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IRSC 2025

***Advancing Railway Safety through
Innovations and Collaborations***

Hong Kong, China 25th - 30th November 2025

Industry's missed opportunity

Peter Doggett
Chief Operating Officer
Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR)
Australia

Industry's missed opportunity

The promised land:

- One rail safety regulator 
- A single national accreditation scheme 
- Flexibility (non-prescriptive) 

Three green ticks – so what did industry miss???



Sub-theme: Collaboration and challenges

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Industry's missed opportunity

Our legislation is (99% anyway) non-prescriptive and performance based. This leads to the safest outcomes as risk is managed by the operators themselves who are best placed to do so.

Australia has many discrete (but joined) networks across the country.

- They are legislatively bound to operate safely 
- But before 1 November 2025 no requirement to consider interoperability 



Sub-theme: Collaboration and challenges

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Industry's missed opportunity

Because industry has failed to deliver true national interoperability and harmonisation the government has stepped in.

- A defined National Network of Interoperability (NNI)
- Requirements for Interoperability Management Plans
- New mandatory standards



Sub-theme: Collaboration and challenges

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Industry's missed opportunity



National rail standards framework.

Australia's infrastructure and transport ministers approved the three-tiered National Standards Framework approach.

TIER 1

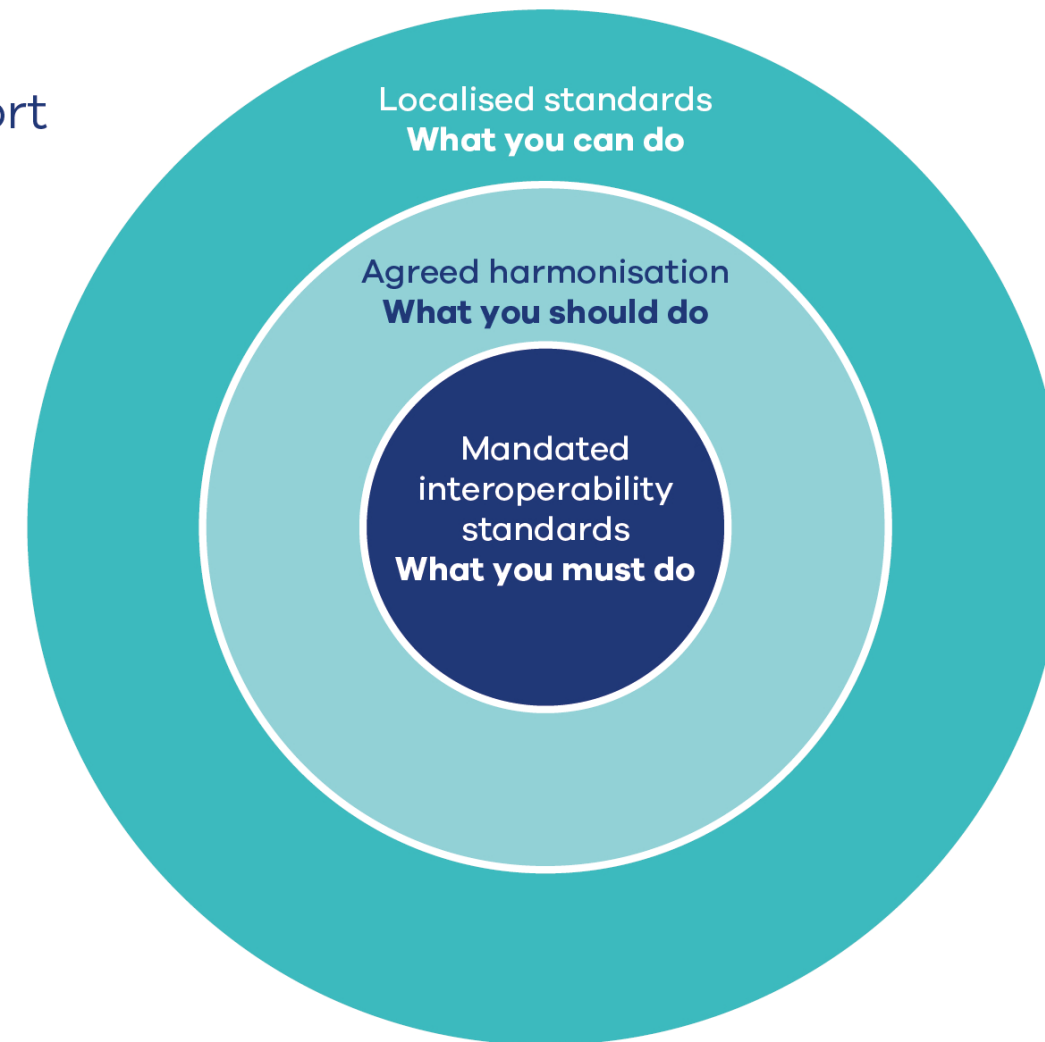
Mandatory interoperability standards.

TIER 2

Harmonised standards, rules and ways of working to lift national productivity.

TIER 3

Allows for localised standards and training requirements where it does not impact on the National Network for Interoperability.



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Industry's missed opportunity

The risks from here:

- Was it really broken? Harmonisation (probably) - interoperability (arguable)
- The inner circle gets larger – more and more mandatory standards – stifle innovation and move the risk ownership
- Who pays? Will that delay safety investments?



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Industry's missed opportunity

The role of ONRSR as the regulator from here – what does it mean for industry

- More prescriptive
- Safety versus efficiency
- Governments encouraged to be more directive

Has industry made it harder for themselves?????



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Industry's missed opportunity

Will it become harder for individual industry players because they have not delivered as a collective to fully achieve the national goals of government???



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