



QUEENSLAND BRANCH

RTBU MEDIA RELEASE

AUTHORISED BY OWEN DOOGAN BRANCH SECRETARY

Level 1, 457 Upper Edward Street, Brisbane QLD 4000

Email: info@rtbu.com.au • Website: www.rtbu.com.au

Phone: 3839 4988 • Fax: 3832 1278

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RTBU Welcomes Preliminary Safety Report into Cleveland Rail Accident

The RTBU today welcomed the release of the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) preliminary report into the accident that occurred at Cleveland Railway Station on the 31st January.

“We are pleased that the Traincrew involved on the day were completely vindicated. This report clears them and acknowledges they were doing their jobs properly and competently” said Owen Doogan, Secretary of the Rail Tram and Bus Union.

“The clearing of the Driver and Guard is no small matter. Traincrew across Queensland were relieved to read this given the Minister for Transport and some in Queensland Rail (QR) inferred in media statements that the accident may well have been attributable to the Driver. This is now put to bed and these statements are shown to have been made without a single shred of evidence nor merit”, said Mr Doogan.

The RTBU is also pleased that the independent investigators of the ATSB clearly vindicate the position of the Union following the incident.

“The RTBU has always maintained that the problem relates to the 160 and 260 class of train. They experienced increased in sliding in what are called ‘low adhesion circumstances’. It means there is a risk of sliding where there is leaf litter, rust or other contaminants on track. The report says that there were insufficient measures in place to stop this from occurring.” said Mr Doogan.

“The report shows that despite people such as the Minister for Transport and some in QR putting their heads in the sand pretending nothing was wrong, the RTBU was clearly right – there was a safety problem and something needed to be done” said Mr Doogan.

Following pressure from the RTBU immediately after the accident, QR agreed to set up a working group to look closely at the issues raised by the Union. So far the RTBU has been successful in having several operational changes introduced, including new rules for how drivers will operate trains to try to reduce risk as well as possible modifications of trains to increase safety measures. The release of this report goes to strengthen the work already done by the RTBU to date.

“We’ve been working hard to get changes happening to make sure trains are safe and reliable. We have successfully lobbied for operational changes and continue to work for longer term solutions” said Mr Doogan.

“The greatest improvement we have been able to lobby for is the withdrawal from service of the worst offending trains – the ones that have form in terms of sliding way further than anticipated, and beyond the safe control of Traincrew. We are committed to improving the safety of the rail network, regardless of the short sighted and now clearly ill-informed views of the Minister for Transport” said Mr Doogan.

For further comment call:
Owen Doogan – 0419 769 126