



## NIF Update – Operator Instruction Manuals and Station Staff Consultation Dispute

On Wednesday afternoon, the RTBU appeared before the Fair Work Commission regarding consultation around the Operator Instruction Manuals (OIMs) and the training packages for the operation of the NIF.

For the past few months, NSW Trains have been attempting to work through the development process for the OIMs and the training packages for the NIF – a process not unfamiliar to the RTBU during past introductions of new rolling stock. However this time, there has been a continued refusal by NSW Trains and Transport for NSW to allow the RTBU or Health and Safety Representatives access to the NIF during its testing and verification. This makes consultation on the OIMs and training packages impossible.

Despite some heated debate before the Commission, the RTBU and NSW Trains were unable to agree on a resolution to the dispute and it is now being scheduled for a hearing in late July – early August 2020. Your delegates will be giving evidence to the Commission on the flawed process embarked upon by NSW Trains and highlight the safety implications of establishing these OIMs without being involved in the testing process, or even observing the train.

This dispute is on a long list of issues that the RTBU has raised about NSW Trains' proposed operating model and the pay and conditions associated with it. In a nutshell, current disputes include:

- 2018 consultation dispute before the Fair Work Commission regarding the design and operating model of the NIF
- Dispute about proposed pay and conditions before the Fair Work Commission
- 2 provisional improvement notices about the OIMs
- Letters of notice to NSW Trains (also to Transport for NSW and RailConnect) relating to alleged breaches of the *Rail Safety National Law*

The proposed operating model for the NIF is Driver Only Operation (DOO) as it is now clear that the proposed Customer Service Guard position will not provide an absolute right of way to the driver. The RTBU remains fundamentally opposed to the introduction of Driver Only Operations (DOO) anywhere in NSW. We will not settle for any crewing model less safe than those we have now for passenger train operations.

In other news, Station Staff will commence discussions with NSW Trains next Monday morning. The RTBU have been pushing NSW Trains to commence this process since it became apparent late last year that there may be some impact on Station Staff from the introduction of the NIF. As soon as we are notified of any effects on Station Staff, we will let you know.

The RTBU's position on the introduction of the NIF will be guided by members and delegates. It is important that members and delegates continue to be involved in and own the RTBU's position. Remember that 90% of members have previously indicated they are not prepared to crew the NIF due to safety concerns. This is a fact that NSW Trains would do well to remember!

Issued & Authorised By:

Alex Claassens

**Branch Secretary**