

National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy

2017-
2020



Strategic objective:
to reduce the likelihood
of incidents and near
misses at Australian
railway level crossings



1 INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The aim of this document is to guide national coordination and practice on level crossing safety across jurisdictions.

This document provides an overview of the purpose and background to the strategy and details the key focus areas, actions, outcomes and measurement tools that will ultimately guide the work of the National Level Crossing Safety Committee (NLCSC). This document replaces the National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2010-2020 developed by the Australian Transport Council (ATC) and builds upon the outcomes achieved through that Strategy, taking a strategic focus to deliver substantial outcomes over the next three years.

The NLCSC objective is to provide national leadership and direction for the National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2017-2020.

PURPOSE

Most jurisdictions have a level crossing safety strategy and there are a range of technologies, trials, interventions, awareness campaigns and innovations being undertaken or considered across Australia. A national strategy, overseen by the NLCSC, will provide a source of coordination and guidance across jurisdictions as well as acting as a vehicle via which promising solutions can be progressed on a national scale.

This National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2017-2020 outlines the high-level strategic direction to significantly improve safety at railway level crossings through a nationally coordinated approach. Through its links to the Transport and Infrastructure Senior Officials' Committee (TISOC) it is also intended that the NLCSC will be able to drive national policy reform where applicable.

BACKGROUND

Level crossing collisions between heavy vehicles and fully loaded passenger trains represent the potential for the greatest loss of life and cause of serious trauma from a transport related incident. Such crashes also have a significant social and economic impact.

Although the fatality rate is trending downwards, there are hundreds of near misses between pedestrians and vehicles with trains at level crossings every year. Although low frequency, collisions can be very high consequence and hence must continue to be actively addressed.

Level crossing safety is a high safety priority for the rail industry, governments and the community and hence government and industry have re-established the NLCSC to drive a national approach, share knowledge and experience and coordinate efforts.

NATIONAL RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSING SAFETY STRATEGY

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

To reduce the likelihood of incidents and near misses at Australian railway level crossings.

PRINCIPLES

To successfully achieve the strategic objective of the National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy the following principles will be adopted:

- Safe systems approach.
- Shared responsibility using a cooperative approach.
- Engagement with rail industry, government, road and rail stakeholders and the community.
- Evidence based approach.
- Using existing information and building on research, trials and international developments.

IDENTIFIED OPPORTUNITIES

The NLCSC has identified a number of opportunities for a national approach to level crossing safety, including:

- Recognition of human factors and influences on road user behaviours that contribute to level crossing incidents.
- Improved data relating to railway level crossings.
- Recognition of the complex ownership, responsibilities and management of railway level crossings thereby requiring stronger relationships between all levels of government, the road and rail industry, road and rail users and the community.
- Improved community understanding of the risks and importance of compliance.
- Harnessing the potential of rapidly emerging technologies applicable to railway level crossings.

OVERVIEW

The following table is a summary of the key areas of focus, action, outcomes and measurement tools that will inform the NLCSC. An Action Plan has been developed to govern the activities of the Committee.

APPROACH

The National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy will be driven by the NLCSC. The Committee is nationally oriented and comprises senior representatives from Government, Rail Industry and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. The Committee will drive this strategy and implement the actions outlined in the accompanying Action Plan.

AREAS OF FOCUS

The NLCSS focuses on six key streams or focus areas:

1. Safe systems
2. National coordination
3. National approach to risk assessment
4. Technology and innovation
5. Education and enforcement
6. Data improvement and knowledge management

The table below identifies the key actions in each focus area, the outcomes linked to each action and how progress will be measured.

Area Of Focus	What Are We Going To Do?	What Will We Achieve?	How Will We Measure Progress?
Safe systems	To adapt and apply, in a railway level crossing context, internationally recognised road safety practices based on a safe systems approach.	A system that recognises human fallibility and limits to tolerance of forces on the human body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New policies incorporate a safe systems approach. • Benchmark against international best practice.
National coordination	To achieve more consistent and coordinated arrangements across jurisdictions including sharing of good practice and to identify opportunities to work together to achieve common aims and goals.	More consistent practices across jurisdictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent of inconsistent practices. • Identification of opportunities for coordination of activities.
National approach to risk management	Through ALCAM understand and effectively manage risk at railway level crossings to evaluate, prioritise and inform the development of investment strategies. Engagement with ALCAM Steering Committee to measure risk at level crossings.	Well understood and effectively managed levels of risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment decisions supported by risk assessment management tools.
Technology and innovation	To maintain a register of technological solutions and emerging innovations across Australia and overseas being trialled or utilised by operators, track owners and governments. Capture learnings from trials or implementation of level crossing solutions. Engagement with Australian Centre for Rail Innovation (ACRI) for research and the Rail Manufacturing CRC to develop scholarships.	Effective emerging technologies monitored and where applicable adopted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of an up-to-date register of technologies and innovative trials. • Evidence that new technologies have been adopted. • Investment in research and development.
Education and enforcement	To coordinate communication campaigns and share creative materials so as to generate awareness of level crossings and establish understanding of the required behaviour by road users and pedestrians at level crossings. Improve compliance with level crossing controls through ongoing enforcement. Support of TrackSAFE Education and other level crossing safety education programs.	Improved compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of material and campaigns shared. • Increase in level of awareness by community. • Increase in the level of compliance • Take-up of TrackSAFE Education curriculum resources in primary and secondary schools.
Data improvement and knowledge management	To capture incident data at level crossings in a nationally consistent manner that enables better analysis and understanding of the characteristics surrounding incidents. Engagement with the Rail Industry Safety Standards Board (RISSB) and ONRSR regarding national level crossing incident data.	Information to support decision making is accessible, current and shared. National standards are adopted for investigating and recording data related to rail crossing incidents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data gaps in understanding risks and human fallibility are identified and reduced. • Benchmark against international best practice.

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS

MEASUREMENT

MEASURING POLICY EFFECTIVENESS

To achieve the Strategic Objective, an Action Plan drawing on the Principles outlined in this Strategy has been developed. It will be updated annually and reported against at NLCSC meetings, including:

- Outlining progress against the Action Plan and other successes.
- Communicating relevant performance measures based on work done and the latest available railway level crossing safety data.
- Outlining the direction and aspirations.

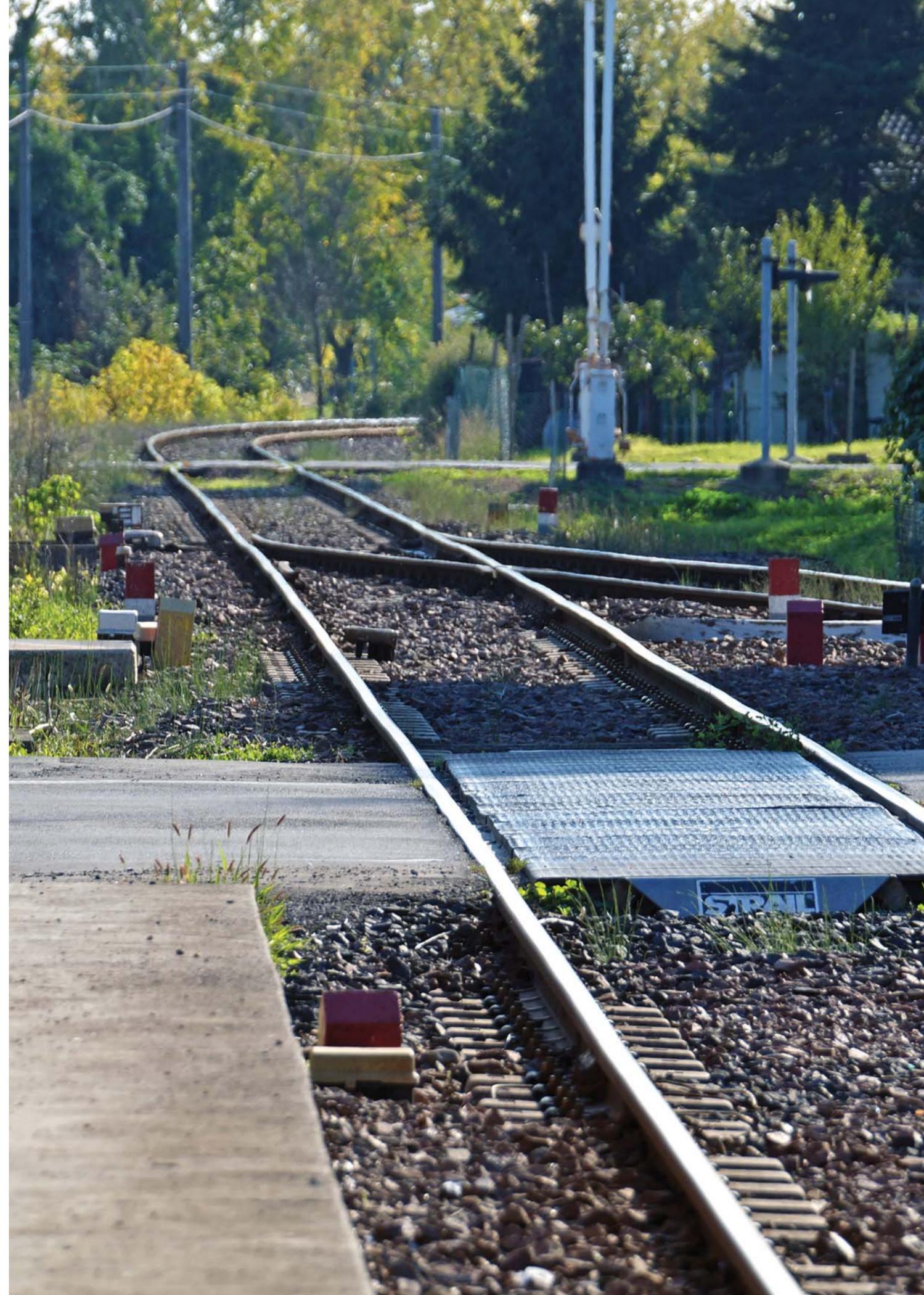
To gauge the effectiveness of this Strategy, a number of specific measures have been identified and are outlined in the table on page 3.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT – ROLE OF THE NLCSC

An important element in ensuring the success of this Strategy will be the identification of, and strong engagement with, all stakeholders who have an interest in achieving the objective. Given the large number of participants involved it is vital to bring together users, all levels of government, rail operators, owners and managers, and the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. The NLCSC will fulfil this role. Ongoing investment by all parties is essential.

REFERENCES

ATC National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy 2010-2020



The National Railway Level Crossing Safety Strategy (2017-2020) has been developed by the National Level Crossing Safety Committee.

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