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Alice to Darwin railway track joining ceremony

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A major milestone in the Alice Springs to Darwin railway project will take place tomorrow with the joining of the tracks between Tennant Creek and Katherine - at Adrail’s Buchanan Camp site, near Daly Waters.

Chief Minister Clare Martin, said the railway was currently the largest infrastructure development in Australia. The railway had been a dream of legislators for 130 years.

"Tomorrow’s welding ceremony signifies a milestone achievement of more than 50 percent completion of work on the 1420 kilometre railway. When the track between Katherine and Tennant Creek is complete, about one third of the new railway track will be operational.

"The event will be covered on national television on Network Nine’s Today Show, allowing all Australians to view this historic moment.”

Since tracklaying began in April this year more than 600 km of track has been completed with two crews laying track at an average of 2 km per day. Some trackwork has also been completed to approximately 50 km south of Tennant Creek and to the ballast quarry 20 km north of Katherine.

Over 1200kms of corridor clearing is now complete; 960,000 sleepers have been manufactured; 1,725,000 tonnes of ballast produced and 82,000 tonnes of rail delivered.

At the 510 metre long Elizabeth River Bridge the final concrete beam was put into place this week.

During rail construction, employment reached a peak of 1451 direct employees, with 916 from the Territory.

Training, in particular Aboriginal participation, is an important aspect of the work being carried out and of the 660 nationally accredited training courses run since the railway project began, more than 100 Aboriginal participants have completed the courses.

As at the end of September, the value of contracts awarded was $825 million - of that amount $480 million has been awarded to Territory based businesses and industries.

Ms Martin said that she expected a decision on the location of a passenger terminal would be made next week.

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