

Engagement and Education Strategy

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1 Purpose

The Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) is committed to maintaining strong and collaborative relationships with stakeholders and driving ongoing and positive engagement with the rail industry to support our vision of Safe Railways for Australia.

The purpose of the ONRSR Engagement and Education Strategy is to:

- > Articulate how ONRSR executes its engagement functions under the *Rail Safety National Law* (RSNL)
- > Outline the strategic directions and principles which guide our approach
- > Provide an overview of the mechanisms ONRSR uses to engage with its stakeholders.

2 Scope

Engagement is a broad term which includes a range of activities including industry communication through various channels (including websites and newsletters), interaction with stakeholders via forums and other events, and specific consultation processes to gather feedback on policy changes and other reforms.

Education about the requirements for rail transport operators and duty holders under the RSNL is a primary focus of ONRSR's engagement, alongside the sharing of information to support safety improvement across the rail industry. It is this area – directed to industry sectors or whole-of-industry level – that is the focus of this strategy.

Operator-specific educational activities delivered by ONRSR's rail safety officers have the same objectives – securing compliance and improving safety – but are not covered in detail in this strategy.

All four of ONRSR's key functions – Administer, Educate, Monitor, and Enforce – and how they are delivered is outlined in The ONRSR Way (see onrsr.com.au).

3 Legislative context and strategic directions

3.1 Functions under the RSNL

The RSNL sets out ONRSR's functions as being:

- > To administer, audit and review the accreditation regime under the RSNL
- > To work with rail transport operators, rail safety workers, and others involved in railway operations, to improve rail safety nationally
- > To conduct research and collect and publish information relating to rail safety
- > To provide, or facilitate the provision of, advice, education and training in relation to rail safety
- > To monitor, investigate and enforce compliance with the RSNL
- > To engage in, promote and coordinate the sharing of information to achieve the objectives of the RSNL, including the sharing of information with prescribed authorities (such as the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board).

This strategy focuses on the highlighted functions above.

Education is a core part of ONRSR's active engagement with rail transport operators and stakeholders which aims to:

- > inform decision making
- > identify risks and emerging issues impacting safety
- > better understand industry needs
- > build stronger relationships.

ONRSR's education function is delivered at individual operator, industry sector and whole-of-industry levels and is primarily directed towards:

- > increasing understanding of the legal requirements and the expectations ONRSR has on operators for demonstrating compliance with these requirements
- > raising industry awareness and exposure to information regarding safety issues that exist or are emerging within the rail industry that operators should be aware of
- > sharing examples of good practice and encouraging continual improvement of safety management systems.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities

Staff across ONRSR are involved in engaging with a variety of rail stakeholders and delivering education on compliance with the RSNL. There are specific roles and responsibilities for Rail Safety Officers and the Stakeholder Engagement and Influence team which are outlined below.

Rail Safety Officers

Rail safety officers use an educational approach as part of their regulatory interactions with individual rail transport operators as an option for securing compliance and improving safety. Situations where an educational approach is appropriate include:

- > where a rail transport operator demonstrates a lack of awareness about, or misinterpretation of the RSNL or the particulars of their accreditation, where the breach is minor in nature and the operator demonstrates a willingness to take measures to make improvements.
- > where it is observed an operator is demonstrating a poor understanding of the requirements of the RSNL or has experienced a turnover of staff that creates gaps in their knowledge of what is required.

Rail safety officers deliver education through ad hoc advice in phone calls, emails and meetings as well as education-focused site visits.

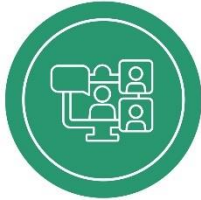
Stakeholder Engagement and Influence Team

The Stakeholder Engagement and Influence team is responsible for:

- > developing and implementing the Engagement and Education Strategy and annual program
- > developing educational resources including Safety Messages, Safety Alerts, case studies and animations
- > arranging engagement and consultation activities including ONRSR's stakeholder forums
- > managing ONRSR's public-facing communication channels
- > evaluating the effectiveness of ONRSR's engagement and education activities.

3.3 Strategic Directions 2024-2027

This strategy supports delivery of the following two strategic priorities in ONRSR's Strategic Directions 2024-2027:



CULTIVATE STRONG AND COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS.

Focus Areas

Engage industry:

Seek input and share relevant information for specific safety outcomes.

Collaborate nationally:

Identify key stakeholders for collaboration on important safety issues.

Influence policy direction:

Enhance relationships with industry associations, unions and Governments.

Outcomes

The rail industry and key stakeholders value ONRSR's engagement.



INFLUENCE SAFETY PRACTICES AND BUILD SAFETY KNOWLEDGE AMONG RAIL TRANSPORT OPERATORS.

Focus Areas

Amplify influence channels:

Ensure the right messages reach the right audiences, maximising our influence on safety practice.

Motivate industry action:

Share trends, patterns and research relevant to the safety challenges faced by RTOs.

Influence safety performance:

Share safety lessons, case studies and better practices to influence improved safety management.

Outcomes

Industry and stakeholders view ONRSR as a leader of safety improvement.

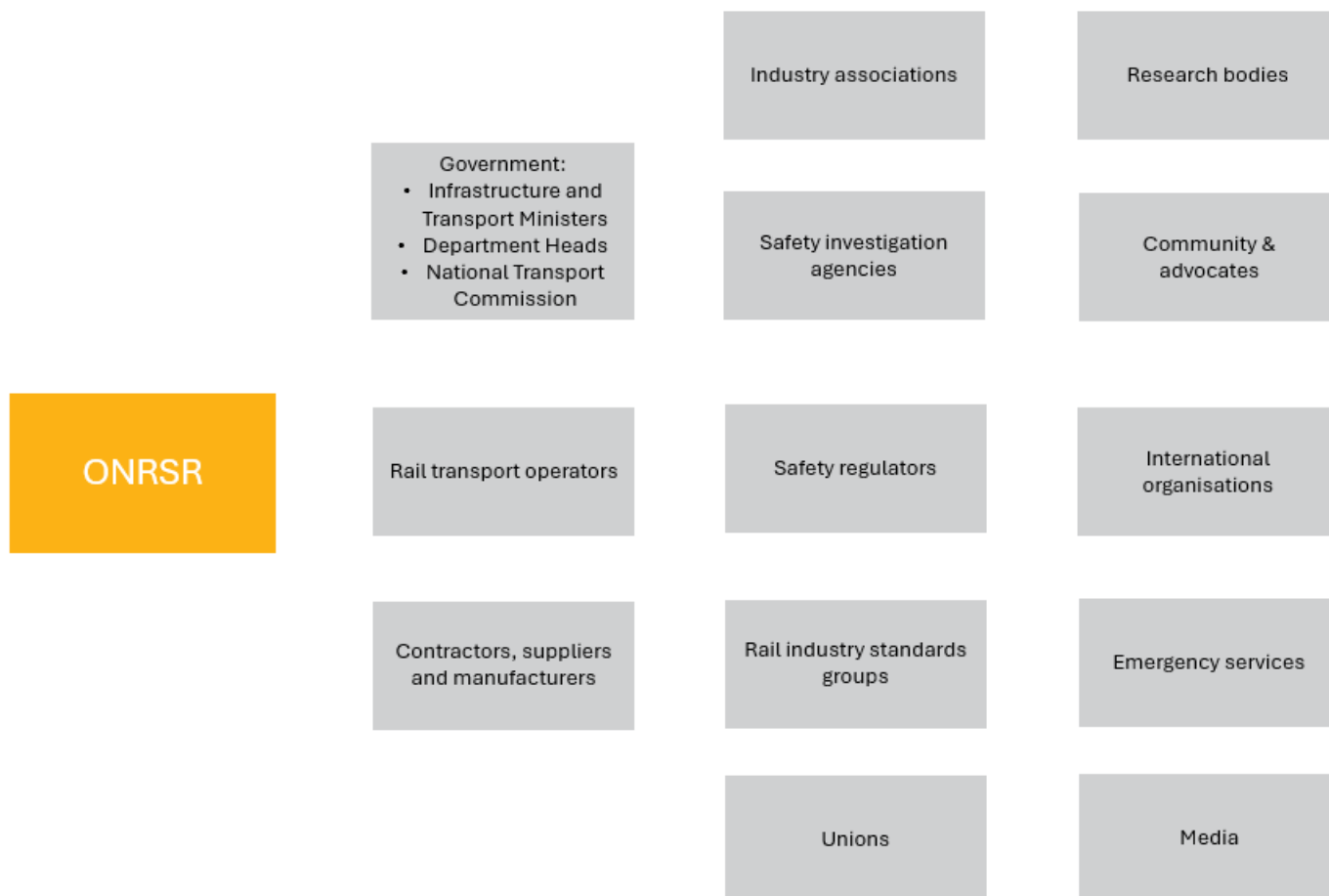
4 Principles

In conjunction with ONRSR's organisational values (Integrity, Respect, Independence, Diligence, and Excellence), we apply the following principles in delivering our engagement function:

- > *Transparent* – we are open about the way we conduct our functions, including our engagement process, and our stakeholders' roles and how their input will inform our work
- > *Timely* – we will communicate regularly and engage early
- > *Responsive* – we will respond to feedback and communicate to 'close the loop'.

5 ONRSR stakeholders

ONRSR interacts with a range of external stakeholders within and outside the rail industry as outlined in the diagram below.



6 Our approach

ONRSR engages in different ways depending on the objective of the activity and the stakeholders involved.

6.1 Open communication channels

ONRSR maintains a website and social media channels which enable all stakeholders access to a range of resources and information, along with regular news and information releases including insights from data analysis and compliance activity. Specific products include:

- > guidance material to assist operators to understand what is required to comply with the RSNL
- > the annual Rail Safety Report including safety performance data and information on rail safety issues
- > Safety Messages and Safety Alerts
- > monthly Engauge e-newsletter

- > animations featuring incident recreations and lessons learned on managing different safety risks
- > webinars on specific topics
- > web-based dashboards providing quarterly updates on key occurrences and trends.

The ONRSR Contact@ email enables any stakeholder – including members of the public – to seek information from ONRSR or provide feedback.

6.2 Stakeholder forums

ONRSR has established a framework of ongoing forums to provide a platform for stakeholders to hear about issues of relevance to local operators as well as national updates, and to engage with ONRSR staff and each other. This framework comprises:

- > Annual state-based Engagement Forums for safety and operational managers from commercial rail transport operators
- > Annual state-based tourist and heritage forums
- > Twice-yearly Chief Executive's Forum
- > Senior Government Policy Group.

In addition, ONRSR participates in established forums hosted by other organisations including:

- > Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board (RISSB) Safety Managers' Group
- > Australasian Railway Association (ARA) Safety Policy Committee
- > Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia
- > National and state-based level crossing committees.

6.3 Memoranda of Understanding

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) support ONRSR's work with other agencies by recognising the roles of parties and facilitating coordination to improve regulatory efficiency and effectiveness.

ONRSR has MoUs in place with international regulators, workplace safety authorities, police, dangerous goods regulators, technical regulators, safety investigators and other national bodies. Details of these MoUs are published on the ONRSR website.

6.4 Consultation

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach and ONRSR will make decisions based on its principles, as well as the nature of the subject matter and its impact on stakeholders.

The globally recognised International Association of Public Participation (iap2) spectrum¹ provides a useful framework for categorising the different engagement methods ONRSR uses and the purpose they each serve (see table on the next page).

¹ iap2 public participation spectrum – iap2.org.au/resources/spectrum

	Nature of change/issue	Example	Engagement methods (not exhaustive)
Inform <i>We will provide timely and targeted information about minor changes alongside insights to assist operators to improve safety</i>	Minor impact	Minor administrative updates	> Monthly <i>Engauge</i> newsletter > Emails > Safety Messages > Website content > Fact sheets > Social media - LinkedIn > Event presentations
Consult <i>We will invite stakeholder feedback on changes and proposals that impact them</i>	Single issue Low impact Low level of complexity	Review of guidelines or policy	> Engaugement and Chief Executive's Forums > Surveys > Event presentations > Website content > Fact sheets
Involve <i>We will work directly with stakeholders through a targeted approach on a significant issue or change</i>	Multiple issues in a specific sector Medium level of complexity Moderate impact on stakeholders	Development of regulatory policy	> Online submissions > Discussion papers > Dedicated sessions (eg. webinars and workshops)
Collaborate <i>We will partner with stakeholders to develop alternatives and identify a preferred solution</i>	Multiple issues Medium level of complexity Moderate or high impact on stakeholders Multiple options for a solution	Legislative changes or reforms	> Open or targeted consultation process using various tools to enable participation, including website content, fact sheets and dedicated workshops
Empower <i>We will empower stakeholders to take action</i>	Potential high impact High level of industry interest Multiple options for a solution	An identified, sector-wide safety risk that requires a multi-faceted approach to treatment	> Provision of advice, data and expertise to support and enable specific initiatives developed by industry to be delivered or shared

7 Evaluation

ONRSR is committed to evaluating the effectiveness of our engagement activities and overall performance to identify and implement improvements. We use a mix of formal and informal mechanisms and sources to gather stakeholder feedback, including:

- > Independent periodic stakeholder survey
- > Surveys of participants in ONRSR events
- > Feedback from attendees at ONRSR forums
- > Ad hoc stakeholder research as part of the strategic business planning
- > Feedback from individual stakeholder interactions
- > Social media channel commentary
- > Sentiment in media coverage
- > Submissions through the ONRSR Contact@ email.