

Youths crossing rail tracks

It was reported that children, mostly teenagers, are crossing the railway tracks near a railway station to congregate at an old mine ventilation duct.

The railway tracks have a 'man proof' fence on one side and a 'farm fence' on the other. To allow for vehicular access to the rail corridor, there is a gate in the 'man proof' fence. The children are squeezing past the gap in the gate or just going over the top, then walking about 40 metres along the tracks.

CSIRS Requirement

The Office of Transport Safety Investigation (OTSI) sought verification of the claims from the infrastructure operator, as well as specific comment about:

- Methods used to ensure that infrastructure is inspected in a manner consistent with the inspection requirements.
- Methods used to ensure that the type of fencing used along the rail corridor continues to be appropriate to variations in the local environment.

Investigation outcome

The operator confirmed the hazard of trespassers in the rail corridor.

The operator's investigation found that the condition of fences is regularly reviewed by a combination of walking and high rail inspections. Areas identified as requiring repair during these inspections are rectified immediately.

A walking inspection of the fence at the reported location has been carried out and found to be in good condition.

The mix of urban and rural fencing is appropriate for this location. The operator also monitors trespasser incidents as a performance indicator; locations with above average incident rates are identified and appropriate security measures put in place. Measures to improve rail corridor security include oversight and policing of trespasser activity as well as public education and use of penalties.

OTSI Action

OTSI has advised the reporter of the findings and response provided by the responsible operator.

The Transport Safety Regulation division of the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator has been advised of this report so that it can monitor the effectiveness of the operator to manage trespass.

The outcomes of the inquiries made by both OTSI and the responsible operator have been recorded in the OTSI's Safety Investigation Database for future review and safety trend analysis.