

National Level Crossing Safety Roundtable 2024

Summary, outcomes and actions

Date: Wednesday 6 March 2024

Place: Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre

Level Crossing incidents are a major safety challenge facing our rail network in Australia today. The 23,000 level crossings across Australia present significant risk to the safety of all the users of the rail and road network, and to the resilience of our transport systems. Every year, incidents at level crossings result in injuries, loss of life, and significant economic costs.

Following the release of the *National Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2023-2032* and prompted by recent level crossing fatalities, the National Level Crossing Safety Committee hosted a Roundtable in Brisbane on 6 March 2024. 65 delegates attended to identify key priorities from the Strategy's Work Plan and commit to actions that will see those priorities delivered.

The event was opened by The Honourable Catherine King MP, Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, with keynote addresses from Sally Stannard, Director-General of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and Chair of the National Level Crossing Safety Committee highlighting the urgent need for action and change, and from Paul Scurrah, Chief Executive Officer of Pacific National, who drew our attention to the recent fatalities of Pacific National train drivers and strongly advocated for behavioural change through enforcement, education and real time awareness technologies and greater collaboration between the rail and road sectors.

Content experts provided insight into the key issues of each of the Strategy's four focus areas, which led into facilitated discussion to identify and prioritise high impact initiatives and seek commitment from delegates for delivery of those initiatives.

The discussion delivered some very positive outcomes with delegates clearly working toward the development of effective and deliverable solutions. The Roundtable was marked by a shared effort to collaborate across sectors, and by the open exchange of ideas, reaching toward the common goal of safer level crossings across Australia.

We sincerely thank everyone who attended for engaging in the open and frank discussions, and for your ongoing commitment to the delivery of the outcomes from the day. We would also like to thank Mr Sal Petrocchio OAM, Dr Natalie Pelham, Associate Professor Gemma Read, and Paul Cockerton for providing key insights for our discussions.

Key Themes

The four key initiatives of the Strategy Work Plan, **Education and Enforcement**, **Assets, Technology and Innovation**, **Data Improvement and Knowledge Management** and **National Coordination** provided the structure for the Roundtable discussions. Delegates identified a number of key actions and made commitments to drive those initiatives forward.

Summary of Actions

1. Collaboratively, the National Rail Safety Regulator and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will lead the establishment of a sustainable, national education program for safe driving around level crossings.
2. A pilot using new-generation camera technology to detect road users driving dangerously around level crossings will be led by Queensland, with learnings shared.
3. Rail Industry organisations Pacific National, Aurizon and Qube committed to adopting the new Code of Practice: Level Crossings and Train Visibility.
4. Road freight operators Linfox ANZ and Toll Group committed to incorporate level crossing details into pre-trip briefings and to implement improvements to in-vehicle telematics to incorporate train location information.
5. The National Rail Safety Regulator, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, Austroads, National Transport Research Organisation and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau will lead the collation of meta data, including the identification of data owners and gaps and opportunities to improve data sharing across organisations and industries. This work will also provide greater visibility of risk assessments for Heavy Vehicle General and Restricted Access Routes and how to capitalise on opportunities to improve the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM) data quality and outputs to provide detailed level crossing mapping.
6. The National Rail Safety Regulator will lead a review of the specific requirements of, and overall effectiveness of, safety interface agreements between road and rail managers for input to the National Transport Commission Review of the Rail Safety National Law.
7. Rail infrastructure managers, operators and unions will progress new arrangements for the collation of sensible near hit data.
8. The National Heavy Vehicle Regulator will work in consultation with government departments and industry to add level crossing data to their route planner map.
9. The National Transport Commission will conduct a review of level crossing related penalties across Australia to give advice to the National Level Crossing Safety Committee, including opportunities to harmonise penalties.
10. The National Level Crossing Safety Committee will facilitate the formalisation of the work program and establish an approach to regularly reporting on progress and continue collaboration and sharing of learnings.

Further information:

To access the National Level Crossing Safety Strategy, visit:

<https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/safety/rail-safety/national-level-crossing-safety-strategy>

To contact the National Level Crossing Safety Committee, please email:

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