

Update on Queensland Rail network & impacted freight train 20 February 2019

Incident details

- On 7 February 2019, 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

- Following the recession of flood waters over the last week, Queensland Rail had been granted permission to access to the closed Flinders Highway, enabling the organisation to gain limited access to the site at Nelia – 50 kilometres east of Julia Creek – where a Pacific National train was inundated by unprecedented flood waters on 7 February.
- While ground conditions still aren't dry enough to accommodate the heavy machinery required for Pacific National to recover the train and wagons, it is anticipated – weather conditions permitting – Pacific National can commence this process late this week. In preparation, representatives from Pacific National are meeting with local contractors regarding their works, which will be implemented as soon as conditions allow.
- Queensland Rail's focus has been on securing the safety and security of the Nelia site for the community and recovery teams, with an exclusion zone of 20 metres established around the train, and security personnel now on site. Fencing will be progressively arranged around the site as ground conditions allow. This safety exclusion zone is not impeding on neighbouring properties.
- An important part of the recovery work is correctly identifying and managing any environmental impacts caused by the spill of minerals into floodwaters by the impacted Pacific National train at Nelia.
- On Friday, 15 February the Department of Environment and Science issued a 'Clean Up Notice' to Queensland Rail, Pacific National and Glencore outlining the key requirements for the site including containment, monitoring, assessment and remediation.
- This Clean Up Notice supports the approach already adopted by the parties, and Queensland Rail, Pacific National and Glencore are engaging the services of an independent environmental specialist to assist with achieving the requirements of the Notice.

- Aerial surveys have been conducted of both the Nelia site and downstream areas to inform sampling and assessment activities. Whilst site access remains challenging, ground-based sampling is expected to commence later this week.
- Early inspections indicate that a significant portion of the mineral concentrates have remained in the train's wagons, but that 19 wagons carrying zinc concentrate and two carrying lead concentrate have sustained damage.
- Once site access is secured, an accurate assessment of product loss can be made.
- These mineral concentrates have low solubility and are therefore expected to have low mobility in the environment. However, flood water velocity is likely to have resulted in some product mobilisation.
- Assessments to better understand floodwater flow paths are being completed to aid identification of potentially affected areas.
- Queensland Rail, Pacific National and Glencore will continue to work together to keep the local community informed as this work progresses and as more information becomes available.
- Queensland Rail will continue to work with the relevant agencies to keep the local community informed as further information becomes available and 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

- Queensland Rail crews were able to return the North Coast Line south of Townsville Saturday afternoon, 9 February.
- The Mount Isa Line remains impacted by flood damage between Cloncurry and Hughenden.
- Queensland Rail engineers and recovery crews have identified damage across 307 kilometres of track, with extreme erosion identified at 204 sites. This includes approximately 40 kilometres of major track washouts and 20 kilometres of track scouring and work is now underway to confirm required repairs and expected recovery timeframes, taking into account optimum use of all industry resources, plant and equipment.
- All available resources are being mobilised to undertake repairs, including engineers and track teams from South East Queensland, to ensure we return the Mount Isa Line to full operation as soon as possible. We will continue to keep stakeholders and the community informed of these plans and timeframes.
- Repair works already commenced from Richmond to Hughenden and is expected to reopen this section within a week.
- 10,000 sleepers have been delivered to Hughenden and Cloncurry.

- Julia Creek to Oorindi remains inaccessible via ground, with inspections being undertaken by drone.
- 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.