



The Hon Duncan Gay MLC

Minister for Roads and Ports

Deputy Leader of the Government

Legislative Council

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GRAIN RAIL LINES TO RECEIVE \$277 MILLION UPGRADE

NSW Minister for Roads and Ports Duncan Gay today provided an update on maintenance and upgrade work on the state's grain rail lines.

"We have a mantra in the O'Farrell Government, and that is to 'get the state moving again.'

"To help achieve this, over the next five years the government will be spending more than a quarter of a billion dollars on maintenance and upgrade works to the state's 996 kilometres of grain rail lines," Minister Gay said.

Since coming to office in March 2011, the O'Farrell Government has invested \$61 million on maintenance and upgrade works to the state's grain lines – or more than \$3 million a month – with about 100 people actively working on the tracks each year.

In the last 18 months, the NSW Government has:

- ✓ **replaced 109,000 old timber sleepers with modern steel sleepers;**
- ✓ **resurfaced 609 kilometres of track (the same distance travelling by car from Sydney to Moree)*;**
- ✓ **constructed 27 new bridges and upgraded 18 level crossings (including new bridges at Tootool on The Rock-Boree Creek line and at Wee Waa over the Namoi River and upgraded crossings at Ungarie and Burren Junction);**
- ✓ **laid 61,000 tonnes of ballast (equivalent to about 2,650 three-axle rigid trucks filled with gravel); and**
- ✓ **refurbished 20 kilometres of old worn rail.**

Minister Gay said the government was working around the clock to reverse 16 years of Labor neglect and mismanagement of the state's grain lines.

"We're determined to improve the condition and reliability of country grain lines to attract more bulk freight onto rail, in the process easing pressure on rural and regional roads," he said.

"This financial year, we've committed a further \$46.5 million to continue maintenance and upgrade works.

“This means the O’Farrell Government will have spent nearly \$108 million in two years improving grain rail lines in country NSW.”

NSW Government funding in 2012-13 will result in the:

- ✓ **replacement of 55,000 timber sleepers with modern steel sleepers; including works on the Bogan Gate to Tottenham, The Rock to Boree Creek, Ungarie to Naradhan and Ungarie to Lake Cargelligo grain lines;**
- ✓ **resurfacing of 265 kilometres of track;**
- ✓ **upgrading of 22 level crossings (including crossings near Coonamble and Gular);**
- ✓ **replacing or upgrading 16 rail bridges and culverts; including several on the Coonamble line and replacement of the 30 metre long bridge over Humbug Creek at Ungarie; and**
- ✓ **laying of 20,000 tonnes of ballast.**

“By the end of 2013, 57 kilometres of old track from Armatree to Coonamble will be replaced, allowing more efficient and reliable train operations along the entire 150 kilometre length of the Troy Junction to Coonamble grain line.

“The Government’s firm commitment to future maintenance and upgrade works will ensure NSW grain farmers and rural businesses will continue to benefit from access to a reliable and efficient rail system.

“The government recognises that whilst we’re getting on with the job, discussions with industry and regional communities reveal that there is more to be done.”

ENDS

***Resurfacing (also known as tamping)**

A ballast tamper or tamping machine is a machine used to pack (or tamp) the track ballast under railway tracks to make the tracks more durable. Early machines only lifted the track and packed the ballast. More modern machines, also correct the alignment of the rails to make them parallel and level, in order to achieve a smoother ride for passengers and freight and to reduce the mechanical strain applied to the rails by passing trains.