

**NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RAIL
SAFETY DATA**

2008 – 2010

October 2008



National Transport Commission

**Prepared by
National Transport Commission**

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National Strategy for Rail Safety Data

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Abstract: This report outlines the national strategy for rail safety data that has been developed in consultation with rail regulators and industry.

Purpose: For approval by ATC

Key words: rail, safety, data

FOREWORD

The National Transport Commission (NTC) is a body established under a Commonwealth Act and an inter-governmental agreement with a charter to develop, monitor and maintain uniform or nationally consistent regulatory and operational reforms relating to road transport, rail transport, and inter-modal transport. This body is funded jointly by the Australian Government, states and territories.

High quality rail safety data is vital in the management of rail. However, a range of deficiencies currently exist with the way industry and regulators manage rail safety data.

To address this issue, NTC has developed this National Strategy for Rail Safety Data in consultation with the rail regulators and industry. This strategy outlines the areas in which action is needed to improve rail safety data. These actions are for regulators and industry to develop and implement.

The strategy's national approach to rail safety data will improve data collection, access, analysis, publication and use. National rail safety data would be enhanced further by a single, national rail safety regulatory and investigation framework.

The Commission acknowledges the contribution made by NTC officers Jan Powning, Neil Wong, Karen Dowling and Tim Eaton. The NTC is grateful for the support and advice afforded to it by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and members of the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and Rail Safety Package Steering Committee, and acknowledges the particular contribution of Julie Bullas from Queensland Transport and Phil Sochon from the Australasian Railways Association.

The NTC is submitting this final strategy out-of-session to the Australian Transport Council (ATC) seeking endorsement of the strategy. If approved by ATC, states and territories will implement the actions outlined in the strategy.



Greg Martin
Chairman

SUMMARY

In 2006, the Australian Transport Council agreed on the need for a national, strategic approach to rail safety data, and the National Transport Commission was tasked with developing a rail safety data strategy.

This National Strategy for Rail Safety Data commits governments and industry to eleven (11) related actions to improve rail safety data in Australia.

The strategy will deliver *better focused national data*. Actions 1.1 to 1.3 will consider the data needs of regulators, other government agencies, industry and the information needs of the public. Where it is necessary to develop data items to meet these data needs, this will be done.

The strategy will bring about *better data quality*. Action 2.1 will standardise the requirements for reporting certain incidents and action 2.2 will look at options for additional reporting. If actions 2.1 and 2.2 require legislative changes to support them, the National Transport Commission will amend the model rail safety legislation (action 2.3).

The strategy will result in *better data consistency and comparability*. Action 3.1 will standardise the definitions of data terms. Action 3.2 will revise rail safety data normalisers. Action 3.3 will standardise the way in which officers in government and industry are educated about data classification, recording and reporting. Action 3.4 aims to improve reporting culture in industry. Action 3.5 proposes a national rail safety database (or similar) established and maintained by industry.

The national strategy includes a draft implementation workplan with greater detail about each of the actions. The draft implementation workplan sets out responsibilities, consultation requirements, processes for approval and relationships with other actions. The strategy commits the National Transport Commission to report regularly about progress of the actions.

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1. INTRODUCTION

High quality data are essential for managing rail safety risk. In 2006, the Australian Transport Council (ATC) recognised that there was no overarching strategy for rail safety data in Australia, and the National Transport Commission (NTC) was tasked with developing such a strategy. This report is the result.

The draft strategy was developed in consultation with rail regulators, industry and other stakeholders. It provides the directions and actions for those stakeholders to continuously improve rail safety data processes.

The National Transport Commission sought public comment and feedback on the draft report and considered the comments received before finalising the strategy. A broad range of stakeholders were consulted and the draft strategy has been reviewed by the Rail Safety Package Steering Committee, the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Standing Committee on Transport Rail Group (SCOT Rail Group). The final step in the process is an out-of-session submission to the ATC seeking endorsement of the strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

The National Transport Commission has, in collaboration with the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) and through ongoing consultation with key stakeholders and after a public comment stage, developed a national strategy for rail safety data. This is one of a series of inter-related projects that are intended to enhance the national consistency of the rail regulatory framework and to improve rail safety. The ATC has endorsed the project, which conforms to a decision in 2006 by the Council of Australian Governments calling for a further approach by the ATC to establish a nationally consistent approach to interstate rail safety regulation.¹

Rail safety data are used for a wide range of purposes by a variety of stakeholders. Such data are particularly required by key stakeholders (rail transport operators, regulators and other government bodies, the rail industry's representative bodies and unions, and national bodies, including Ministerial councils) for their respective purposes. In recent years, rail transport operators, the industry, regulators and governments have taken various measures to improve rail safety performance, including by improving rail safety data. This has not, however, included a systematic national approach to understanding how the needs at various levels for such data can best be met.

Data actions in this strategy are generally the responsibility of the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and/or the Australasian Railways Association.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel consists of the rail safety regulators from all states, the Northern Territory and New Zealand. The key role of the panel is to provide advice to senior government officials and the National Transport Commission on rail safety regulatory issues to help enhance safety and regulatory outcomes consistent with the rail safety co-regulatory framework.

¹ Council of Australian Governments meeting outcomes, 10 February 2006, Attachment B, National Competition Policy Review, Decision 5.5, p.5.

The Australasian Railway Association (ARA) is the peak industry body for the rail sector in Australia and New Zealand. ARA represents the interests of rail transport operators (freight, passenger, tourist and heritage); track owners; manufacturers of locomotives, rollingstock, signalling and communications; equipment suppliers; maintenance and construction companies; freight forwarders; investment banks, lawyers, IT and service providers and consultants. As a result of its wide membership ARA is referenced in the strategy as representing the rail industry.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology for developing the strategy is described in Appendix 1. Broadly, the National Transport Commission identified the needs of stakeholders for rail safety data, considered how well the needs were being met and proposed a strategy within which actions are proposed to:

- a) satisfy the main needs of the key stakeholders for rail safety data;
- b) ensure that there is appropriate alignment of the rules and principles at the levels of rail transport operators and regulators as well as nationally in relation to the collection, classification, analysis, reporting, and publication of rail safety data; and
- c) improve the relevance, validity and reliability of the data.

4. ISSUES

It appears that many of the needs of governments and the public for rail safety data are being met by information about top-level events, which underpins the current regulatory regime for rail safety data. Nonetheless, there are information gaps. In addition, the focus on top level events is seen as limiting the understanding of the causes of incidents and precursors. Stakeholder needs for national comparative precursor data are not being met by the current data collection, classification and reporting mechanisms.

The examination of the needs for relevant, valid and reliable rail safety data has identified deficiencies in the existing data:

- some key needs are not met;
- inconsistencies exist;
- more attention is needed to meet regulatory good practice principles;
- there are shortcomings in existing classification tools and problems of data comparability;
- difficulties occur in the provision of national data; and
- some nationally collected data are of limited or no value.

There is presently no strategic framework to provide a mechanism for identifying and focusing on the needs of key stakeholders, for aligning the levels at which data is used so that unnecessary regulatory burdens are avoided, and to facilitate improvements in the quality, timeliness and use of data.

Accordingly, a strategic approach must be taken to give greater attention to the actual needs of the key stakeholders and to how well they are met, particularly by improving the quality and consistency of the data. In this respect, stakeholders at all levels should be able to understand the causes of incidents better and consequently be in a better position to manage, from their differing positions, rail safety hazards and risks.

Initiatives that are taken under the strategy should be implemented in carefully planned stages, accompanied by effective measures to ensure that the resulting data do not suffer from the types of problems seen in the past. For this reason, greater statistical expertise is needed in designing the rail safety information system so that it provides valid, reliable data that more effectively meet the needs of the key stakeholders and does not include data of questionable quality or utility.

The alternative approach of continuing to make ad hoc improvements, either after problems are identified or when new circumstances or needs emerge, cannot be justified. It is both inefficient and highly likely to entrench most of the existing problems.

5. THE STRATEGY

The proposed strategy is a framework document. It recognises the main stakeholders who are responsible for improving rail safety data, identifies key activities that can improve those data, and outlines priority work.

The strategy cannot solve every difficulty relating to rail safety data. There are tensions between the demands of safe rail operation on the one hand and the collection, reporting and use of data relating to that operation on the other. The strategy will, nonetheless, provide a framework for a better focused data regime.

The implementation of the strategy provides an opportunity for excluding some past areas of data collection by providing a better focus on quality, adequacy and utility. Even so, achieving a better data regime within a strategic framework will take time.

The strategy provides a reference point for initiatives to improve the nature, quality, utility and consistency of rail safety data and the processes for its collection, accessibility, analysis, publication and use.

The strategy must be capable of modification to meet changing needs and circumstances as and when required. Initially, attention will be given to the actions that are necessary to provide a sound foundation for progressive improvements to rail safety data. Once the action items have been completed, a data framework document will be produced articulating the management of effective and efficient collection, classification, reporting and publication for nationally consistent, relevant rail safety data.

The strategy is set out below. It comprises high level objectives and a set of guiding principles. There are good reasons for specifically focusing the strategy on meeting data needs:

- a) this will be the first time that a national strategic approach has been taken to rail safety data and it is important to have a tightly focused and realistic statement and goals that can be successfully implemented;
- b) no explicit overall national strategy for rail safety exists that would guide the development of contributing strategic approaches, so the rail safety data strategy should be aimed at ensuring the priority data needs of key stakeholders are met and not attempt to address any non-data issues;

- c) there is not a clean sheet for rail safety data – there are already substantial collections of data and well established practices at the operator, regulator and national levels; and
- d) obtaining rail safety data has significant costs and, in relation to many needs, takes some time to be shown to be valid and useful.

NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR RAIL SAFETY DATA

Objectives

To ensure that rail safety data:

- meet the identified needs of governments, industry and the public;
- support good decision-making about rail safety;
- guide actions to improve rail safety; and
- provide timely, accurate and relevant information about rail safety performance.

Guiding principles

In meeting the identified needs of governments, industry and the public for rail safety data, the collection, classification, analysis, reporting, and publication of such data will:

- be nationally consistent;
- use sound statistical principles to produce data that are useful, relevant, reliable and valid;
- be efficient and effective and in line with national principles for good regulation;
- not impose limits on states and territories' ability to monitor risk; and
- follow national regulatory policies to avoid increases in the reporting burden for operators and regulators.

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Roles and responsibilities during the development of the content of the strategy and implementation will be:

- a) The National Transport Commission will take a coordinating and reporting role for actions outlined in this data strategy.
- b) Major stakeholders in the development and implementation of the strategy will include Rail Safety Regulators Panel (RSRP), Australasian Railway Association, the rail industry, rail unions and the Australian Transport Safety Bureau; and
- c) an appropriate chief executive level group will be identified to advise on the strategic content within the strategy.

The specific roles and process for approval of each action are identified throughout the implementation workplan.

7. STRATEGIC THEMES

The strategy has a number of strategic themes, which contain actions to address identified problems and to improve rail safety data.

7.1 Strategic theme 1: Better focused national data

National data can provide a picture of rail safety across Australia. Some national data are currently available. Even so, users' needs do not guide the dataset and therefore ongoing work to define their needs is required to produce better focused national safety data.

To guide such work, three main classes of users have been identified for immediate attention: the public, rail regulators/governments and the rail industry (including rail transport operators, contractors, industry bodies and unions).

When developing the actions outlined below, the National Transport Commission recommends that rigorous principles be applied to avoid wasted effort and non-comparable national data, including:

- statistical testing of possible data items to ensure their validity and genuine comparability;
- assessing whether a particular stakeholder's need for data can be met by other means than the national collection; and
- data not to be collected nationally if available from other national collections or not significantly useful for rail safety purposes.

Action 1.1 Specify the national data that are required to meet the high-level rail safety information needs of the public, and agree on their collection and publication.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association will develop a recommendation, to be progressed through the National Transport Commission, for implementation by states and territories.

Action 1.2 Specify the regulator and other government needs for collated national data, and develop the data items that will meet these needs.

In consultation with rail industry stakeholders, the Rail Safety Regulators Panel will specify its data requirements and the National Transport Commission will specify data requirements for broader government rail safety information needs. A recommendation will be developed and progressed through the National Transport Commission for implementation by states and territories.

Action 1.3 Specify industry needs for collated national data and develop the data items that will meet those needs.

The Australasian Railways Association will review and identify its needs for collated national data and the collection and reporting requirements will be modified appropriately.

7.2 Strategic theme 2: Better data quality

This theme relates to improving the quality and timeliness of data to make them more relevant and useful.

In developing this strategy, rail regulators and the Australasian Railways Association identified that the statutory requirements for reporting notifiable occurrences need revising. Work is required to improve the administrative reporting system, focusing on producing timely, useful and good quality data.

Action 2.1 Standardise requirements for reporting notifiable occurrences.

Rationale: Differences in reporting requirements in the various jurisdictions impede obtaining useful national data.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel, in consultation with the Australasian Railways Association and other relevant stakeholders, will develop standardised requirements for reporting notifiable occurrences.

Action 2.2 Consider options for complementing top event reporting with chain of event reporting and contributing factors, establishing uniform requirements at a national level for reporting such data, including:

- a) standardised reporting at the jurisdictional level so as to be nationally consistent;
- b) measures to prevent double counting of an incident;
- c) measures to ensure causal factors are captured/reported; and
- d) processes to ensure that information from investigations is collected consistently and is readily accessible.

Rationale: Stakeholders have strongly supported chain of event reporting and contributing factors data to complement the top event data. There is an opportunity to develop and implement this in a nationally consistent way.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will develop a recommendation. The recommendation will be considered by an appropriate chief executive level group. States and territories will then implement the recommendation.

Action 2.3 Revise the model Rail Safety Bill and regulations to be consistent with the outcomes from actions 2.1 and 2.2 and make consequential changes to state and territory laws.

Rationale: Rail transport operators are statutorily required to report notifiable occurrences under the national model Rail Safety Bill. Any resulting changes from action 2.1 to notifiable occurrences are likely to require amendments to the model Bill and regulations and hence to state and territory laws giving effect to them.

Subject to the outcomes of actions 2.1 and 2.2, the National Transport Commission will undertake the required process to revise the model Rail Safety Bill and regulations for a decision by the Australian Transport Council. States and territories will then implement the recommendation.

7.3 Strategic theme 3: Better consistency and comparability

Consistency and comparability will improve the quality of rail safety data.

Action 3.1 Develop uniform definitions ('data dictionary') that, where possible and appropriate, are consistent with non-rail equivalents and international rail practice.

Rationale: Use of standard definitions of data terms by all rail transport operators and government agencies will improve the consistency, comparability and hence the utility of rail safety data.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will develop a recommendation. The recommendation will be considered by an appropriate chief executive level group. States and territories will then implement the recommendation.

Action 3.2 Revise normalisers for national rail safety data.

Rationale: The usefulness and validity of national rail safety data depend on having sound, relevant normalisers. ON-S2² should be updated or replaced so that there are better normalisers and gaps are filled. The approach taken should take account of the need to facilitate international rail safety benchmarking.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and Australasian Railways Association will complete their review of ON-S2 to produce revised and new normalisers. Complementary work that is undertaken by the Cooperative Research Centre for Rail Innovation will be taken into account.

Action 3.3 Develop standardised educational requirements for classifying, recording and reporting rail safety data.

Rationale: How rail safety data are classified, recorded and reported also affects data quality. Accordingly, a standard approach for training those persons who have such responsibilities will help to improve data quality. In addition, the culture within the businesses of the rail transport operators collecting information will affect data quality. Attention must be given to fostering a culture in which reporting is not incident dependent.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will develop standardised educational requirements to improve data classification, recording and reporting. The recommendation will be considered by an appropriate chief executive level group. States and territories will then implement the recommendation.

Action 3.4 Improve rail safety data reporting for industry.

Rationale: The culture within the businesses of the rail transport operators collecting information affects data quality, for example, after a major rail

² ON-S[x] is an Occurrence Notification Standard

level crossing accident, it is common for train drivers to report near misses more frequently over the subsequent months. Attention must be given to continuous improvement of the reporting culture in rail to optimise data quality. The role of rail unions to influence outcomes of this work positively should be recognised.

The Australasian Railways Association and accredited rail transport operators, with assistance from the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and in consultation with other stakeholders, develop an industry-wide education program to improve reporting culture.

Action 3.5 Better rail safety data for industry.

Rationale: High level data which will be collected across jurisdictions are of limited operational use to industry. On the other hand, detailed precursor safety data can be an important dataset for comparing trends and benchmarking safety performance for individual rail transport operators. This information is commercially sensitive and not currently collated.

The Australasian Railways Association, in consultation with relevant stakeholders including rail unions and the Rail Safety Regulators Panel, will investigate options in relation to responsibility for a national industry rail safety database containing such information and/or a safety risk model. This will include a cost benefit analysis of the options and their suitability in the Australian rail environment.

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

Since National Transport Commission does not directly collect or collate rail safety data, a project working group was formed to assist in the project. The working group consists of rail safety regulators, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, and representatives of the industry and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

The National Transport Commission has followed a consultative, collegiate process including:

- a) conducting a systematic needs analysis in two workshops with key stakeholders and through individual discussions with them;
- b) translating the needs analysis into a broad articulation of what data sets are required;
- c) at a broad level, comparing the data that are required with those that are currently collected and made available;
- d) identifying some gaps between currently held rail safety data and the needs of key stakeholders;
- e) considering whether and how those gaps should be addressed;
- f) conducting a further workshop with the key stakeholders to consider the scope and terms of the strategy and to identify possible actions to improve rail safety data so that it meets the key identified needs; and
- g) conducting a public comment process for the strategy and revising it taking account of the comments received and further targeted consultation with key stakeholders.

APPENDIX 2: DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN

Action 1.0 – National Transport Commission to coordinate and report on implementation of data strategy.

Outcome

Coordination and regular reporting of the actions under this strategy. A final summary document provided to ATC when all actions are complete.

Responsibility

National Transport Commission.

Process

The National Transport Commission will coordinate and report on the implementation of the strategy. This will include developing a reporting system, regularly seeking updates and reporting on progress. Timelines for the deliverables will be agreed with responsible body or agency (listed below).

When all actions are completed the National Transport Commission will document the outcomes of the actions under the strategy and report to ATC.

Strategic theme 1: Better focused national data

Action 1.1 – Specify the national data that are required to meet the high-level rail safety information needs of the public, and agree on their collection and publication.

Outcome

Agreed key national rail safety information relevant to the public is made available.

Background

The currently available national rail safety data were not developed to meet public needs. In addition, the current rail safety data are not user friendly compared to information supplied by other transport modes. This action addresses those problems.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including Australian Transport Safety Bureau and Commonwealth Government.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association.

Process

- Analyse the public needs for data, considering data provided for such purposes for other transport modes in Australia and internationally, and the best way to communicate the status of rail safety in Australia.

- Having consideration of the cost implications, identify "value add" information that may be provided. For instance, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's road safety publications analysing road in more detail than the monthly statistics on road safety.
- Specify the data to meet these needs, and seek national agreement from an appropriate chief executives group through the National Transport Commission.
- Agreement with the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and Australasian Railways Association for the provision of the data and the publication schedule.

Interdependencies

- Links with public safety definitions for the other modes of transport in Australia, especially the road safety data collection by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau that currently includes level-crossing fatalities and serious injuries.
- Action 1.2 needs to incorporate outcomes from Action 1.1, because regulators will provide the data to the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and will need to know the format.
- Action 1.3 needs to incorporate outcomes of Action 1.1 because industry will provide the data to regulators.
- Additional categories may be required following the completion in March 2008 of the review of ON-S1.

Action 1.2 – Specify the regulator and other government needs for collated national data and develop the data items that will meet these needs.

Outcome

An agreed national rail safety data set that meets the ongoing needs of regulators and other government bodies and requirements for Australian Transport Safety Bureau publication.

Background

The current rail safety data collected by regulators is considered not to take into account sufficiently the broader needs of government. This action will address that deficiency and provide the opportunity to review the existing rail safety data.

ON-S1 has recently been reviewed. Further review and additional categories may be required following the completion of this action.

Responsibility

National Transport Commission for the specification of the national rail safety data needed for government policy purposes.

Rail Safety Regulators Panel for specifying regulator needs for national rail safety data.

Rail Safety Regulators Panel for the development of data items.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including government agencies and industry.

Process

- National Transport Commission to research and report on broader government policy needs.
- Rail Safety Regulators Panel to report on regulator needs for top event data.
- Rail Safety Regulators Panel to identify the top event data that are valuable for national comparison and the data that are required locally. Other data requirements will be established as part of other action items.
- Report on progress with the proposed data set to an appropriate chief executive level group.
- Integrate with other actions contained in the strategy relating to regulator data requirements.
- Develop the data items that will constitute the necessary data set, and seek national agreement from an appropriate chief executives group through the National Transport Commission.

Interdependencies

A review of classifications in ON-S1 is now complete. An implementation date, including phase in period, has been agreed with industry. Additional categories, or refinement of categories, may be required following the completion of Action 1.1 and the National Transport Commission report from this action.

Action 1.3 – Specify industry needs for collated national data and develop the data items that will meet those needs.

Outcome

Industry has specified the national data that it needs to monitor risk management outcomes, and to identify measures for continuously improving safety.

Background

Currently, in line with statutory requirements, the rail industry collates and provides rail safety data to regulators. However, these safety data do not meet the wider risk management needs of industry. This project will specify national data which will meet industry needs (e.g. data for monitoring trends and benchmarking).

Consultation

The Australasian Railways Association will consult the industry over the value of existing (or proposed) nationally collected data items and identify data items that should be maintained, modified or discontinued, and any suggested new data items.

The outcomes of the consultation will be discussed with the Rail Safety Regulators Panel.

Responsibility

Australasian Railways Association.

Process

Any proposed changes will be considered by the Board of the Australasian Railways Association. If required, a report will be submitted to the Rail Safety Regulators Panel for its appropriate action.

Interdependencies

Actions 1.1, 1.2 (note – this project will identify specific national data required by the industry, whereas action 3.5 is about building the industry database), 2.1, 3.1, 3.3, and 3.5.

Strategic theme 2: Better data quality

Action 2.1 – Standardise requirements for reporting notifiable occurrences.

Outcome

Greater consistency and validity of reported data.

Background

Rail regulators and the Australasian Railways Association have identified that the statutory requirements for reporting notifiable occurrences need revising. Work has been undertaken on revising the classifications within ON-S1 to improve the administrative reporting system for top event data. To achieve greater consistency and validity, work is currently underway to simplify and unify the reporting requirements for notifiable occurrences (ON-S1 Part B).

Consultation

Relevant stakeholders including the Australasian Railways Association and the Data Strategy Reference Group.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel

Process

Develop proposal for standardised reporting and recording data, including:

- a) identifying regulator needs and classifications which meet these needs and are accepted by industry;
- b) standardising reporting at the jurisdictional level so as to be nationally consistent (Rail Safety Regulators Panel); and
- c) auditing consistency of implementation (Rail Safety Regulators Panel).

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel is to report on progress and provide an implementation timetable to an appropriate chief executive level group.

Interdependencies

Action 2.2.

Action 2.2 - Consider options for complementing top event reporting with chain of event reporting and contributing factors.

Outcome

An improved understanding and capture of the events leading to an incident and of causation to facilitate improved risk management, and a framework for reporting these events.

Background

Although top event reporting of rail safety data meets a number of purposes, it does not provide a basis for sufficient understanding of the sequence of events leading to the incident nor the underlying causes of incidents or trends in such causes. Work has been underway for some time on developing a framework for the capture of contributing factors (CFF). This is currently being tested by industry.

Consultation

Relevant stakeholders.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association.

Process

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel is to develop a project plan covering:

- integrating data collection structures for top event occurrence reporting (ON-S1), contributing factors reporting and chain of events reporting;
- identification of incidents that should be subject to chain of event/causation factors reporting;
- establishment of common coding to facilitate identification of common factors, and chain of events; and
- processes to ensure that all required data is collected consistently and is readily accessible.

A project plan and progress report, including the implementation plan, will be considered by an appropriate chief executive level group.

Interdependencies

Actions 1.2, 2.1 and 2.3.

Action 2.3 – Revise the model Rail Safety Bill and regulations.**Outcome**

The Model Bill and regulations reflect any changes to data reporting requirements in a timely way and state and territory legislation are amended accordingly.

Background

Rail transport operators are statutorily required to report notifiable occurrences under the national model Rail Safety Bill. Any resulting changes from actions 2.1 and 2.2 to notifiable occurrences are likely to require amendments to the model Bill and regulations and hence to state and territory laws giving effect to them.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders and a formal public consultation opportunity as required under the National Transport Commission Act.

Responsibility

National Transport Commission.

Process

- Subject to timing of actions 2.1 and 2.2, National Transport Commission to develop (with appropriate consultation) any required amendments to the model Rail Safety Bill and regulations.
- National Transport Commission to follow its statutory process for development, culminating in amendments being sent to ATC for a statutory vote.

Interdependencies

Action 2.1 and 2.2 – necessary to complete these actions before undertaking 2.3.

Strategic theme 3: Better consistency and comparability.**Action 3.1 – Develop uniform definitions or ‘data dictionary’.****Outcome**

Standard data definitions that are used by industry and government.

Background

Currently, there are no standard definitions for rail safety data across industry and governments. Therefore, the development of standard definitions of data terms used by all rail transport operators and government agencies will improve the consistency, comparability and hence the utility of rail safety data. This work will require statistical expertise.

Consultation

Relevant stakeholders.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association.

Process

- The Rail Safety Regulators Panel to review current practices and identify requirements to bridge gaps identified in the review.
- Progress report to an appropriate chief executive level group.
- Develop the data dictionary, with expert statistical support, to contain uniform definitions that where possible and appropriate are consistent with non-rail equivalents and international rail practice.
- The data dictionary will be considered by an appropriate chief executive level group.

Interdependencies

Actions 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2.

Action 3.2 – Revise normalisers for national rail safety data.**Outcome**

Better normalisers for national rail safety data.

Background

Suitable normalisers for national rail safety data are essential. ON-S2 requires updating so that there are better normalisers and gaps are filled.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Australian Transport Safety Bureau.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association.

Process

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association will:

- Identify the capacity and skills needed to undertake the statistical work and secure necessary assistance.
- Complete review of ON-S2 with revised and new normalisers, in consultation with industry, ensuring any work being undertaken in this field by the Cooperative Research Centre for Rail Innovation is incorporated.
- Report to an appropriate chief executive level group for consideration.

Interdependencies

Actions 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1.

Action 3.3 – Develop standardised educational requirements for classifying, recording and reporting rail safety data.

Outcome

Standard education packages for data classification, recording and reporting of rail safety data are developed, maintained and delivered to relevant government and industry parties.

Background

How rail safety data are classified, recorded and reported affects data quality. Accordingly, a standard approach for educating those persons who have such responsibilities will help to improve data quality.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including the rail industry and rail unions.

Responsibility

Rail Safety Regulators Panel and the Australasian Railways Association.

Process

- Work has commenced and a proposed program is being developed by regulators and industry. Although this will only cover the revised ON-S1 requirements, it will provide a framework when further data sets are established.
- Rail Safety Regulators Panel to prepare draft package for ON-S1 data collection.
- Rail Safety Regulators Panel to finalise overall framework and institutional arrangements, including the relationship with existing education or training programs, in consultation with stakeholders.
- Rail Safety Regulators Panel will be responsible for updating the education packages in consultation with the Australasian Railways Association and other relevant stakeholders.
- Progress reports to an appropriate chief executive level group and final proposal to ATC.

Interdependencies

Other existing education requirements that apply to rail safety workers.

Action 3.4 – Improve rail safety data reporting for industry.**Outcome**

To continuously improve the reporting culture in industry.

Background

The culture within the businesses of the rail transport operators collecting information affects data quality, for example, after a major rail level crossing accident, it is common for train drivers to report near misses more frequently over the subsequent months. Attention must be given to continuous improvement of the reporting culture in rail to optimise data quality. The role of rail unions to influence the outcomes of this work positively should be recognised.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including the Rail Safety Regulators Panel and rail unions.

In consultation with relevant stakeholders, industry will regularly assess improvements to the reporting culture in industry and provide reports on progress.

Responsibility

Australasian Railways Association.

Process

The Australasian Railways Association will develop education and awareness programs to address reporting culture inadequacies identified through audit. The scope and application of the audit will be discussed with relevant stakeholders prior to commencement. The process will include:

- completing a benchmark audit of the current reporting culture in industry;
- developing a scoping document taking into account the findings of the audit; and
- developing an industry wide education program in consultation with stakeholders.

Accredited rail transport operators will progressively implement education and awareness program, including periodic audits to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Interdependencies

Actions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 3.3.

Action 3.5 – Better rail safety data for industry.**Outcome**

A proposal for establishing a national rail safety database or industry safety risk model (or both) to be established and maintained by the rail industry, with appropriate access for other stakeholders.

Background

High level data collected across jurisdictions are of limited operational use to industry. On the other hand, detailed precursor safety data could be an important dataset for comparing trends and benchmarking safety performance for individual rail transport operators. This information is commercially sensitive and not currently collated. An industry database could contain data of greater value to industry participants and potentially become the national database generally.

Consultation

Consultation with relevant stakeholders including rail unions.

The Australasian Railways Association will work with the industry in developing the proposal.

The Rail Safety Regulators Panel will be consulted.

Responsibility

Australasian Railways Association.

Process

The Australasian Railways Association will investigate options in relation to responsibility for a national industry rail safety database containing such information and/or a safety risk model. This will include a cost benefit analysis of the options and their suitability in the Australian rail environment.

Progress reports on the database proposal will be made to an appropriate chief executive level group.

Interdependencies

Actions 1.1 – 3.4.