

Media Release

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Aurizon urges communities to stop taking risks at rail crossings

Australia's largest rail-based transport business, Aurizon is urging motorists and pedestrians to be vigilant around rail crossings after a recent high volume of near-miss incidents across its national operations.

Aurizon's Head of Safety, Danny Harnedy said Aurizon operates approximately 160 coal and freight trains a day on its 2,700 kilometre coal rail network in Central Queensland and other rail networks across Australia.

"Our drivers work around the clock to carry more than 250 million tonnes of freight for customers each year. That means they are on the tracks day and night and can travel in either direction.

"In the past two months, our drivers have been exposed to twelve* near misses with vehicles in Queensland and Western Australia, one near miss with a pedestrian in Ipswich and two vehicles have collided with trains south of Townsville and in Gladstone.

"Just last week, south of Townsville, a vehicle towing a horse float collided with an Aurizon train at a level crossing. Our driver was traumatised by this incident and the driver of the vehicle also sustained injuries.

"In the near miss at Moura, the driver of the car recklessly drove around the flashing lights and boom gates and narrowly missed colliding with the train.

"While it's fortunate that no-one was severely injured in any of these incidents, people need to understand that there is a very real and emotional impact for our drivers and their families.

"We are urging people in all communities to stop taking risks with their lives and the lives of our drivers. If people continue to take risks, it's only a matter of time before the outcome is fatal.

"When our drivers see a vehicle or a person on the tracks, they are fully aware they can't immediately stop or swerve to miss. They know they can apply emergency brakes, but when a fully loaded train can take two kilometres to stop, the outcome can be devastating."

Mr Harnedy said Aurizon's commitment to safety extends to the people in the communities where the Company operates.

"Our message regarding rail crossing safety remains simple. Always approach rail crossings cautiously and stop, look, listen and think.

"Like road safety, rail safety is critically important and we encourage parents to teach their children from a young age about the dangers associated with rail level crossings.

"Aurizon's website contains important messages and videos about rail safety, which we encourage all families to watch," he said.

<https://www.aurizon.com.au/sustainability/rail-safety>

* Eleven of Aurizon train drivers' near misses with vehicles were in Queensland at Glen Geddes, Oakey, Dalby, Moura, Bloomsbury, Charters Towers, Landsborough, Cromarty and three in the Rockhampton region. There was also one near miss in Collie, Western Australia.

Footage and images available on request.

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