

Question on Notice

No. 23

Asked on 13 February 2024

MR R MOLHOEK ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON B MELLISH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the ATSB report ‘Level crossing collision between passenger train E820 and road vehicle’ dated 8 November 2023 which states ‘Queensland Rail has not been managing risk at level crossings in accordance with the requirements of its level crossing safety standard’—

Will the Minister advise (as of today's date) (a) how many level crossings requiring assessment every five years there are on the Queensland rail network, (b) how many of these have been inspected within the last five years and (c) how many qualified assessors does Queensland Rail currently have to undertake the assessments?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Southport for the question.

There are 1176 public level crossings on the Queensland Rail network that require regular inspection and assessment at designated intervals in accordance with Queensland Rail's safety standards.

Queensland Rail level crossings are inspected every seven days to ensure the crossing is safe for rail traffic, primary controls are operating, and the road conditions are safe. Track inspections are also conducted annually for each level crossing, also to ensure that the crossing is safe for rail traffic, primary controls are operating, and the road conditions are safe.

Further, for active control crossings (those level crossings that have flashing lights and boom arms), additional inspections on signalling components are undertaken monthly to assure the protection is operating to design.

Queensland Rail has advised there are almost 250 track workers, track inspectors and maintenance workers across the SEQ and Regional network qualified to undertake the weekly, monthly and annual inspections. All the weekly, monthly and annual safety and maintenance inspections are up to date.

Five-yearly assessments differ from the safety inspections. These are undertaken to identify changes to environment, such as traffic types and volume, and inform whether a detailed Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM) assessment is required.

As identified in the ATSB Report, five-yearly assessments have not historically occurred. Despite this, 109 detailed ALCAM assessments have been updated since the Kianawah Road level crossing occurrence in 2021, and programs have been put into action to ensure data is up to date, including:

- working with respective road authorities in accordance with the Interface Agreement to review level crossing data and controls (an Interface Agreement is a written agreement in place between Queensland Rail and the relevant road authority to manage the risks to safety, under Rail Safety National Law)

- collection and review of road and rail traffic data, population data, historical accidents, changes in demographics or topography or other situations deemed relevant by the assessor.

Queensland Rail will have the requirements of the five-yearly assessment updated later this year. This information will be used to prioritise if an updated ALCAM is required.

Further, Queensland Rail's level crossing safety standards are currently being reviewed and updated to ensure they are in line with operational requirements and meet all safety and compliance obligations.

Safety at railway level crossings is an important issue for road users, road managers, communities, Queensland Rail and its customers. On Queensland Rail's Citytrain network, every level crossing on public roads has full active protection (boom arms, flashing lights); and for the Regional network, level crossings have a variety of either passive or active protections. Collisions between road users and trains at urban railway level crossings persist, despite protections being in place.

Five yearly assessments can be undertaken by a range of Queensland Rail track and maintenance employees, as the assessments are then overseen by a qualified level crossing assessor. Queensland Rail currently has four qualified level crossing assessors.