PRESS RELEASE

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COAG still Marking Time with Rail Reform

The rail industry is severely frustrated by the tardy rail safety reform agenda announced by the Council of Australian Governments after its meeting 1 May.

Mr Bryan Nye CEO of the Australasian Railway Association said: “After most States have failed to meet the nationally agreed target of 1 July 2007, COAG has failed to pressure the States to implement uniform national rail safety legislation.”

The COAG announcement of 1 May allows tardy jurisdictions to continue to drag the chain. With the original target being 1 July 2007 surely the tardy states have had long enough?

“Apart from Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales, jurisdictions failed to meet the deadline by a mile. Even then, neither Victoria, South Australia or New South Wales have fully aligned their legislation with the National Model Bill and Regulations.”

The good news is that COAG has shown great support for a National Rail Safety Regulator and Investigator with the commissioning of a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) by the NTC last year.

“Industry strongly supports NTC quickly finalising the RIS and moving to implement this very valuable nation-building reform to give effect to a national rail safety regulator” said Mr Nye.

“A national rail safety regulator will considerably enhance the regulation of rail across the nation by bringing improved consistency, effectiveness and efficiency of regulatory practice which will reduce the regulatory burden on rail.”

“I call on COAG to establish a transition process to set up the National Rail Safety Regulator as soon as possible. This must be decided at the next COAG for the good of the nation.” Mr Nye said.

The rail industry is committed to improving its effectiveness as a provider of efficient and environmentally effective transport of people and freight to meet Australia’s growing transport task. The sooner we get uniform rail safety legislation the sooner we can put more effort into expanding rail services.

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