MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIAN FIRST LX CODE OF PRACTICE RELEASED

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) has released an Australian-first Code of Practice designed to improve safety at thousands of level crossings around the country.

The *ONRSR Code of Practice – Train Visibility at Level Crossings* has been published today following its endorsement by Australia's State and Federal Infrastructure and Transport Ministers.

ONRSR Chief Executive and Australia's National Rail Safety Regulator, Dr. Natalie Pelham said the new code would significantly strengthen the safety management systems rail operators use to safeguard interactions with pedestrians, cyclists and motorists – including heavy vehicle drivers.

"The Code of Practice sets out train visibility best practice to industry and provides operators with guidance on how to tailor assessment and treatment of their specific safety risks," Dr. Pelham said.

"As we have consistently maintained throughout its development, the code is not a silver bullet solution – unfortunately where level crossing safety is concerned no such solution exists. But what we do have here is a well-considered and responsibly developed safety tool."

"Crucially, it is backed by a significant body of independent research and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including those with lived experience of rail collisions, industry representatives, unions, governments and subject matter experts."

"Several national operators, including Aurizon and Pacific National, have already committed to adopting the code."

Ministerial approval means the *Code of Practice –Train Visibility at Level Crossings* has legal standing, and a court may use the code as evidence to determine whether a rail transport operator, so far as is reasonably practicable, addressed a safety risk and complied with *Rail Safety National Law*.

ONRSR will complement release of the code with national in-field compliance and education activities.

In addition to the consultation process, ONRSR considered a range of data and information in developing the code, including historical records of tens of thousands of rail safety occurrences reported to the national regulator along with two major pieces of academic research.

Conducted by the Monash Institute of Railway Technology, an initial independent research project looked at how specific controls such as flashing beacons on locomotives and the conversion of train headlights from halogen to LED impacted train visibility for road users.

This was followed by a second round of research that looked at the effect of additional front and side locomotive lighting.

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The researchers made important recommendations from both programs that have now been incorporated into the broader set of controls that the code asks operators to consider when assessing the risks posed by their specific rail operations at level crossings.

“This code represents the latest tool ONRSR can provide to support collective efforts to improve safety at thousands of level crossings around Australia,” Dr. Pelham said.

“Ultimately, safety at level crossings relies on significant coordination and action to manage the risks. Members of the public, rail transport operators, road transport industries, governments, emergency services and regulators all have a vital role to play.”

Further background information and copies of the *ONRSR Code of Practice – Train Visibility at Level Crossings* can be downloaded from the ONRSR website**.**