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Minister for Roads

Media Release

Powerful tribute at Werris Creek honouring rail workers

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The 20th National Rail Safety Week is being marked with a solemn ceremony at the Australian Railway Monument in Werris Creek in northern NSW today.

The ceremony will honour rail workers who have died in service to Australia's rail network.

More than 100 families, friends, and colleagues of those who have died, as well as representatives from across the rail industry, will hold a minute's silence and lay wreaths next to the names that will be remembered forever.

Each of the more than 4,500 names on the National Railway Monument at Werris Creek represents the loss of a railway worker since the 1850s.

This year, four new names have been added to the walls of the monument. One of them was Troy Ernst, a freight train driver who died in an accident in December last year.

The others are names of railway workers, one whose death dates back to early this century and two others from the 1920s and 30s. Their names have only just been added to the monument due to recent research by volunteers from the Australian Railway Monument and Rail Journeys Museum.

Hosted by NSW TrainLink and the TrackSAFE Foundation, the event is both a moment of reflection and a time for the rail industry to collectively commit to preventing future tragedies among Australia's 165,000-strong rail workforce.

Following the memorial event TrackSAFE is hosting a national webinar on mental health fitness in the rail industry. More information [here](#).

Minister for Regional Transport Jenny Aitchison said:

"National Rail Safety Week reminds us that behind every statistic is a person, a family, and a community that has experienced profound loss.

"Railways have powered our economy and connected communities for generations, but they also carry inherent risks. This week, during National Rail Safety Week, I reaffirm our commitment to keeping everyone safe, every day, in and around our railways.

"The Minns Labor Government has made significant investments in rail safety, including upgrading critical infrastructure, implementing advanced safety technologies, and strengthening training programs for our workforce.

"The Minns Government is also prioritising mental health support for rail workers, recognising the unique pressures and challenges they face in their vital work.

"I want to thank drivers, engineers, station staff, maintenance teams, and many others who work tirelessly to keep our railways running and safe both now and into the future. Our government will continue to back them with the resources, support and safety measures they deserve.

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"Today's National Rail Safety Week ceremony is a powerful and poignant reminder that safety must never be taken for granted. It must be lived, acted on, and protected – every day, in every decision we make.

"The NSW Government's commitment to rail safety is unwavering and absolute." Executive Director, TrackSAFE Foundation, Heather Neil said:

"As an industry, a community and as individuals, we all must play an active role in keeping ourselves and others safe around the rail network.

"Infrastructure upgrades and the use of new technologies help improve the safety of the network.

"But we also need truck and car drivers, cyclists, motorbike riders and pedestrians to be aware of tracks, look for trains, tram and light rail vehicles and follow all signposted rules.

"Any death or injury on the rail network is devastating - not just for the family and friends impacted but also for rail workers involved in the incident and the first responders called upon in the rescue effort.

"Fatalities, incidents and near hits on the network can cause severe and lasting trauma to the rail employees involved, and most of these incidents can be avoided."

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