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Sent: Sunday, 23 February 2020 2:36 PM
To: s47F [redacted]
Cc: Media Team; Media (Infrastructure)
Subject: Talking points
Attachments: North Station Road.m4a

SUGGESTED POINTS

Thank you for the opportunity to brief our community on a tragic incident which has resulted in the loss of two lives and injuries to passengers on the XPT service to Melbourne.

Firstly, our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have sadly passed away and with affected passengers.

This is an incredibly tragic incident and our focus is to support emergency authorities and other transport agencies in both the investigation and response required to this incident.

The Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau continue with their investigations.

The Australian Government does not support the RTBU or other media outlets pre-empting the outcome of a formal investigation into the tragic loss of two lives.

There is a time and place for the RTBU to play out their political agenda and it is not in the wake of a tragedy.

Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) continues to work with Transport for NSW who are managing the recovery and safe removal of the train carriages and locomotives today.

Cranes have carried out several lifts to remove the carriages and locomotives from the track.

This work will continue throughout the coming three days, reflecting the complexities of the recovery.

Over the next few days equipment including sleepers, rail and signalling equipment will be delivered to the site to repair the rail infrastructure once the XPT is removed.

On Tuesday, we expect to begin the repairs to the track and signal infrastructure which was damaged in the accident.

The site is being carefully controlled to ensure the safety of all those who are now involved in the site recovery and repair.

We acknowledge that the community seek to understand what caused the accident and that's why we are providing full support to the ongoing investigation which will look at all potential factors.

The number one priority of the Australian Rail Track Corporation remains the safety of each and every one of our customers and our team on the ground impacted by this incident.

In respect of the investigation which will relate the cause of this incident, ARTC will not comment further until such results are made public.

Q+As – Wallan incident 23/02/20 - 2pm AEDT

MEDIA STATEMENT

What caused this incident?

As the incident will be under investigation by independent transport safety authorities, it's not appropriate to speculate at this time. We will be working with the authorities to determine the cause of the incident and provide support to those impacted.

Are you comfortable the track is safe?

Yes, I am. Our focus – and our priority – is always to ensure that rail operations are safe. That’s what our business is built on – without safe operations you can’t run a rail business – or any business for that matter.

There were signalling problems on this line all week – did they contribute to the crash?

As the incident is still under investigation, we are not in a position to speculate on causes of the crash. We acknowledge that there were signalling issues due to an electrical fire in a signal relay hut near Wallan in previous weeks, but it is important that we let the investigation take place, but of course a range of factors relating to the track and train need to be looked at and we will be providing whatever support the investigators need.

This line has been in a state of disrepair for some time, does ARTC take responsibility for this crash?

Firstly, on behalf of all at ARTC, I’d like to offer my sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and my thoughts to those that were injured. This has been a distressing incident and we will be working with authorities and our railway partners to determine the cause of the derailment.

Our primary focus, and key priority at all times is to run a safe railway network for our customers and those that use it – we will provide all the support we can in both the investigation and response to this incident.



Was this incident at the same spot as the derailment from November 2017.

The incident being referred to was a derailment with service 7MC1 at Wallan in 2017. It was the at the same crossing loop, not the same spot.

Not as important but Interestingly unions saying that drivers avoiding the area? Can we explain how you can do that on a train line?

The Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

Is the cause of the derailment the same as the Barnawartha incident a few weeks ago?

Investigations are still underway so this has not been determined.

Key Questions from Journalists and media coverage overnight:

I understand that trains in this area were operating on restricted speeds, have you determined if the train was operating within those guidelines?

The Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau all remain on site undertaking investigations with a preliminary report due within the next 30 days. We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

Is this a case of driver error?

Firstly, our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have sadly passed away and with affected passengers.

This is an incredibly tragic incident and our focus is

to support emergency authorities and other transport agencies in both the investigation and response required to this incident.

Is the \$235m North East Line Upgrade project meant to fix these kinds of issues?

Major work is set to start in coming weeks on the \$235 million North East Rail Line upgrade which is set to improve passenger service performance between Melbourne and Albury.

The project will help improve ride quality and comfort for travellers, reduce the causes of major delays that can impact services such as signal failures due to signal wire theft and pave the way for the introduction of new VLocity trains.

Australian Rail Track Corporation has contracted John Holland to complete this upgrade by mid-2021, with more than 200 people to be employed at construction peak and more than \$50 million set to be injected into the regional economy through the life of the project.

What will happen to passengers and freight trains in the meantime?

ARTC services in the region have been suspended until further notice and the site is quarantined for incident investigations to take place. All Seymour, Shepparton, Albury, and Sydney train services will be replaced by buses until the end of the investigation.

What is the 2018 report referenced in Border Mail? what is it? do we have it? who's is it?

ARTC notes media coverage of a privately prepared 2018 report warning of "the real possibility" of a deadly derailment on the North East line will be shared with transport ministers and the Prime Minister following the XPT tragedy. The briefing paper was yesterday cited by Wodonga MP Bill Tilley in the wake of the derailment near Wallan on Thursday. Mr Tilley said he intended to send the paper to Prime Minister Scott Morrison, the federal, Victorian and NSW Transport Ministers and his Albury counterpart Justin Clancy.

This is an incredibly tragic incident and our focus is to support emergency authorities and other transport agencies in both the investigation and response required to this incident.

What were the factors behind the 2 hour delay of the train (that derailed) itself – why was it behind in schedule?

This is an incredibly tragic incident and our focus is to support emergency authorities and other transport agencies in both the investigation and response required to this incident. The Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

We will provide updates as they become available.

We have former employee that left in difficult circumstances - Jeff board - former Seymour PC / Area Manager Wangaratta – he has often made critical comments on social media and to Politicians?

ARTC is working with the Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

Alan Jones interview – were there incidents of drivers needing to stop the train regularly to jump out and manually switch the signals / points etc.? (answer is No but they are getting confused with the Train Authority Working arrangements)

ARTC is working with the Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

Were train drivers refusing to drive on the track?

ARTC is working with the Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors.

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Previous media statements

STATEMENT #2

ARTC media statement as of noon 21 February

At about 8pm yesterday evening a train derailment involving the NSW Train Link XPT service bound for Melbourne occurred approximately 1.5 kilometres from Wallan, Victoria.

Firstly, our thoughts are with the loved ones of those who have sadly passed away and with affected passengers.

This is an incredibly tragic incident and our focus is to support emergency authorities and other transport agencies in both the investigation and response required to this incident. The Victorian coroner, Office of the National Safety Regulator and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau are all on site undertaking investigations.

ARTC services in the region have been suspended until further notice and the site is quarantined for incident investigations to take place. We are providing full support to the investigation which will look at all potential factors. We will provide updates as they become available.

STATEMENT #1

Wallan Incident Advice #1 – 20 February 2020, 11:30pm (AEDT)

ARTC services are suspended until further notice, to allow emergency services to respond to a train derailment involving the NSW Train Link XPT service bound for Melbourne around 1.5 kilometres from Wallan, Victoria.

We are working hard to support emergency services, NSW TrainLink and investigators to respond to this tragic accident.

Response to signalling hut fire in Border Mail (20 February 2020)

Please quote an Australian Rail Track Corporation spokesperson:

At around 11.45pm on the 3rd of February, a power line came down and connected with the local power supply of a signal relay hut at Wallan.

A resulting electrical fire caused extensive damage to the signal relay hut, power supply and all internal wiring and circuitry. This in turn impacted all signalling infrastructure controlled between Donnybrook and Kilmore East.

The loss of the signalling system and the need for a complete rebuild of the signal relay hut meant potential delays of more than 120 minutes per train service as a result of the requirement to run in 'degraded mode' operations at 25km/hr.

In response, ARTC consulted with its customers and has invested tens of thousands of dollars a day in an interim train authority system while repairs are undertaken. This is a safeworking system to allow trains to run at normal operating speed but includes stopping at Donnybrook and Kilmore East. It has reduced delays for freight and passenger customers travelling through this section.

Repairs to the signal relay hut and testing of the restored signalling system is expected to be completed over this coming weekend.

ARTC thanks customers for its understanding due to the disruption and patience while repairs to the signalling were made as quickly and safely as possible.

ATTACHMENT A:

Friday 21 February:

Statement from RTBU Secretary Mark Diamond over XPT derailment in Wallan

We are deeply saddened by the loss of two of our comrades.

The two people who died were train driver John Kennedy, from Canberra and a rail safety worker (driver's pilot) from Castlemaine, who was in the driver's cabin at the time. The name of the pilot has not yet been released publicly. Both popular and highly-respected members of the rail community.

The RTBU is providing support to members who were on the train and who have been affected by this tragedy.

Our hearts go out to the families, friends and colleagues of the two workers.

The RTBU had serious concerns about the state of the main line track between Melbourne and Sydney for many years.

It is important that safety authorities conduct a full and thorough investigation of the particular circumstances of this derailment.

Two of our colleagues have been killed, and we must get the bottom of what caused this terrible tragedy.

ATTACHMENT B: Statement from Rodd Staples on XPT derailment at Wallan

Friday 21 February:

Please see below a statement from Transport for NSW Secretary, Rodd Staples.

All of us at Transport for NSW, and especially NSW TrainLink, are devastated by the tragedy at Wallan yesterday evening.

A NSW TrainLink driver and a railway pilot have lost their lives, and our hearts go out to their family, friends and colleagues. This will be an exceptionally difficult time for them, and we will support them in any way that we can. Our thoughts are also with the train's crew and customers, some of whom have been injured and transported to hospital.

Counselling services were made available at Southern Cross Station to all customers arriving in Melbourne after being transferred from Wallan by coach.

Support is also being offered to the crew, and to all NSW TrainLink staff at depots across the state.

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator has started what will be a thorough investigation to establish the cause of this incident.

While this investigation is ongoing, we will not be making any further comment on the cause.

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