Line between the New England Highway and the existing track. It extends from Minimbah Bank approximately 16km south of Singleton, and continues north under the Golden Highway then through to Whittingham Junction just north of Range Road crossing.



Why is there a need for another railway track?

On 5 September 2004, ARTC commenced a 60-year lease of the interstate and Hunter Valley rail lines of New South Wales. Coal exports within the Hunter Valley are thriving. ARTC is therefore implementing a strategy of line improvements endeavouring to keep the rail system capacity ahead of industry demands.

How was the preferred route identified for Minimbah?

An earlier options review study identified nine possible routes for a third track at Minimbah Bank. Following a number of workshops with ARTC representatives and project stakeholders, along with additional studies, the above alignment was selected as the preferred option.

What will the construction of the third track involve?

The following elements are anticipated as part of this Project:

- Approximately 10.8km of new track parallel to the existing dual track.
- Bulk earthworks and drainage works.
- Signalling.
- Services relocations.
- A new road bridge constructed over the Golden Highway to the south of the existing Bridge. Work includes partial realignment of the Golden Highway.
- Closure of a private level crossing and provision for new private access.
- A new rail bridge over Mudies Creek.
- Closure of Range Road level crossing with a bridge over the rail line just north of the existing crossing. Work includes partial realignments of Range Road and a new intersection to the New England Highway.
- A new rail culvert underbridge just north of range Road.
- Provision for a new maintenance access track on the eastern and western side of the existing mainline.

Will private property need to be acquired?

It is anticipated that some private land will need to be acquired. Discussions with landowners are currently underway to explain the land required and negotiate compensation.

When will the third track be completed?

Based on the engineering completed to date, it is estimated construction will commence in January 2009 and be completed by March 2010.

The project team is currently undertaking the detailed design and environmental assessment of the project.

This started early in 2008 and is likely to be completed in late 2008. The Minister for Planning must approve the project before it can proceed to construction.

What are the impacts of the project on the local community?

A Preliminary Environmental Assessment was undertaken for the Project in 2007. The main issues that were identified are highlighted opposite:

- The potential to increase noise and vibration levels at a number of locations, during both the construction and operation phases.
- There is potential for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous items within the study area.
- The project would lead to a relatively low ecological impact.
- Construction works could potentially generate dust from earthworks and emissions from construction machinery.
- The Project could generate social impacts to some local residents, due to property acquisition, the closure of a private rail crossing, and temporary and permanent alterations to vehicle access.
- The Project could create an overall positive economic impact, as its operation would allow increased line coal carrying capacity, while its construction would result in direct employment opportunities and benefit local and regional goods and services providers.
- The improved train efficiency would result in a long-term decrease of greenhouse gas emissions associated with a reduction in fuel demands by the trains.

The detailed environmental assessment that is currently underway will further investigate and report on: project justification, land use and property, noise and vibration, Indigenous heritage, flora and fauna, hydrology and flooding, visual amenity, contamination, social and economic, air quality, Non-Indigenous heritage, planning and zoning issues, energy and greenhouse, resource conservation and waste management, and groundwater.

When will the detailed design for the track and Environmental Assessment be on exhibition?

It is anticipated that the detailed design and the Environmental Assessment for the project will be on public exhibition at the end of this year. The community will have the opportunity to comment on the project at that time.

Where to go to for more information or to provide feedback?

If you require further information or wish to advise the Project Team of any information that you may have that would assist in the Environmental Assessment, please contact the Community Information Line on 1800 810 680 (free call).