



Proposed amendment to RSNL National Regulations

August 2024



Reforming the RSNL National Regulations to include interoperability requirements

The NTC is delivering the National Rail Action Plan to advance interoperability across Australia's rail system. This significant program of national rail reform is a priority for all Australian governments and National Cabinet.

Australia's rail system is currently made up of 18 separate rail networks, 11 different signalling systems, and countless different rules. This impacts rail's ability to move people and goods seamlessly across the country.

With \$155 billion being spent modernising rail networks over the next 15 years, governments and industry have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to advance interoperability so that rail can play a bigger role in meeting the needs of our growing cities, regions and ports.

Until now, rail transport operators have not needed to consider the national interoperability impacts of their individual network decisions.

The Rail Safety National Law (RSNL) review indicated that overarching interoperability provisions should be included in the law, which will be considered in the longer term as part of a broader legislative reform process.

As a first step, Ministers have asked the NTC to develop a requirement for rail transport operators to have an Interoperability Management Plan as a regulatory requirement in the RSNL National Regulations.

What is proposed?

It is proposed that rail transport operators be required to consider national interoperability when planning changes to their railway operations. This means they would need to consider not just interactions with their neighbouring (interfacing) rail transport operator, but also with other rail transport operators with railway operations on the 'National Network for Interoperability' (NNI).

The proposed change would result in the requirement for one extra element in a rail transport operator's Safety Management System (SMS) to require:

- the identification and consideration of interoperability when planning or implementing changes to an operator's railway operations
- a documented interoperability management plan which records the identified interoperability matters and includes a requirement for such matters to be considered before making any changes to the operator's railway operations.

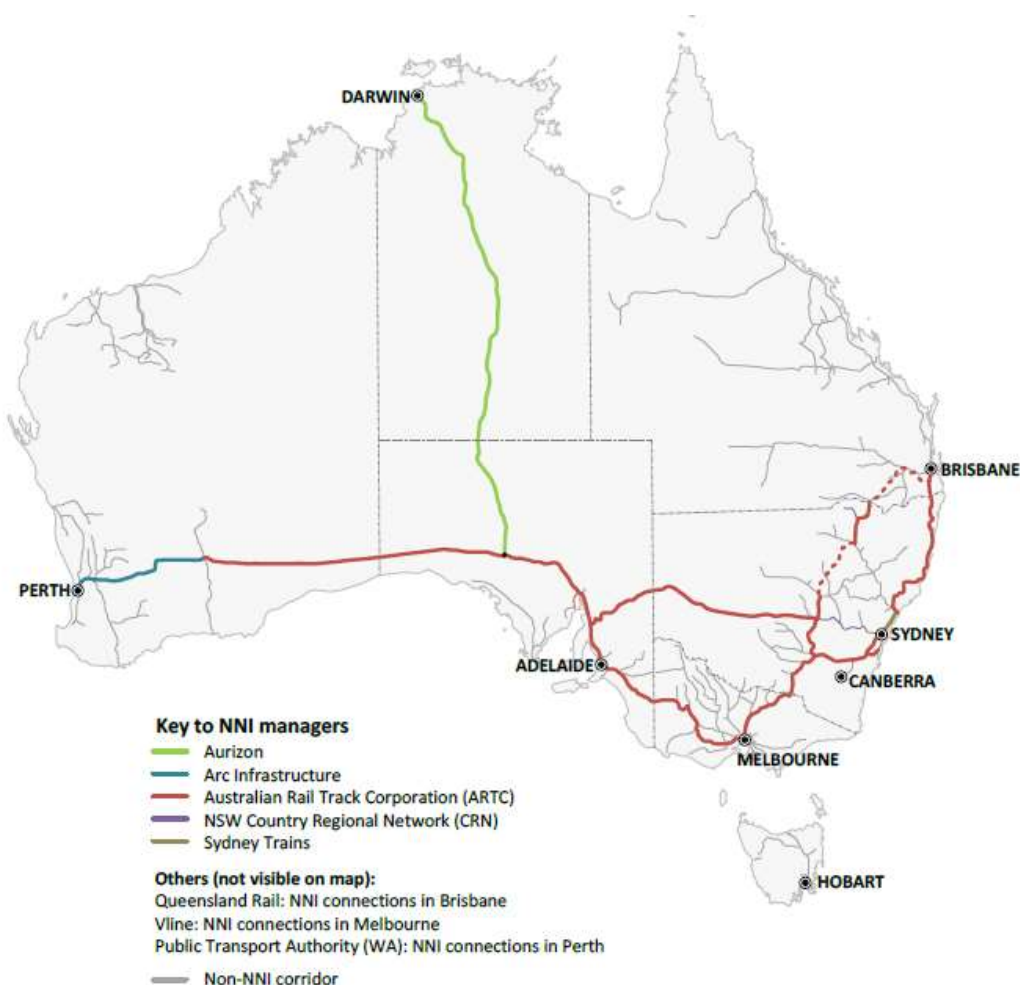
Who will it impact?

The proposed requirement would apply to rail transport operators with railway operations on the NNI. See the below NNI map for reference. This would not apply to all rail transport operators, but to those who interact to provide network to network and port to port connectivity across the country.

These rail transport operators would have one extra element to include in their SMS. This aligns with the intent of the RSNL to support safety.



National Network for Interoperability (NNI)



What would need to be considered in an Interoperability Management Plan?

An interoperability management plan will need to encompass changes to railway operations which might impact other parts of the NNI.

Implementation of the proposed requirement will be supported by guidance material for industry. This will include interoperability considerations, as well as consultation, timing and process requirements. RISSB has a suite of products relating to interoperability, which will inform development of this guidance material.

NTC will engage with ONRSR and RISSB, as well as industry, in developing the guidance material to ensure a best practice outcome.

When would the requirement commence?

Following consultation feedback and analysis, the NTC will seek ITMM approval for the draft amendment regulation. A date for implementation will be finalised once appropriate supporting material has been developed and relevant South Australian Government processes (as the host jurisdiction) have been completed. The intent is that industry will be given sufficient notification prior to commencement.



Submitting feedback

The NTC seeks your feedback on the draft amendment regulation by 5:00pm AEST Friday 4 October 2024.

In your response, you are asked to respond to the following:

1. Does the draft regulation amendment reflect the policy intent to require rail transport operators to consider interoperability when planning changes to their railway operations?
2. Do you have any other feedback on the draft amendment?
3. Do you have any suggestions for what the guidance material should (or should not) include?

Please submit your feedback via email to NRAP-Secretariat@ntc.gov.au

If you have any questions or need clarification, please contact Melissa Radke, Head of National Rail Standards Reform, mradke@ntc.gov.au

