

MEDIA RELEASE



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HORN NOISE SOLUTIONS MAKE HASTE WITH CAUTION

TasRail is continuing to respond to community concern over levels of train horn noise with a multifaceted approach to reduce the noise out on the network without compromising the community's safety.

CEO Damien White said today that he was strongly aware of the issues the community has raised and a globally recognised expert had been enlisted to expedite the solutions.

"We have engaged David Edwards from Australasian Transport Risk Solutions to find solutions that will take the stress out of the community, whilst at the same time at least maintain if not improve safety at the numerous crossings along the Western Line."

David Edwards has investigated major incidents in the rail sector for decades, as well as previously being a Regulator and a train driver.

"The tragic fatality last week underscores the need for continual vigilance when it comes to interface with the road and pedestrians" Mr White said.

"Undoubtedly there are much more satisfactory solutions available when one considers the volume of train movements and road rail interface in Tasmania that will meet both safety and community concerns.

"Quiet zones, which are residential areas where the horns are not blown, have been successfully introduced in other jurisdictions and we are actively exploring that option for TasRail along with changes to horn use at private crossings. If this is an acceptable option we will implement it as soon as practicable."

In his work in Australia, the UK and the US, Mr Edwards did note that the community had been instrumental in bringing the complaints, but also in driving behavioural change within their own regions.

"As long as trains continue to have near miss incidents with pedestrians and drivers that regularly disobey level crossing warning signs, there will be a need for a high level of vigilance from TasRail. The community has to sign on to work together to ensure that everyone supports safe behaviour around trains," Mr Edwards concluded.

CEO Damien White reiterated that TasRail was working very hard to resolve the community angst that the new horns had caused, however, changing the current safety regime at the pace the community is demanding is not easy.

"Let's not forget that Tasmania has 6 times the national average of level crossing incidents," Mr White said. "We adopted these standards for a reason and we need to be very sure that any change is based on a clear, risk and evidence based approach."

In parallel with the development of alternative horn-blowing regimes, TasRail are also developing alternative options for both shrouding and positioning of the horns.

Further risk workshops will be held at the end of next week and a further update will be provided at that time.

ENDS

For more information or comment:

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