

Update on Queensland Rail network & impacted freight train 12 February 2019

Incident details

- Late Thursday afternoon 7 February, aerial inspections of flooding impacts to the Mount Isa Line by Queensland Rail identified a stowed Pacific National freight train at Nelia – approximately 300 kilometres east of Mount Isa – had been significantly impacted by flood waters.
- The train consists of one locomotive and 80 wagons which were storing a mixture of products including zinc, lead and copper anodes.
- It is understood that some product has spilled into flood waters.
- The train was stowed at the location from 31 January, as a precaution, due to heavy rainfall on the Mount Isa Line preventing its full journey from Mount Isa to Townsville. Nelia is a high point in the area and had previously provided safe stowing for trains in flood events.

Current situation

- The site, near Julia Creek, remains significantly impacted by flood waters meaning it is not possible to access the site except via aerial inspections.
- Further aerial inspections of the site are being undertaken in order to better understand local conditions, and appropriate controls will be implemented to ensure safe access of the site once waters recede.
- Both Pacific National and Queensland Rail have also appointed independent environmental specialists to help guide preliminary assessments of the site and inform next steps.
- Once site access is available, the recovery of the Pacific National train will commence which will include a detailed inspection of the train and wagons, implementing any feasible containment measures, removal of product in wagons, righting the wagons and removing the train from site.
- This work will involve the use of machinery, including cranes, and cannot be undertaken until flood waters recede and ground conditions allow.
- An environmental action plan will also be implemented which will include sampling and remediation works where required.
- Queensland Rail will continue to work with the relevant agencies to keep the local community informed as further information becomes available.
- While the area remains evacuated, Queensland Rail has reached out to local landholders near the site to share information.
- A Queensland Rail representative has also joined the Mount Isa District Disaster Management Group, to ensure we are linking into the broader recovery piece for the region and continue to share information with local stakeholders.

Network Status

- Due to flooding impacts, the Mount Isa Line remains closed between Cloncurry and Hughenden, and the North Coast Line remains closed between Townsville to Ingham.
- As water subsides, Queensland Rail will work as quickly and as safely as possible to restore sections of the Mount Isa and North Coast lines and open up access for our freight customers.
- Queensland Rail crews were able to return the North Coast Line south of Townsville Saturday afternoon, 9 February.
- Spirit of Queensland and Inlander passenger services are continuing to experience cancellations and impacts due to this unprecedented weather event. Where possible, replacement road coaches will be arranged, however this is subject to road conditions which are also currently impacted in many locations.
- Customers booked on a Queensland Rail service in the affected areas are encouraged to visit www.queenslandrailtravel.com.au or call Queensland Rail Travel on 1800 803 009.