

# CSIRS Outcome Report

## Confidential Safety Information Reporting Scheme (CSIRS) C1012A: Unauthorised driver desk modifications

### The issue

The Office of Transport Safety Investigations (OTSI) received a report that potentially unauthorised modifications had been made to accommodate the brake handle on Tangara train sets. There were two methods of modification reported. Firstly, through use of a grinder, the manufactured space for brake handle travel on the driver's desk had been lengthened and widened. Secondly, in at least one instance, the brake handle stem was filed at the contact point with the driver's desk (Figure 1).

### OTSI action

OTSI provided a CSIRS Safety Notification to Sydney Trains and requested that an investigation into the matter be undertaken.

### Operator response

Sydney Trains immediately issued an alert to all maintenance depots reminding staff of the requirement for all modifications to rolling stock to be progressed through the 'configuration change management process'.

In addition, Sydney Trains began an audit of its fleet during regular maintenance intervals to determine the cause and extent of the driver desk modifications to inform remedial actions. Sydney Trains advised OTSI that it had deemed the modifications were '... not considered to present a safety risk to operations or the asset' but did not conduct a formal risk assessment at that time.

### OTSI action

OTSI reviewed Sydney Trains' advice and provided further information, received subsequently from the CSIRS reporter, to it of instances of unsecured driver desks to the bulkhead, and grinding that allowed the 'emergency' brake position to be selected (Figure 2). OTSI requested a follow-up of previously advised grinding of a brake handle stem given the additional examples.

OTSI also requested that Sydney Trains verify that the driver's desk modifications did not present an immediate risk to brake handle operation.

### Operator response

Sydney Trains immediately inspected the individual train units related to the new issues raised and took corrective actions where required. In addition, it fast-tracked the fleet audit and conducted a formal risk assessment of identified issues.

At conclusion, Sydney Trains provided OTSI with a copy of its investigation report, which found:

- 36.8% of driver desks had been modified

- The modifications had occurred over an extended period, without engineering approval
- No single cause was found for the modifications, rather, there were several contributory factors
- Safety risks presented by the modifications were formally risk assessed and found to be ‘tolerable’
- Instances of unsecured driver desks would be addressed by December 2022 during ‘routine maintenance’
- The determination for the standardisation of driver desk slot size to accommodate the brake handle was to be completed by March 2023, with corrective actions to follow.

## Conclusion

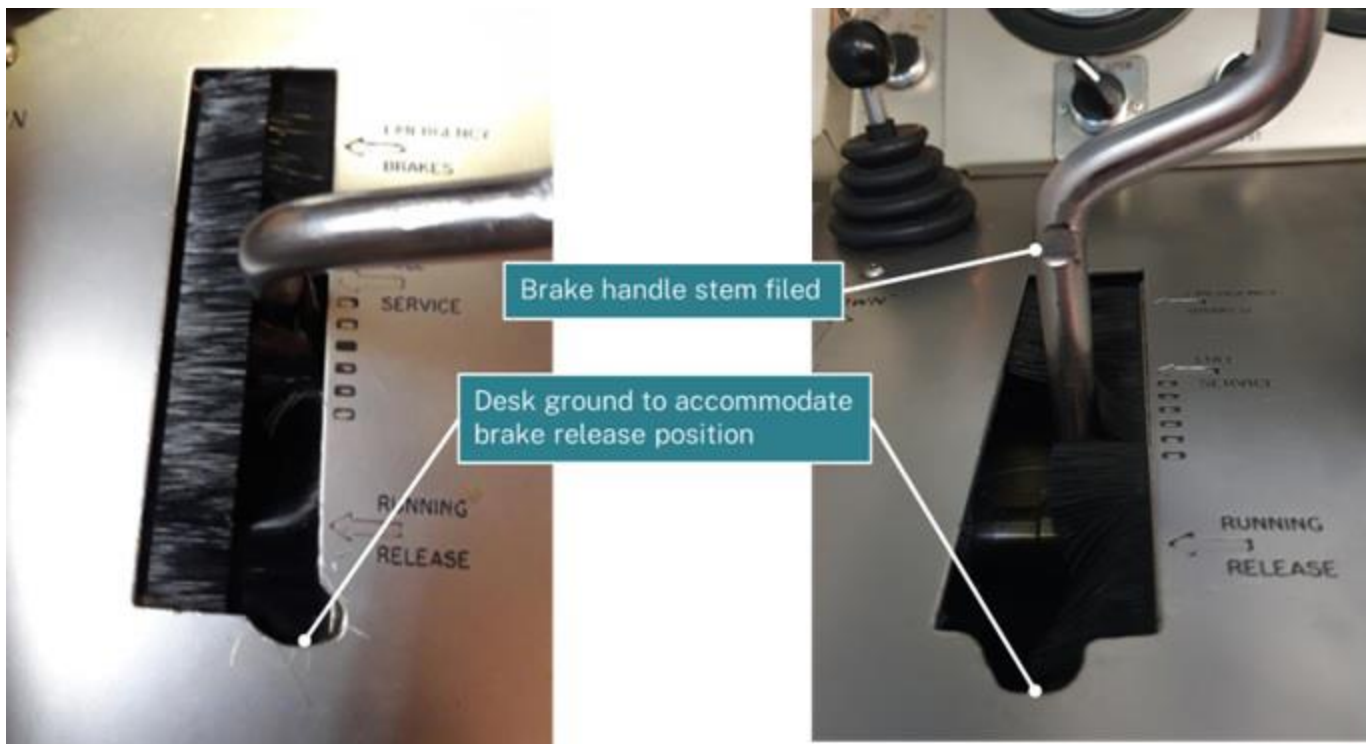
Sydney Trains appropriately responded to the safety risks arising from unauthorised desk modifications by conducting a risk assessment, auditing the fleet and, reporting an intention to determine a long-term solution by March 2023.

However, the widespread extent of the identified issue, including the significant period in which it existed without formal recognition, could be indicative of a wider problem within Sydney Trains’ internal reporting mechanisms. OTSI has raised this concern with Sydney Trains to address as appropriate.

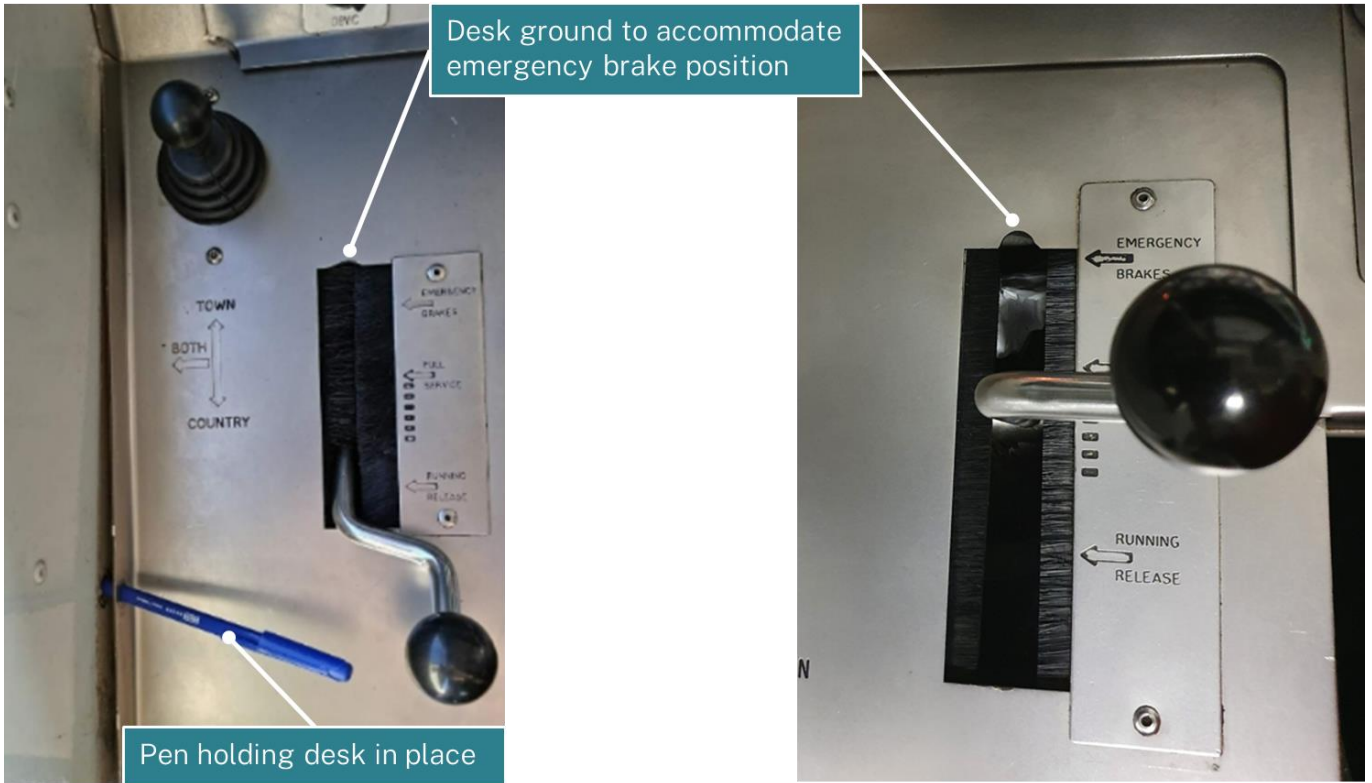
OTSI reminds all rail transport operators that any modifications to original design must follow proper engineering and change management processes, including the formal assessment of the requirement for, and risk of, any such changes.

OTSI has engaged with the reporter and briefed them of the contents of this CSIRS Outcome Report.

**Figure 1: Modifications to allow Tangara brake handles to select release position**



**Figure 2: Modifications to allow Tangara brake handles to select emergency position**



*The Confidential Safety Information Reporting Scheme (CSIRS) operates under the provisions of Section 46E of the Passenger Transport Act 1990. It is a voluntary, confidential and non-punitive scheme that enables employees in the public passenger transport sectors of the rail, bus and ferry industries to report safety matters.*

*OTSI provides feedback to each reporter on the investigation outcomes of a CSIRS report. In selected matters that have significant operational safety matters, OTSI also publishes a CSIRS Outcome Report. For more information on CSIRS, go to [otsi.nsw.gov.au](http://otsi.nsw.gov.au).*