



ASSOCIATION OF TOURIST & HERITAGE RAIL AUSTRALIA

ABN 19 755 744 868

ATHRA ALERT #37 – December 2007 **NTC Survey of T&H Operators** **Implementing Rail Safety Worker Competency Requirements** **Through The Use Of Registered Training Organisations**

Tourist and heritage rail organisations throughout Australia, if not already, will shortly receive a National Transport Commission (NTC) survey via their state rail safety regulators office. The NTC survey aims to assess the impacts and potential costs of the implementation of competency provisions for rail safety workers that are contained in Section 68 of the national model Rail Safety Bill 2006 (Model Bill). Currently Section 68(3) states that only certification issued under the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF) (ie, by a Registered Training Organisation) will be accepted as evidence of a rail safety worker's competence.

ATHRA is opposed to the enforced use of RTOs as this will be very costly and potentially prohibitive for many tourist and heritage sector operators. The ATHRA position was reinforced as recently as 15th September 2007 when the following motion was adopted at the ATHRA General Meeting in Adelaide:

ATHRA strongly supports the use of competency based training and assessment without the compulsion to use an RTO.

NTC has consulted ATHRA regarding the content of this survey.

Key Messages:

The NTC survey is aimed at determining the potential cost of the impact of the Section 68 requirements. Only through accurately knowing the numbers of workers involved in the tourist and heritage sector and their skills can this impact be able to be estimated.

The outcome of this survey is vital in determining the potential impact of Section 68 on the overall sustainability of the tourist and heritage rail sector in Australia. All tourist and heritage rail organisations should participate in the NTC survey and answer the questions accurately and with the best information available to each group.

Recommended Actions:

- All tourist and heritage sector rail groups should participate in the NTC survey and use their best endeavours complete the survey by the due date of 1 February 2008.
- Any group unable to complete the survey by the nominated date should formally request NTC for an extension of time.
- Specific questions about the content of the survey should be directed to NTC.
- Any groups with views or concerns about the NTC survey are welcome to contact ATHRA so we are better able to collectively represent the position of the sector.