

Summary of the CEO Industry Reference Group Meeting

26 November 2021

The key outcomes from the meeting include:

1. ONRSR's Chief Executive, Ms Sue McCarrey reported:
 - A key focus for ONRSR is level crossing safety. ONRSR is working closely with all key stakeholders and will assist in sharing information.
 - ONRSR has undertaken an analysis of the correlation between interface agreements and occurrences at level crossings. Initial findings suggest a correlation between no interface agreements and level crossing incidents. Level crossings with no interface agreements have a rate of occurrences three times more per crossing than those with a signed or expired interface agreement. ONRSR are in the process of unpacking the data to undertake further analysis. This area is flagged as a potential focus for ONRSR in the new year.
 - Consultation on the proposed cost recovery model will recommence in Sydney and Melbourne the week beginning 29 November. Early in the new year ONRSR will travel back around the states to meet with those who have not yet attended or to follow up where needed.

2. ARA's General Manager, Policy and Government Relations, Simon Bourke reported:
 - ARA have established a Safety Policy Committee which informs the development of positions on key policy and safety regulatory issues as well as explore initiatives to support an improved rail safety culture.
 - ARA launched their Rail Freight Action plan on 17 September. This is a twelve-month activity agenda for the rail freight sector, focused on mode shift, interoperability and competitive neutrality.
 - The Rail Supply Chain Blueprint launched on 22 September. This defines clear actions across a number of focus areas, procurement, local content policy, standards, innovation and technology, type approvals, sustainability, skills development and export promotion.
 - ARA released their Sustainability Strategy in September outlining a three-year action plan. It promotes the benefits of rail and further embeds sustainable practices within industry.
 - ARA are involved in the working groups of the reform project Disability Standards for Accessible Transport which is being led by the Commonwealth and Transport for Main Roads Queensland.
 - A successful Rail Safety Week was held in August with support from more than 90 organisations.

3. RISSB's General Manager Innovation and Major Projects, Jesse Baker reported:
 - In recent months RISSB has been receiving a lot more enquiries on level crossings. In response to this RISSB will holding a hackathon in mid-February to look at the current state of technology for level crossings in Australia.
 - The major projects portfolio is in its second year and will be focusing on rail problems that cannot be easily addressed by RISSB's usual products.
 - RISSB are exploring working with RSSB in UK on fatigue management.
 - The RISSB Horizons program call for nominations has now closed. There has been a large amount of interest and RISSB may have to run two parallel groups.
 - RISSB launched their four learning express courses on 22 November.
 - The RISSB Rail Safety Conference will be held on 3-4 May 2022 with planning in progress.

4. ONRSR's Chief Operating Officer Mr Peter Doggett reported:
 - National Operations are planning a review of how it undertakes education activities that sit under their umbrella. The aim is to be clearer on what they are trying to achieve, have documented scopes and goals, have defined measures of success and have the outcomes feed into sources of regulatory intelligence. ONRSR will work with operators in the new year. Feedback/suggestions can be provided to Peter Doggett or to the local teams.
 - National Operations are reviewing the post fatality check list. In recent months both police and Comcare have contacted ONRSR asking about responses from track managers in terms of fencing at locations where fatalities have occurred. Industry should be prepared to start thinking more about this issue.
 - Under section 104 of the RSNL the Regulator may direct an operator to amend its safety management system. This is not a power that is intended to be used very often, however section 104 is appropriate in circumstances where an operator has either failed to take reasonable actions in response to an identified problem or does not have the capacity to identify an appropriate solution.
 - The classification of rail safety workers continues to present challenges. ONRSR has been made aware where some operators are now limiting the classifications and numbers of people who they deem to be rail safety workers. It is not acceptable to water down the requirements to try and facilitate the employment of people without the appropriate skills and knowledge necessary to undertake the position.
 - ONRSR's Investigation team has increased its capacity and capability over the last couple of years. Section 20 of the RSNL has been utilised by investigators to request personal details of people involved in incidents, which has resulted in some concerns from operators sighting privacy/legal issues. ONRSR's motivations in issuing a section 20 notice is to fully understand what has occurred in an incident.

5. ONRSR's Executive Director | Policy, Reform and Stakeholder Engagement, Julie Bullas reported:
 - The test portal for the National Rail Safety Data Strategy is proposed to be ready from April 2022. Online workshops with operators will be run in the new year.
 - The final proposal for the Cost Recovery Model will be submitted to Ministers in May 2022 for their consideration. It is proposed to go live on 1 July 2023. The management and control trial engaging an external consultant will commence in December and run through to February 2022.

- The National Level Crossing Portal is up and running with over 120 approved users. Development of a phase 2 is being considered as part of the proposed Level Crossing Safety Strategy (2021 – 2030).
- ONRSR will be working with a small reference group to develop guidance to provide greater clarity around consultation requirements under the RSNL. This work will commence in early 2022.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday 25 March 2022 (subject to change).