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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the methods of track access used across ARTC Networks, how they are applied, and what the phases of preparation, delivery, and close-out entail. It will also identify specific roles and responsibilities throughout the possession management process while clarifying where variations exist based on Network complexities.

1.2 Scope

This procedure includes detail on types of possessions used for accessing the ARTC Network, how those possession types are implemented, and who is responsible for undertaking certain tasks within the process.

Within scope is the management of possession delivery across the ARTC Network. Out of scope is the planning and approval of possessions, which can be found in OPE-PR-045 and OPE-PR-057.

1.3 Document Owner

Document ownership is shared between the Manager Planning and Coordination (National Network) and the Manager Asset Engineering, Planning and Coordination (Heavy Haul). The Possession Logistics Manager (National Network) and the Closedown Manager (Heavy Haul) are the point of contact for all queries relating to this document.

1.4 Responsibilities

1.4.1 Closedown Manager/ Possessions Logistic Manager

The Manager is accountable for the implementation and distribution of the Possession Management Procedure and has overall responsibility for the planning, coordination and delivery of the possession. The role ensures all possession activities are planned, integrated and executed in accordance with approved schedules, safety requirements and operational standards. Responsibilities include coordinating with internal and external stakeholders, approving possession schedules, overseeing possession delivery and maintaining effective governance throughout the execution phase. The Manager is also responsible for facilitating post-possession reviews to capture lessons learned, identify opportunities for improvement and drive continuous enhancement of future possession planning and delivery.

1.4.2 Safe Working Coordinator / Possession Logistics Coordinator

The coordinators are responsible for centralising all work requests submitted by Job Owners and reviewing them to identify any potential conflicts or competing activities. Where conflicts are identified, the coordinator works with the relevant Job Owners to ensure they are resolved prior to the commencement of the possession. The role also involves engaging the necessary resources to take, hold and fulfil the Work on Track Authority for the possession and facilitating effective communication by chairing possession planning meetings and briefings.

During the possession, the coordinator oversees the operation of the Possession Management Delivery, ensuring activities are coordinated effectively and that communication between stakeholders is maintained to support the safe and efficient delivery of the possession.

1.4.3 ARTC Job Contact (Job Owner)

The ARTC Job Contact, or Job Owner, is the nominated representative responsible for providing all information required within the Work Matrix for their designated work. As the primary point of contact for the possessions team, the Job Owner is responsible for answering questions relating to the scope and delivery of the work and is the first point of contact for other Job Owners requiring assistance to resolve worksite interactions. The Job Owner is accountable for resolving conflicts that may arise in relation to their work and for consulting with other stakeholders to nominate an appropriate responsible owner where coordinated worksites are required.

During the possession, the Job Owner is responsible for the safe delivery of the designated work in accordance with the approved Matrix requirements. They act as the primary contact for their allocated jobs and are responsible for escalating any incidents, risks, or site delays that may impact the safe or successful completion of the work.

1.4.4 Possession Protection Officer (PPO)

The Possession Protection Officer (PPO) is responsible for taking, holding and fulfilling the Work on Track Authority for the duration of the possession. The PPO authorises worksites to access the danger zone within the possession limits and controls all rail traffic movements and transfers within those limits. Through these responsibilities, the PPO ensures the integrity of the possession and maintains the safety controls required to protect personnel, infrastructure and rail operations throughout the possession.

2 Possession Types

A range of options, dependent on work type and duration, permit access to the Rail Network as outlined below. Configuration Possessions occur in conjunction with Sydney Trains. All possessions are implemented using the appropriate work on track methods within the ARTC Network Rules and Procedures.

2.1 Facilitated Possessions

2.1.1 Configuration 9

Telarah (exclusive) to Acacia Ridge (exclusive).

2.1.2 Configuration 10A

Port Botany (inclusive) and Marrickville Junction (ARTC/ST Interface) to Enfield West (exclusive) and Flemington South (ARTC/ST Interface).

2.1.3 Configuration 10B

Port Botany (inclusive) and Marrickville Junction (ARTC/ST Interface) to Chullora Junction (clear of North Fork).

2.1.4 Configuration 14

Enfield West and Macarthur (ARTC/ST Interface) to Moss Vale (exclusive) – Extended Configuration 14, Enfield West and Macarthur (ARTC/ST Interface) to Cootamundra.

2.1.5 Configuration 16

Moss Vale to Unanderra branch line.

2.1.6 Major Possession

A Major Possession is typically greater than 60 hours in duration and prevents all rail traffic (including mandatory trains and ad hoc traffic) from accessing a section of the network.

2.1.7 Mains Possession

A Mains possession is in the Heavy Haul Network and is a full or partial closure of the main lines between the Sydney Trains boundary and the National Networks boundary near Telarah. Typically, these possessions are held on a weekend.

To limit the overall impact on customers, these possessions are generally aligned with a Sydney Trains possession. In some cases, a closure of Port Waratah Yard is taken during the same period as there is significantly less traffic operating.

2.2 Unfacilitated Possessions

Unfacilitated possessions are possessions that are not under the coordination of the possessions teams and are managed locally by the responsible job owner. These possessions are not subject to facilitation or possession management processes outlined in this document.

2.2.1 Preventative Maintenance Possession

A PMP is a closure of the network at or between defined locations. The purpose of the PMP is to undertake multiple preventative maintenance activities and defect rectification works, integrated into a single possession. PMP's are generally undertaken on a recurring basis depending on the needs of the network.

2.2.2 Urgent/ Unplanned Track Possession

An Urgent Possession is taken in response to a need for unplanned maintenance at short notice to ensure the integrity and safety of the network and its users and may impact normal rail traffic movements. This is due to the issue not being able to be rectified in a current advertised possession. Refer to OPE-PR-038.

2.2.3 As Trains Permit

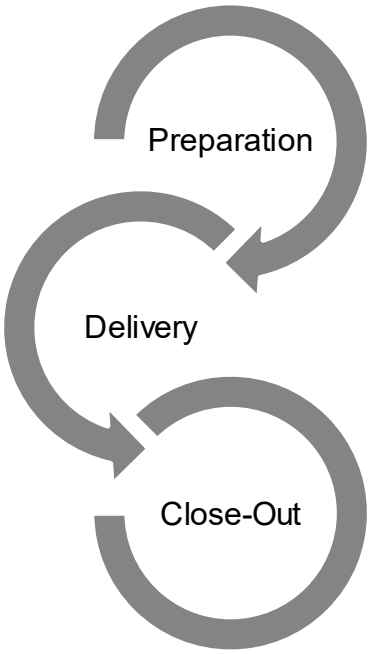
ATP work is work on track that is undertaken between scheduled train services and does not impact the published rail service timetable. ATP activities are executed within the available windows between train movements as agreed with the network controller, allowing maintenance or inspection works to be completed without requiring a possession or causing disruption to normal rail operations.

2.2.4 Emergency Possession

An Emergency Possession is taken in response to an incident that requires a significant and coordinated response. The incident might involve death or serious injury, health or safety effects, significant damage to property or infrastructure, significant train service disruption, or environmental impact. Normal rail traffic movements will be held or suspended in the event of an Emergency Possession under the authority of ARTC Network Control.

3 Possession Management Process

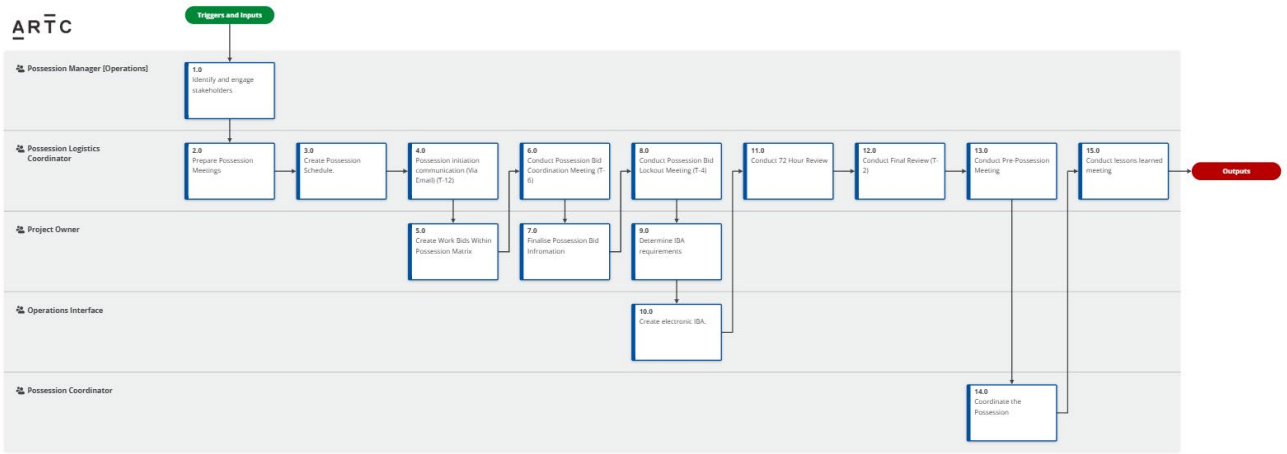
ARTC's vast and complex rail network requires comprehensive and adaptable processes. For facilitated possessions, detailed coordination starts with a structured T-Minus process inside sixteen (16) weeks in advance of possession delivery dependent on the possession duration, network, and complexity of work planned. Specific tasks within the possession management process vary across the networks to appropriately facilitate safe and efficient delivery. Fundamentally, the possession management process consists of three (3) phases – Preparation, Delivery, and Close-Out.



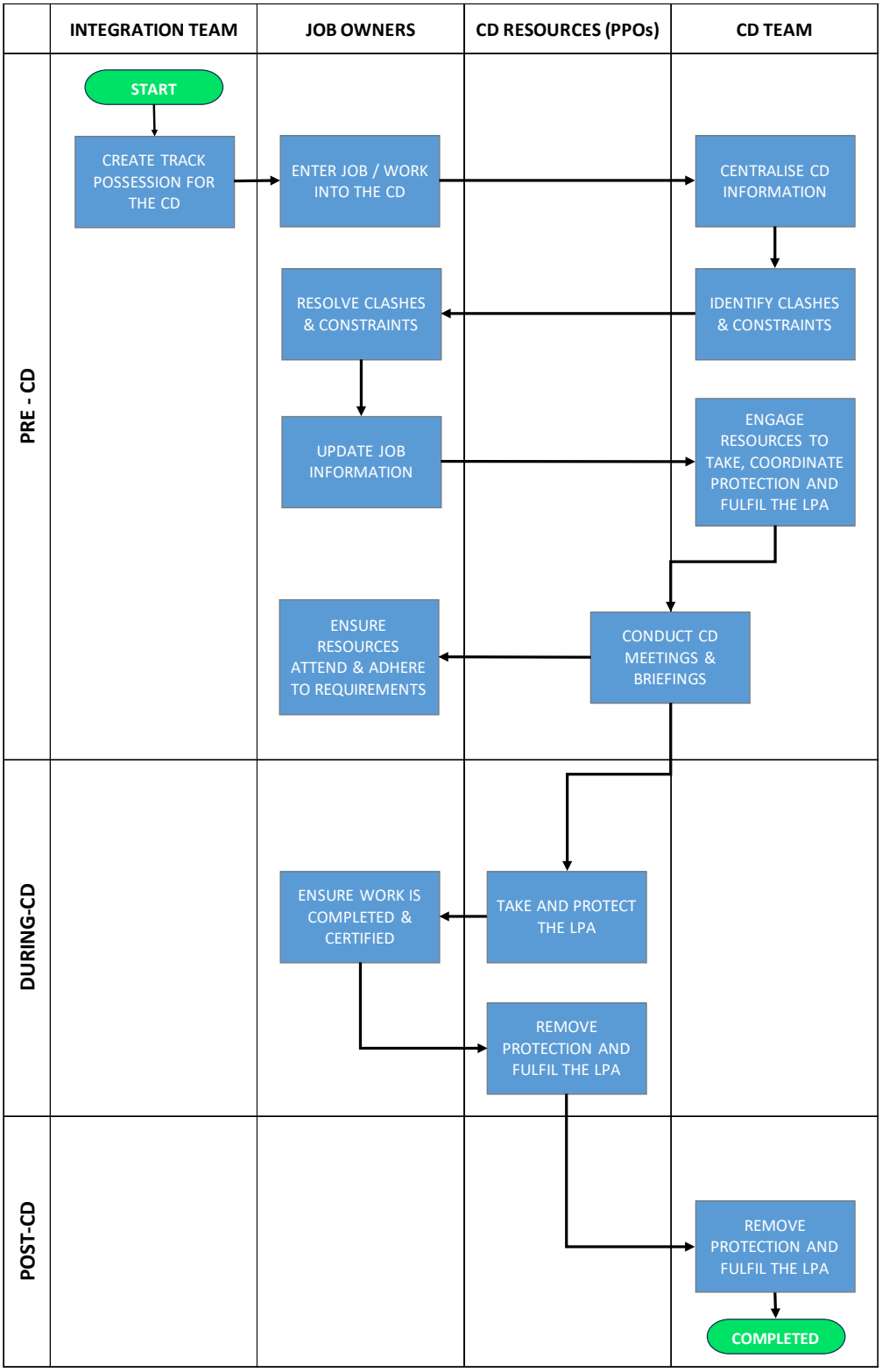
Variations associated with different Networks are depicted below:

3.1 National Network

Link to Process Map "Interstate Possession Management"



3.2 Heavy Haul Network



4 Possession Preparation

Preparation begins via a T-minus process after the annual possession plan has been established and published. In the "Preparation" phase of the possession process, the groundwork is laid to ensure a seamless and well-coordinated operation. This phase encompasses several critical activities designed to safely deliver possession works. Key activities include engaging stakeholders, analysing expectations and reviewing possession conflicts while publishing possession details and preparing possession meetings. The final step is a mandatory briefing for safe workers and job contacts/owners.

4.1 Engage stakeholders

Stakeholders wishing to perform works during a possession will submit work requests at the start of the applicable T-minus process and asked to populate their work bids into a possession matrix. Stakeholders are reminded of the various information required, and key milestones for this information at initiation. Those stakeholders who are not part of the initial communications, can contact the 'possession owner' as described on the advertised possession calendar.

Information related to a specific possession is published centrally and can be accessed as required.

4.2 Prepare Possession Meetings

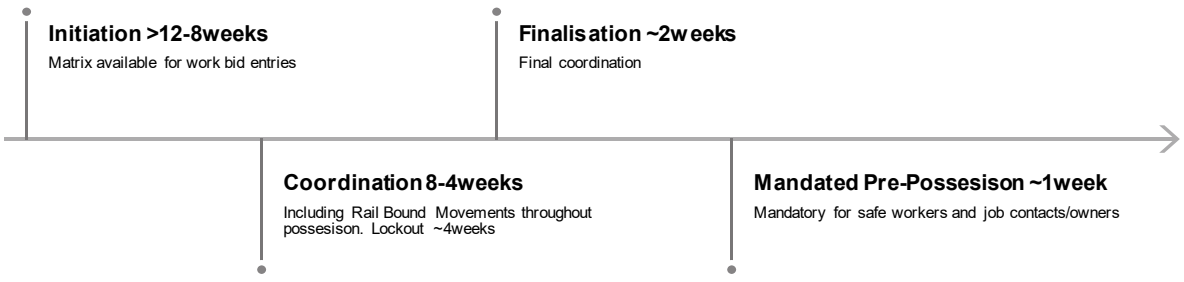
Possession meetings are created for each individual possession according to the applicable T-minus process. These meeting requests are sent to key stakeholders for each individual pre-possession meeting. It is the responsibility of individual job contacts/owners to attend possession meetings or provide representation at each meeting.

The meetings, dependent on the T-minus functionality, provide various outcomes including but not limited to the coordination of adjacent worksites, rail bound movements, and track re-certification detail.

4.3 Meeting Cadence

The sequence of meetings plays a crucial role in ensuring the success and safety of all planned activities. These meetings are meticulously structured to facilitate clear communication, thorough planning, and efficient coordination among all stakeholders involved. By adhering to this sequence, the process aims to pre-emptively address potential issues, allocate resources effectively, and ensure all necessary safety measures are in place.

A T-Minus process is structured appropriate to the specific possession. Generally, the meeting content covers initiation, work coordination, conflicts, movements, re-certification, safe working, and general safety and environment throughout the preparation phase.



4.4 Information Required

All information must be entered into the matrix to enable the coordinators to undertake a comprehensive assessment of potential conflicting worksites. As a minimum, this information must include the worksite footprint, location, date and duration of the works, any worksite constraints, plant and equipment, certification requirements, and personnel details. Providing complete and accurate information is critical to identifying potential conflicts, assessing associated risks, and ensuring the safe and efficient coordination of all activities within the possession.

4.5 Identifying Rail Bound Movements

Any rail bound movements between worksites need to be identified and include location to and from, timing, and equipment information. These movements should be sequenced in logical order to allow safe coordination of various movements through various fixed worksites. The movements are to be documented on a movement matrix supplied by the possession team and is the responsibility of the job owner. Job Owners have a responsibility to understand planned rail bound movements through their worksites so they can be managed appropriately.

4.6 Coordinating Worksites

A Coordinated Worksite is a protection arrangement established within an LPA that allows multiple individual worksites, either separated or located within 500 metres of each other, to operate under a common set of outer protection boundaries. The coordinated worksite is managed by a nominated CPO, who is responsible for the overall coordination of protection arrangements, rail traffic movements, and communication between work groups operating within the defined limits. This arrangement improves the safe and efficient management of multiple worksites by providing a structured framework for coordinating activities while maintaining clear accountability and effective control of the possession area.

4.7 Affected Signalling Systems

The identification of affected signalling systems is the responsibility of job owners. A plan must be submitted to the local Signal Maintenance Engineer for review and acceptance and should indicate whether the system will be functional on the hand back of the work site. Should the signalling system not be functional at hand back, an agreed rectification strategy will be in place prior to the possession.

4.8 Mandatory Briefing

The pre-possession briefing is mandatory for the safe workers associated with all work bids and is held ~three (3) days from the start of the possession. This briefing covers all coordination work, rail bound movements, safe working specifics, safety and environmental constraints, and reporting and escalation requirements.

5 Possession Delivery

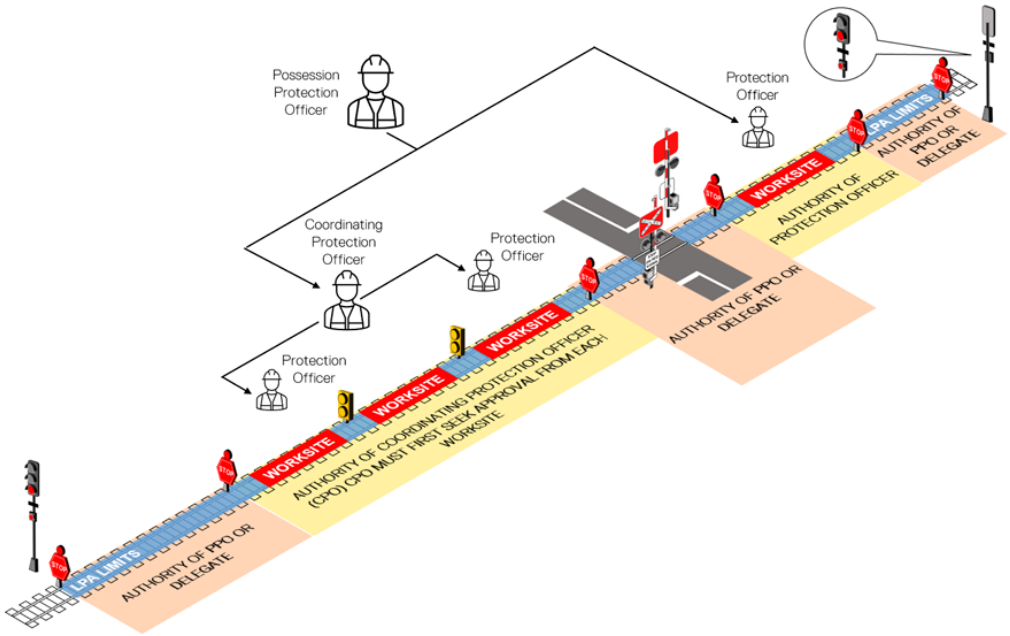
The Possession Delivery Phase is the phase where planned activities are executed within the possession limits. Success during this phase relies on effective coordination, communication, and oversight to ensure works are delivered safely, efficiently, and in accordance with the approved possession plan.

Given the dynamic nature of possession activities, emerging risks and unplanned issues must be identified and managed in real time. Through regular communication and proactive decision-making, stakeholders can maintain situational awareness, minimise operational impacts, and ensure the safe and timely completion of all work within the possession window.

5.1 Protect Possession

5.1.1 Protection area of responsibility

The below diagram identifies the areas of responsibility for the Possession Protection Officer (PPO), Protection Officer (PO) and Coordinating Protection Officer (CPO).



5.2 Coordinate the Possession

Potential possession impacts (example: Late running services) shall be identified prior to possession take up and clear communication with all involved parties ensured. The coordinators shall manage queries throughout the possession and escalate potential handback delays. Project owners carry responsibility to manage issues including incidents, project resources, scope of works, and all other project related items during the possession. At the end of the possession, handback outcomes shall be communicated to key stakeholders.

5.3 Update Meetings

Throughout the possession, structured update meetings are conducted in both the AM and PM to support the safe, coordinated, and efficient delivery of possession activities. These meetings provide a formal forum for communicating critical information, monitoring progress, identifying emerging risks, and ensuring alignment across all work groups.

Key topics discussed include safety shares and lessons learned, injuries, incidents, near misses, hazards, and other SHEC matters. The meetings also address network-related issues that may impact operations following the possession, including job cancellations, known conditions,

infrastructure defects, or asset damage. Potential handback risks and any issues that could affect the safe and timely return of the network to service are reviewed, along with any other matters relevant to the possession. General business items are also discussed to ensure stakeholders remain informed and aware of activities occurring across the wider possession.

These meetings attended by appropriate Job Owners, ensuring effective communication, collaboration, escalation and decision-making throughout the possession lifecycle.

5.4 Reporting

Incidents should be reported immediately and in accordance with COR-PR-034 Event Response and Notification.

Reporting on work as executed during a possession should be captured and reported as soon as reasonably practicable post work completion. A unit of measure, units planned vs units completed can be populated via an applicable possession reporting form or directly in ARTC's Enterprise Asset Management System (EAMS). Temporary Speed Restrictions should also be updated in the applicable system as soon as practicable and noted in any possession close-out documentation.

5.5 Escalation

Should any concerns arise throughout the possession that could delay or degrade handback to operations, escalation is required. Various levels of escalation are depicted in the below table.

ARTC – Possession Delay Escalation Matrix - DRAFT

Responsible Person		Site Supervisor/Safe Worker	Project Owner/Possession Coordinator/PPO	Level 2 Manager	Level 3 Manager	General Manager
Advises Responsible Manager		Project Owner/Possession Coordinator/PPO	Level 2 Manager/s – Possession Manager, Program Delivery Manager, Area Manager	Level 3 Manager/s – Maintenance, Planning, Engineering, Projects, Service Delivery	General Manager/s – Ops, Customer, Safety	Executive General Manager
Consequence Type	**Example**					
Consequence – Significant **Initiate DWG**	Delay to handback >6hrs	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Immediate	Yes
	Degraded handback >6hrs or unknown time					
Consequence – High **Initiate DWG**	Delay to handback <6hrs				Yes	Yes
	Degraded handback <6hrs					
Consequence – Medium	Delay to handback <3hrs			Yes	Yes	No
	Degraded handback <3hrs					
Consequence - Low	Delay to handback <1hrs		Yes	Yes	No	No
	Degraded handback <1hrs					

Immediate = Call 24/7 - Yes = Call during business hours, email and text outside business hours
Delay to handback = delay to advertised time of possession handback
Degraded handback = a portion of track that following the possession work, is not fully operational (excluding TSR's)
DWG = Disruption Working Group
Safety Incidents should refer to RLS-GL-003 Notification Escalation Matrix

5.6 Coordinate Recertification

Following the receipt of signal certification plans from individual worksites and a confirmed rail bound movement schedule, the appropriate Signalling Engineering Manager will coordinate a plan for recertifying the signalling system on the Network prior to handback. These requirements vary based on the differing risk associated with track circuit reliability and the availability of train consists suitable for reducing that risk. It is always the intention to hand back the Network fully operational with no delay or degradation. This work does not supersede any safe working requirements where degradation exists.

Signalling recertification can be in various forms dependent on the safe working rules and procedures. Remote monitoring of a train consist can occur while sometimes site inspections and activities are required by qualified and competent personnel to protect the integrity of the asset.

5.7 Handback

To support the safe and timely handback of the rail network to Operations, all worksites must be clear of track, with all personnel, plant, equipment, and materials removed from the worksite. A nominated time will be communicated prior to the possession indicated when all work must be off track. This will be prior the advertised handback time specified in the TAA. The period provides sufficient time to complete required inspections, resolve outstanding issues, manage unforeseen events that may impact the handback process, and remove all Possession protection before the network is returned to service.

Where a risk to the planned handback is identified, or there is a requirement for work to continue within the contingency period, the Job Owner must immediately notify the coordinator. Following notification, the coordinator will engage with relevant stakeholders to assess the situation, evaluate potential impacts to operations, and determine the most appropriate mitigation strategy. Early and proactive communication is critical to enabling informed decision-making, minimising operational impacts, and maximising the opportunity to implement effective contingency measures. The success of any handback recovery strategy is dependent upon the timely escalation of issues and close collaboration between the Job Owner and the Possession Management Team.

6 Possession Close-Out

The possession close-out is crucial for identifying planned vs actual achievements and how this contributes to an improvement to the Network while fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By reflecting on the outcomes and identifying lessons learned, the organization can enhance future possession operations, leading to more refined processes and better overall performance.

6.1 Conduct Possessions Review

A post possession review meeting shall be conducted within three (3) weeks of the possession as an opportunity for the possession management team and key stakeholders to discuss the overall possession and items that worked well, as well as areas for improvement. Participants will work together to understand lessons that can be learned and actions that can be put in place to improve the preparation and delivery of future possessions.

7 Reference Documents

The following documents support this procedure:

Document Type	Document Number and Title
Parent	
Subordinate	
Reference	Safety Management System (SMS)
	ARTC Network Rules & Procedures
	OPE-PR-045 Annual Possession Plan Requests and Approvals
	OPE-PR-057 ARTC Annual Possession Plan Procedure
	OPE-PR-038 Unplanned Track Possessions
Work Instructions:	Hunter Valley T-minus Process
	How to Enter Work into the HV CD Matrix
	Hunter Valley Safeworking coordinator Manual
	Hunter Valley Closedown Possession Protection Officer (PPO)
	Hunter Valley Closedown Coordinator Manual
	Hunter Valley Closedown Overview Document

8 Definitions

The following terms and acronyms are used within this document:

Term or acronym	Description
AM	Morning
AMP	Asset Management Plan
AO	Absolute Occupation (VIC) An advertised formal authority to occupy a closed defined portion of track for a specified period.
APP	Annual Possession Programme
ARTC	Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd
ATP	As Trains Permits
CPO	Coordinating Protection Officer
IBA	Infrastructure Booking Advice. The process for booking track equipment in & out of use.
LP	Local Possession (SA) An advertised formal authority to occupy a closed defined portion of track for a specified period.
LPA	Local Possession Authority. An advertised formal authority to occupy a closed defined portion of track for a specified period.
PO	Protection Officer. The Competent Worker responsible for protection
PM	Afternoon
PMP	Preventative Maintenance Possession

Term or acronym	Description
PPO	Possession Protection Officer. The Competent Worker responsible for coordinating protection of worksites under a Local Possession Authority (LPA).
SHEC	Safety, Health, Environment and Community
SMS	Safety Management System
ST Interface	Sydney Trains Interface
TAA	Train Alteration Advice. A notice outlining changes Possession safe working limits & train running alterations to accommodate possessions.
TSR	Temporary Speed Restriction
UTP	Unplanned Track Possession