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1 February 2013

Incident at Cleveland Station

Today the RTBU has sought to gain a clearer picture of the root cause of the incident at Cleveland Station yesterday. We have attempted to work with QR on what should be a joint concern: The safety of our members and the safety of the travelling public.

Owen Doogan, Secretary of the RTBU has had a meeting and engaged in several high level discussions with QR management to get to the bottom of this issue.

There appears to be a present risk to RTBU members' safety, and accordingly the RTBU and its members cannot safely stand by and wait for weeks for reports to outline what they should do when the action required is clear.

All of the information to hand indicates the strong likelihood that the root cause was not driver error, nor a failure of maintenance or infrastructure: it was a catastrophic brake failure. This is what has emerged today and from the information available.

We acknowledge a full and thorough investigation must take place and it will. It is clear that right now our members face an imminent risk from the type of trains involved in the incident. Because of that risk, any further direction to use those trains would constitute an unlawful instruction from QR.

This means that we see that continued operations of the class of trains involved in the incident at Cleveland yesterday poses an imminent risk to our members' safety and we say they should not be forced to drive these trains, or to work on them.

We must make it clear that the class of train that is under a cloud is only one of many types of train in operation. Our members will remain ready willing and able to operate all other types of trains to assist in the avoidance of any disruption.

QR should have made this decision themselves. We have attempted to discuss this with their senior managers success so far. The danger that our members and the public appear to be in warrants immediate action and for that reason our members will have no practical option but to act on their reasonable concerns about the risks to their own safety.

It shouldn't be up to us to show this kind of leadership but QR's failure to move swiftly enough in taking these trains out of operation means we have to advise our members about their rights to protect their own personal safety, which also affects the safety of the travelling public.

Unity is Strength

Owen Doogan
State Secretary
Queensland Branch