

# ***THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE***

## **Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator**

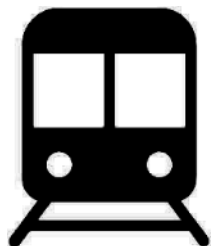
**Dr Natalie Pelham**

**Chief Executive | National Rail Safety Regulator**

**7 April 2026**

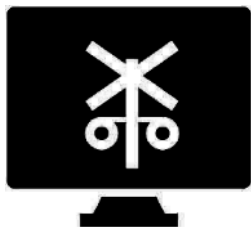


# THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE



## Risk-based Regulation

- ONRSR Approach
- How it works
- Outcomes



## The Level Crossing Context

- Opportunities and Challenges
- ONRSR' role – now / next

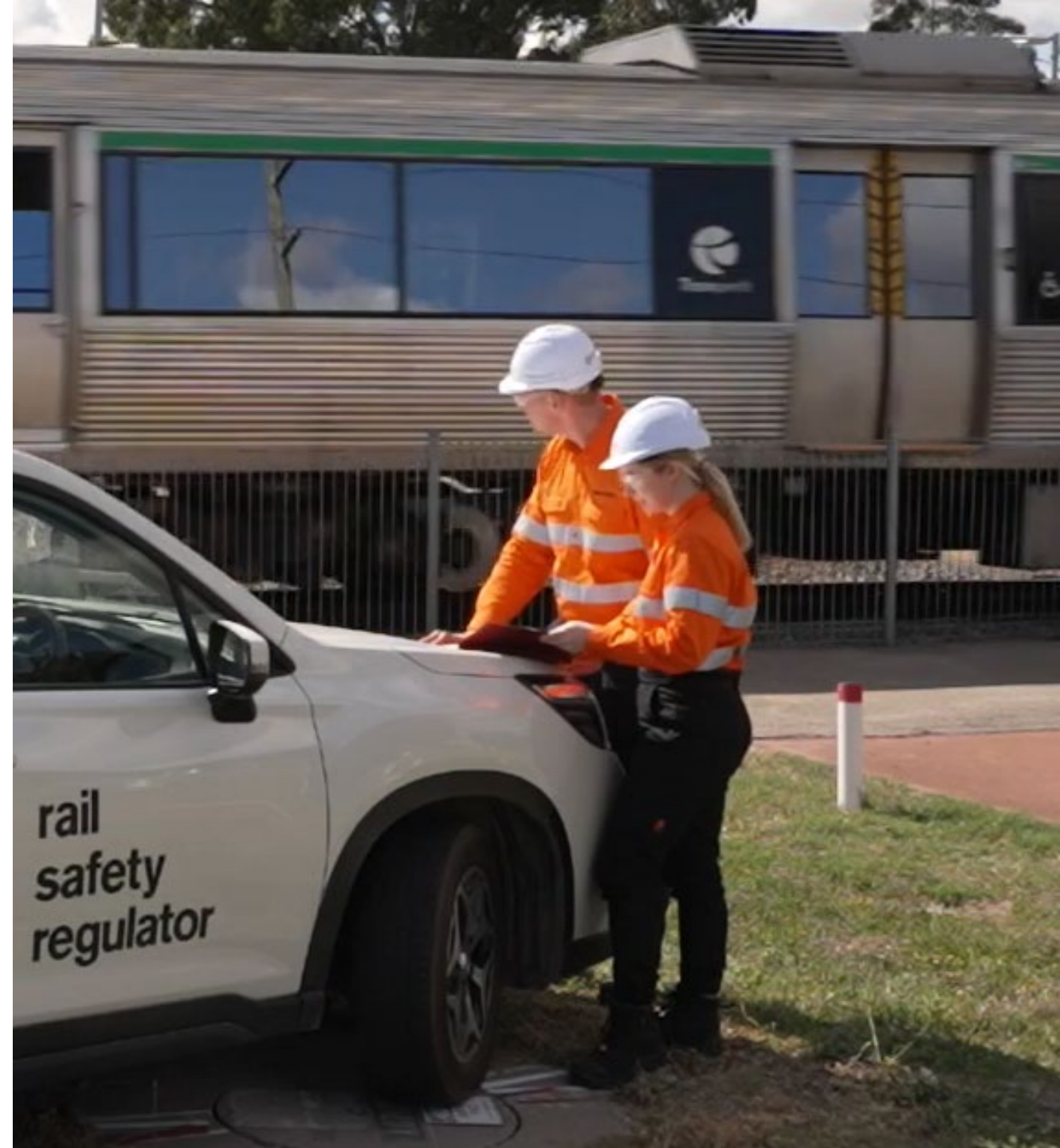


# About ONRSR

- ❑ Independent Regulator and body corporate established Jan 2013
- ❑ **Risk-based** & intelligence-led
- ❑ Administers the *Rail Safety National Law 2012*

## RSNL

- ❑ Accredite rail transport operators and their Safety Management Systems
- ❑ General safety duties on key parties in the rail supply chain to manage risks to safety SFAIRP
- ❑ Risk Assessment and Management processes
- ❑ Commitment to continuous improvement across safety systems, culture and performance



# ONRSR Rail Safety Regulation Model

## RSNL 1. Accreditation Scheme 2. General Safety Duties Scheme

### Compliance: monitor and secure

- Risk-based program
  - Audits
  - Inspections
  - Site visits
- Information to support RSNL compliance and improve rail safety performance

### Safety Improvement: continuous

Using data, information and applied analytics to:

- Identify safety risks and prioritise for action
- Develop actionable safety insights
- Define safety problems and develop programs to improve safety management
- Inform the national work program

CORE

### Investigation: influence and enforce

- Identify and address immediate risks to safety
- Inform safety improvements – through better understanding of causal and contributing factors
- Identify breaches of the RSNL

### Engagement & Education: share and inform

- Share safety information, insights and learning
- Promote safety improvement
- Partnerships and collaborations to amplify and support achievement of ONRSR' safety objectives

**Enablers: IT Strategy, Regulatory Intelligence Strategy, People & Culture Strategy, Governance & Risk Frameworks**

# ONRSR and Level Crossing Safety



# OUR LX PROFILE 2024-25



>20,000 + Level Crossings nationally



Approx **40%** actively controlled  
Approx **60%** passively controlled



**35** LX collisions (train/vehicle)  
**4** x fatalities, **2** x serious injury  
**400+** near hits (train/vehicle)  
**400+** near hits (train/person)



Heavy Vehicles **2.9%** of total fleet but  
**16.9%** of all near hits...



# THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE – LX CONTEXT

## OWNERS (SHARED)

- Rail Infrastructure Managers
- Road Managers  
(State/Territory or Local Govts)

## REGULATORS

- ONRSR (Rail)
- NHVR (Heavy Vehicles)
- Police (Road)

## POLICY AND STRATEGY

- State/Territory and  
Federal Govts/Depts

## USERS (ROAD)

- Heavy Vehicle Operators
- Road Freight Companies
- Private Vehicle Drivers
- Pedestrians

## USERS (RAIL)

- Rolling Stock Operators

- Industry and Advocacy  
Groups

- National Level Crossing Safety  
Committee

# National Level Crossing Safety Strategy

2023-2032



NATIONAL  
LEVEL CROSSING  
SAFETY COMMITTEE



## Interface Agreements – Requirement of RSNL



## Rail Infrastructure Managers and Road Managers



- Risk management
- Ongoing evaluation
- Roles and responsibilities
- Communication/compliance/review



# So, what is ONRSR doing?



## High Risk LX Prioritisation

Observational data / ALCAM / External reports



## NHVR/ONRSR HVLX Safety Partnership (est 2026)



## National Level Crossing Portal (NLXP)

Increased functionality for users



## Research

e.g. LX occurrences Daylight vs Darkness



## Education and Engagement

drivers / road managers (campaigns)



## Code Of Practice: Level Crossings and Train Visibility



Seeks to improve train visibility within broader objective of improving safety at LX



Provides a means of supporting compliance with the duty to manage, SFAIRP, the safety of rail and road users at LXs



Informed by research and extensive consultation



# Operators' Responsibilities



Undertake risk assessment on train visibility at level crossings



Determine appropriate controls for individual rail level crossing operations



Use the code to determine appropriate controls – goes beyond existing level crossing standard (AS7501) – or develop an alternative approach that delivers the same or better safety outcome



# The Story So Far...



Operators' implementation plans



Commitment from major national freight operators



Dedicated ONRSR work streams



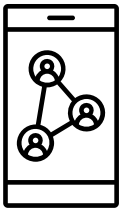
Focus on operators' risk assessments & interface agreements



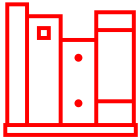
# ENGAGE AND INFLUENCE



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# SAFE RAILWAYS FOR AUSTRALIA

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**onrsr**