

Terms of Reference - NSW Branch Operations Forum

Document Ownership/Enquiries

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Version History

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1. PURPOSE

The Branch Operations Forum has been established to provide the NSW Branch of the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) and representatives of the rail industry with the opportunity to exchange ideas and to discuss operational rail safety issues.

The forum:

- discusses compliance issues (at the broader industry level in NSW) to provide input to the ONRSR's regulatory strategies to improve safety in the industry
- reviews and provides input to safety improvement initiatives developed by the ONRSR
- provides a link with other rail industry consultative committees such as the ONRSR's CEO Industry Reference Group and the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board's (RISSB) Safety Managers Group.

The forum is not a decision making body. It does not consider individual operator/regulator issues or industrial matters.

2. MEMBERSHIP

Composition

The forum comprises a minimum of 16 members representing NSW rail transport operators, unions and the ONRSR (NSW Branch).

The forum comprises a minimum of:

- 3 rail infrastructure managers
- 2 large rail operators
- 2 medium-sized rail operators
- 1 heritage or isolated rail operator
- 2 maintainers or contractors.

It also consists of:

- 1 representative from the Rail, Tram and Bus Union
- 1 representative from the Australian Services Union
- 2 representatives from the ONRSR (NSW Branch):
 - NSW Branch Director (Chairperson)
 - Head of Safety Policy & Improvement.

Representatives of RISSB and the Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI), and the ONRSR Communications Branch, are observers on the forum.

Replacement and duration of membership

Membership of the forum is at the discretion of the ONRSR NSW Branch Director and will normally be for a term of two years. There is no maximum term for membership of the forum.

At the end of each two-year term the ONRSR will invite nominations from the NSW rail industry.

When a vacancy occurs before the end of the appointed term, a replacement may be appointed for the remainder of that term.

3. MODE OF OPERATION

Frequency and scheduling of meetings

The forum will meet three times per year, if possible one to two weeks after the CEO Industry Reference Group. A forward annual schedule of meetings will be agreed at the last meeting of each year.

Meetings will be limited to three hours.

Meeting agendas and papers

An agenda and any papers will be distributed prior to each forum meeting. A standard meeting agenda will be followed although any member can raise additional agenda items.

For major agenda items, and where appropriate, the Chairperson may arrange for the preparation of a briefing paper to be circulated with the notice of meeting and agenda.

Following the meeting, the minutes will be drafted and distributed to all members for comment normally within two weeks of the meeting. A summary of the minutes will be published on the ONRSR website once the minutes have been reviewed by forum members and approved by the Chairperson.

Decision making

The forum is not a decision making body and therefore does not have the power to direct the activities, policies or procedures of the ONRSR.

While the ONRSR will carefully consider any feedback from industry stakeholders, it will not be bound to any particular course of action by the forum's discussion.

Quorum

The quorum will be set at eight comprising a minimum of six industry representatives and two ONRSR representatives.

If a member is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, their nominated alternative representative should attend in their place. If neither is available an apology will be recorded for that meeting.

Conduct of members

The membership of the forum represents a range of views, sometimes potentially conflicting. Members are expected to participate in a constructive manner and consider the views of all parties when difference of opinion exists.

Confidentiality and privacy

On occasion those attending forum meetings will acquire information not generally available to persons outside of the ONRSR. This information may relate to the ONRSR or other organisations or individuals with whom the ONRSR has dealings.

Commercially valuable, political or financial information is a typical example. Such information is either the property of the ONRSR or has been provided on a confidential basis.

All relevant documents will be clearly marked as confidential and for the use of forum members only. It is improper to disclose such information to any other party without proper authorisation or to use the information for personal advantage.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson

- Chairs meetings in accordance with these guidelines
- Receives agenda items, arranges preparation and distribution of agenda, working papers and minutes
- Ensures as far as possible that agendas are followed and that meetings are conducted in an orderly manner
- Monitors and coordinates overall forum activities
- Facilitates, as far as is practicable, the forum meeting, its obligations and responsibilities as set out in these terms of reference
- Appoints a secretary to take minutes for the forum.

Members

- Attend forum meetings as per the agreed forum meeting schedule
- Arrange for a deputy to attend in their absence
- Work within the terms of reference to achieve the purpose of the forum
- Actively participate in forum discussions
- Recognise and fulfil their key role in representing the rail industry
- Inform and consult with the relevant sections of the industry on priority areas, strategies and solutions proposed by the forum
- Promote the role of the forum within industry
- Assist in the dissemination and promotion of improvement strategies to the rail industry.

Other invited participants

On occasion, with the permission of the Chairperson, the forum may invite relevant person/s to attend meetings. The role of these participants may include:

- Contributing to discussion of particular issues of which they have specific knowledge, skills, expertise or experience
- Promoting a better understanding of ONRSR activities and priorities
- Promoting links between the forum and other relevant industry or government agencies.