

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATED UNION OF LOCOMOTIVE EMPLOYEES



Circular: 63/22
Ref: LEL
22/07/2022

Long End Leading Recovery Plan Update

Dear members,

On June 20 2021 the AFULE formally placed a ban on all Long End Leading (LEL) operations in response to the tragic event at Westwood two days prior.

Following the AFULE ban, the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) backed our position and enacted their own ban on LEL, forcing the hand of individual operators to conduct rigorous risk assessments which required ONRSR approval.

Queensland Rail is one such operator and network owner that was required to complete risk assessments before they could conduct any LEL activities. Risk assessments were completed and a procedure for LEL recovery developed which was shared via consultation with your union for feedback.

Overall, Queensland Rail as an operator and network owner had taken on board the necessary controls the AFULE was seeking for when LEL is required in an emergency situation, such as the recovery of a failed consist when there were zero alternate options. Controls such as two fully traction and route qualified Drivers, Driver input into recovery plans and the requirement of senior operations and network management authorisation of the recovery plan, amongst others.

However, our control speed of a maximum of 25km/h for recovery had not been adopted by QR. Instead QR had proposed a speed of 40km/h. Due to this reckless proposal, I wrote to QR on the June 28 2022, emphasising that the AFULE condemn any speed approved by the business exceeding 25km/h.

In good news, late yesterday afternoon I received a phone call from a senior Queensland Rail safety team member informing me that the business had agreed to adopt the final recommendation from the AFULE – a maximum speed of 25km/h for LEL recovery purposes.

Queensland Rail has advised that LEL will be in operation within their business for controlled shunting purposes and emergency recovery scenarios **only**.

This is a significant outcome for QR AFULE members and indeed all Traincrew. Not only does this maximum speed apply to Queensland Rail operated rollingstock but will also ensure third party operators **must** comply with these restrictions whilst utilising any of the Queensland Rail network, state wide.

Traincrew representing Traincrew

The Aurizon network is also capped at 25km/h for the purposes of emergency recovery

The QR LEL Recovery Plan procedure is in the final stages of approval and will be enforced and made available in the coming weeks.

If you would like more information, please contact your local AFULE representative or your state office on 3844 9163 or traincrew@afule.org.au

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mick McKittrick', is written over a solid black horizontal line.

Mick McKittrick,
State Secretary