

TrackSAFE e-NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2014



TrackSAFE is a not-for-profit, rail industry initiative endeavouring to reduce incidents on the rail network. In doing so the aim is to minimise trauma caused to rail employees resulting from witnessing near collisions, injuries, and fatalities whilst simply doing their jobs.

RAIL SAFETY WEEK DATES ANNOUNCED – MARK IT IN YOUR DIARY!

Mark this date in your diaries people – 11-17 August 2014.

Rail Safety Week will once again take place in August this year seeing operators across Australia and New Zealand come together to promote safety around railway lines to local communities and the general public.

The Rail Safety Week Committee will be meeting later in March to discuss potential activities and the theme for this year.

For the latest updates follow us on Twitter @TrackSAFE or on Facebook.

UPGRADE TO VICTORIA'S 'TOP TEN WORST' CROSSING APPLAUDED

The Victorian government has been on a whirlwind path of late to address the issue of level crossing safety through its *Fix Country Crossing Program*.

As part of the program, the Napthine Government declared that it would upgrade a total of 50 level crossings that were deemed in need of attention.

TrackSAFE has welcomed the initiative and commended the Government when it reached its set target last month, by upgrading the Aerodrome Road level crossing in Avenel, Victoria.

This crossing is not only the 50th to receive the upgrade, but was also listed last year by train drivers as one of the top 10 worst level crossings in the State in a TrackSAFE initiative.

The infamous level crossing has had many near collisions and is one of most concern amongst train drivers. There are thousands of near collisions between vehicles and trains at level crossing every year and each one is just seconds' way from becoming a potential disaster.

In 2013 TrackSAFE went out to train drivers to ask them which level crossing they thought were the worst in each State, most level crossings made the list due to records of near collisions, heavy vehicle frequency and sighting distances.

For more view the 'top ten worst' list read the March media release here

www.tracksafefoundation.com.au/site/tracksafe-media-releases.

AUSTRALASIAN RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSING SAFETY FORUM

TrackSAFE and the ARA will run an Australasian Railway Level Crossing Safety Forum in Melbourne on 19-20 March 2014. The Forum will be hosted by both V/Line and Public Transport Victoria and will see up to 70 delegates from government, the rail industry, police, road user groups and research bodies come together to share knowledge on State and National programs and experiences in level crossing safety work. Particular focus will be given to education, enforcement and awareness, infrastructure, technology and research and how they can positively influence behaviour.

While the rail and heavy vehicle industry is moving toward national regulation, level crossing programs and level crossing risk mitigation remain something which is generally managed at the level of State jurisdictions or even individual rail organisations. Following the disbanding of the National Railway Level Crossing Group there is no longer a national level crossing strategy group and yet much of the research being undertaken and strategies being implemented overlap or still have relevance across these jurisdictions.

The aim of the Forum is to bring together key stakeholders and utilise workshops throughout the course of the two days to allow maximum information sharing to identify where programs complement and overlap and where a national approach to level safety can be utilised.

TrackSAFE TURKEY OF THE MONTH

The TrackSAFE Turkey of the Month goes to the Daily Advertiser in Wagga Wagga for publishing this article titled 'Kids trial eggs -ellent test', showing two young children frying an egg on a live railway line in a bid to demonstrate just how hot the weather was.

TrackSAFE felt it should respond to this article by writing to the editor of the newspaper, expressing our shock and disappointment. The letter was published a few weeks later in the publication.

SHOCKING EXAMPLE OF DISREGARD FOR RAIL SAFETY

Dear Editor,

I write concerning the article published in the Daily Advertiser on 18 January 2014 titled 'Kids trial eggs –ellent test' including a photo two children crouched on the railway track frying an egg. We are extremely alarmed that a photo of this nature was published. It is incredibly dangerous to access the rail corridor for obvious reasons, not to mention illegal.

There are around 30 fatalities every year on the Australian rail network resulting from reckless behaviour or failure to obey the rules. Additionally around 150 people die by suicide on rail every year. Further to these 180 fatalities are the thousands of near collisions that occur on the network.

TrackSAFE is a not-for-profit rail industry initiative that was established in 2012 to address these incidents and fatalities on the rail network and the impact on train drivers and other rail employees. One of our primary focuses is on education and awareness for children about the dangers of being on or around the tracks. 'Be on the Safe Side' was launched last year and national education initiative for primary school students. 'Be on the Safe Side' provides teachers with learning resources to teach engaging student-centred lessons within various Australian Curriculum Learning Areas (e.g. English) with a train and track safety focus.

We are not sure where this photo was taken or whether or not it was an active line, but regardless this photo is incredibly reckless and works against we are trying to achieve at TrackSAFE via education and awareness. We continue to reiterate the message that a train can arrive from any direction at any time, so to photograph children sitting on the track is absolutely shocking.

Sincerely,



*Bryan Nye
CEO Australasian Railway Association
TrackSAFE Director*

MEMBER PROFILE

Tasmanian freight rail company, TasRail, works hard to make safety central to operations for both staff and the wider community. From simple things like having a safety share at the start of all meetings, regular toolboxes and Take 5's, to talking safety and encouraging employees to be diligent in their reporting of incidents. The safety focus is not just for frontline staff on the track or in the cab. Safety initiatives such as screensavers with random safety messaging remind everyone that ALL jobs can be done safely.

Zero harm to the community is of equal importance to TasRail. Running a short haul freight service that traverses the State means that TasRail trains cross about 500 level crossings, both road and private. Educating the public – especially drivers, about the dangers of racing the train and high risk behaviours at level crossings are key concerns. To raise awareness, TasRail is an active participant in TrackSAFE's rail safety week. TasRail also use their social media

presence on Facebook and Twitter to encourage safety 'ambassadors' within the community. A new level crossing camera trial has proven to be a great success at capturing enough evidence for infringements to be issued – and hopefully will be a strong reinforcement of TasRail's safety message: 'Lose a Minute Not Your Life.'

'LIKE' US ON FACEBOOK

TrackSAFE is now on Facebook needs your support in spreading the word on important rail safety messages! Our Facebook updates will also keep you informed on the latest TrackSAFE initiatives and announcements and share news on what's happening throughout Australia and the globe to address incidents on rail and trauma to drivers.

Be on the Safe Side also now has its own page so 'Like' both of us today!

Follow TrackSAFE and Be on the Safe Side on Twitter - @TrackSAFE & @TrackSAFEed.

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To subscribe to the TrackSAFE newsletter please email your details to Melissa Harry at mharry@tracksafefoundation.com.au. To unsubscribe, please email 'UNSUBSCRIBE' to the same address.

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