



RTBU NSW

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October 6, 2016

Hunter Valley & Gunnedah Basin Coal News

Long Term Issues – Tunnels, Crib Breaks and Relief Points

After years of next to no progress on the above three matters, the RTBU recently wrote to all the major players ie;

- Pacific National
- Aurizon
- Freightliner
- ARTC
- Hunter Valley Coal Chain Coordinator
- Office Of National Rail Safety Regulation (ONSRR)

and requested all companies meet on 14th September in an attempt to address some of the long standing concerns around these issues.

Although the companies involved constantly promote their safety brands, when it comes to the difficult items it would seem few of them care. Aurizon and HVCCC failed to respond and Pacific National declined the invite stating they had a robust Safety Management System in place to deal with such matters. The regulators office apologised as they were unable to attend on the day however have agreed to meet and discuss the issues. ARTC and Freightliner attended, and all three items were discussed at length.

Tunnels

The RTBU raised the following issues;

- ARTC having three procedural documents that govern the Bylong Tunnel
- No standard for emergency rescue breathing apparatus (Operators using different equipment)
- ARTC Procedure requiring handbrakes to be applied in the Bylong tunnel when escaping from a failed train
- Pacific National having conflicting procedures and their intended changes to provision of SR90 units
- No clear recovery procedure
- ARTC having no procedure for any other tunnel

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Crib Breaks

The RTBU raised the following issues;

- Non scheduling of crib breaks into train plans / pathing
- All operators having differing procedures in relation to requesting crib breaks while on the network

Relief Points

The RTBU raised the following issues;

- Recent changes to relief points with no consultation with train crew from some operators
- Location of new relief points being unsuitable
- Quality of relief points.

ARTC being the network owner and the body that has the overall governance in relation to operations was clearly interested to hear our concerns. They indicated they would take away the information regarding tunnel operations and review current process. They indicated Crib breaks were not an area they had direct control over however if train crew contacted the network controller, Network controllers would work with the crew to facilitate if and when possible, however where individual operators have procedures in place they should be followed.

In relation to recent relief point location changes, it was revealed that this project is a joint project between all operators and was being led by Freightliner. The project is a trial and all feedback is welcome, particularly around any safety concern.

It was disappointing that not all operators participated however we appreciated ARTC and Freightliner hearing our concerns and committing to future meetings to progress the matters raised. The RTBU will continue to pursue all avenues available to address concerns. In the interim members are encouraged to continually raise your concerns with supervisors and managers and where your concern is in regards to a safety threat on the network, Submit a CAN form.

Further progress will be advised