

# Memorandum of Cooperation

Memorandum of Cooperation to support National Rail System Interoperability for future major rail investments between infrastructure and Transport Ministers, rail infrastructure manufacturers and managers and rail operators.

COMMONWEALTH  
GOVERNMENT



STATE GOVERNMENT



TRANSPORT  
MANUFACTURERS,  
MANAGERS AND  
RAIL OPERATORS





# **Memorandum of Cooperation for Interoperability**

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Memorandum of Cooperation to support

## **National Rail System Interoperability for future major rail investments**

Between Infrastructure and Transport Ministers, Australian Rail Investors,  
Owners, Network Builders, Major Manufacturers, Rail Infrastructure  
Managers and Rail Operators.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Rail plays an important role in connecting people and freight across cities, regions and ports, but inefficiencies are holding it back.
- 1.2. Different rules, standards, systems, gauges and rollingstock stymie rail's capacity to operate as a seamless national network to lift Australia's productivity. With significant investment planned to modernise rail over the next decades, there is a generational opportunity to increase rail productivity by increasing interoperability of Australia's rail network.
- 1.3. To this end, Australia's Infrastructure and Transport Ministers agreed in February 2022 for the National Transport Commission to develop a National Rail Interoperability Framework to advance productivity and safety benefits from future rail investments.
- 1.4. This cannot be done by governments alone. It requires a partnership with the rail industry to address common concerns, including:
  - The inconsistency of safe working rules and standards across rail networks which makes it hard for crews and operators to work efficiently across networks
  - Ensuring new train control and signalling systems will work across networks
  - Rollingstock approval regimes that are unique to each network, impacting on productivity, innovation and cost
  - Inconsistency of requirements for train drivers and crew, creating barriers to the mobility of staff and increasing training costs
  - Inconsistent access regulation.
- 1.5. There is a need for more formal coordination and adoption of a national view and implementation of measures that will drive greater interoperability to advance safety and productivity across rail networks for the collective good.

## 2. Purpose of the Memorandum of Cooperation

- 2.1. Participants to this Memorandum of Cooperation share the long-term vision that passengers and freight will move seamlessly and safely between major cities and regions on a modern and productive national rail network.
- 2.2. This Memorandum of Cooperation provides an undertaking by participants, including Infrastructure and Transport Ministers; rail infrastructure owners, managers and builders; major rail manufacturers and passenger and freight rail operators to consider rail system interoperability ahead of future major rail investments.
- 2.3. This requires considering how different technical systems, rules and procedures can work smoothly together when moving across any stretch of the rail network. It also requires a national network view of interoperability and consideration of key interfaces, with a map of the network to be regularly updated by the Participants.

### **3. Interoperability Advisory Group**

- 3.1. Participants commit to collaborating in an Interoperability Advisory Group (IAG), a national forum established to advise senior government decision-makers on interoperability impacts and opportunities from planned projects, to advance safety, environmental and productivity outcomes of the national rail network.

### **4. Effect of this Memorandum of Cooperation**

- 4.1. The Participants acknowledge this Memorandum of Cooperation supports the principle of an interoperable rail network but does not mandate financial, legal or any other type of obligation. Financial decisions, funding, and implementation solutions remain the responsibility of relevant jurisdictions and investors.
- 4.2. The Participants may agree to vary any requirements of this Memorandum of Cooperation.
- 4.3. Unless otherwise agreed by the Participants, this Memorandum of Cooperation will be reviewed every three (3) years.