

# GRASP Meeting Notes

18 January & 6 February 2024

On January 18 and February 6, 2024, the Volpe Center (USA) hosted the 12th meeting of the Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention (GRASP). On January 18, 2024, the Volpe Center hosted a meeting for members in North America, Europe and the UK, and on February 6, 2024, the Volpe Center hosted a meeting for members in Australia and New Zealand. The GRASP working group began in January 2014 and meets yearly to share experiences in preventing railroad trespass and suicide incidents and ways to mitigate the consequences of these events. Note that there was not a formal GRASP meeting during 2023, but instead the meeting date was moved to January 2024 and will represent a shift of this meeting to earlier months in the year.

## ATTENDEES

Alexa D'Adamo, US  
Anjum Naweed, AU\*  
Ann Mills, UK/UIC  
Andy Martin, US  
Anne Silla, FIN  
Barbara Klein Barr, US  
Bart Hoogcarspel, NED  
Brian Mishara, CAN  
Colby Scott, US  
Crystal Gitchell, US

Dan Blais, CAN  
Danielle Hiltunen, US\*  
Helena Rådbo, SWE  
Heather Neil, AU\*  
Hope Steele, AU\*  
Isabelle Fonverne, FRA/UIC  
Jeff Moller, US  
Joe DeLorenzo, US  
Kristen Fredrich, US  
Maryam Hedayati, CAN

Megan Drayton, NZ\*  
Mike Grizkewitsch, US  
Monica Shaw, US  
Richard Zavergiu, CAN  
Scott Gabree, US\*  
Shala Blue, US  
Tore Dyrhaug Mo, NOR  
Vanaaisha Pamnani, US

\*Participated in call on 2/6/2024

## AGENDA

Time	Participant	Topic
08:00 – 08:30	Danielle Hiltunen	Welcome and Introductions
08:30 – 08:50	Ann Mills	Update from UIC TreSP
08:50 – 09:10	Tore Mo	Update from Norway
09:10 – 09:20	All	Break
09:20 – 9:50	Bart Hoogcarspel	Update from Netherlands (provided by Pro Rail)
9:50 – 10:30	Danielle Hiltunen, Mike Grizkewitsch, Kristen Fredrich	Update from US (provided by Volpe, FRA, and FTA)
10:30 – 11:00	All	Discussion and adjournment

# MEETING NOTES

## A Note about Other International Working Groups

GRASP is not the only working group that is seeking to establish coordination between countries to help address rail trespass and suicide. Currently, the [TreSP Network](#) is one such group that is organized by the UIC. These two groups have the potential to complement one another given that they have related, but different missions. As an annual meeting, GRASP is designed for information sharing at a high level, focusing on lessons learned across a broad range of topics. GRASP also aims to engage in discussion and identify problems that remain unsolved or where more research could be focused. The TreSP Network, however, meets quarterly and could provide a forum to explore topics more deeply or more regularly. As these two groups move forward, additional coordination can ensure that the lessons learned from one group can help enhance the goals of the other.

- For more information about the TreSP Network, please contact Ann Mills (chair) or Isabelle Fonverne (UIC Coordinating Member). And see notes from the UK/UIC below for more information about TreSP.

## Introductions and Brief Updates from each Country

- Canada: At Transport Canada, they are looking to reinvest in suicide prevention work. Activity has been reduced on these efforts in recent years and they are looking to expand that work area. One area of focus is with a company known as Invision, who is developing camera technology at crossings. Transport Canada sees a lot of opportunity here. Additionally, there is some outreach work that is being promoted.
  - University of Quebec at Montreal: A current area of focus is on Artificial Intelligence (AI) detection and surveillance to identify people at risk of suicide to intervene prior to an attempt.
- Finland: There have been ongoing discussions about the quality of data. An agreement was recently reached with Finnish police who will start to cooperate to share statistics related to railroad incidents; twice per year they will be able to get data from police to confirm with their data. Additionally in Finland there was a campaign directed to young people about electricity issues on the railway. This was a 30s campaign and was distributed widely. They have a National Traffic Safety Strategy that covers all transportation modes and are now planning a railway safety program which will focus on railways only. This will help to facilitate support for and from the ministry to prevent trespassing and suicide.
- France: The UIC continues to support trespass and suicide related work through TreSP. Ann Mills will speak to this more during the presentation period.
- Netherlands: One issue that will not be in the presentation later is that in the Netherlands they have been working on a regulation for railway stations. For any new station, a risk assessment will be completed and depending on the identified risk of suicide, there are different levels of interventions that should be taken and put into place.
- Sweden: In Sweden they have more 2023 fatalities than the prior year. However, they found that when they stop traffic for a suicide attempt, they were able to help 373 people and remove them from the railway system. Five stops were so serious that they know that they were able to save a life (laying on the tracks or cared for at a platform). In the coming year, Sweden will be focusing on stations, including barriers between tracks to prevent jumping down in front of trains that pass at speed.
- Norway: Tore was recently the co-author on paper about suicide prevention, which is presented later.
- United Kingdom: At RSSB one focus is on identifying a single version of truth on trespass data. A challenge has been that data are collected by different groups, so if you look at British Transport Police data and RSSB data you get some duplication, some gaps, and a general misalignment. They are encouraging frontline staff to record what they can about trespassing incidents to keep that record.

The UK are working towards integrating railway safety elements into school curricula and also towards developing industry standards for suicide prevention.

- United States: The AAR mentioned that in the United States there are reporting challenges. Official determinations of intent come from outside the railway and those can take a long time and there is some evidence that in certain locations it can be hard to call something a suicide for various societal and culture reasons. At FTA they are looking to amplify their suicide prevention and grade crossing safety efforts.

## MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

### TreSP Network

*Update provided by Ann Mills.*

- TreSP Network (<https://uic.org/safety/trespass-and-suicide-prevention/>)
  - o Ann Mills (chair), Nils La Cour (Vice), and Isabelle Fonverne run this group, which includes well over 20 different countries.
  - o Started in 2021 and have regular meetings throughout the year, many online but also in person.
  - o A core activity of TreSP is going through the [RESTRAIL Toolbox](#). Decisions about what measures might be considered to prevent trespass and suicide.
    - TreSP is going through each of the 70ish measures to look at what is known around the world.
  - o The Blue Ribbon event of this group is TreSPAD (<https://uic.org/com/enews/article/save-the-dates-calls-for-papers-ilcad-trespad-2024>)
    - First of these events was in the United States in Denver, CO and then last year in Warsaw.
    - The Warsaw meeting included 180 colleagues with 28 unique countries represented.
    - During the Warsaw meeting, they showed Harrison's story – a short movie that was developed by Network Rail (more on this below).
    - A long list of interested presentations, but a few notes:
      - A Danish railway, DSB conducted unique work about communicating with youth. Built a railway station from Copenhagen in Minecraft where they can explore and learn about railway safety inside the game.
      - Belgian colleagues developed a board game for children and teenagers.
    - A key part of the event was sharing the video of Harrison's Story – terrible story about a boy who went to get a football through a fence at a freight depot and was killed by an electrical current when atop the train. (<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/stories/you-vs-train-harrisons-story/>)
      - Harrison's parents have worked with Network Rail and insisted that his story be told to help prevent future incidents.
      - This video found its way into morning TV in the UK where the number of views were quite high.
      - Grand Prix winner as well as numerous other awards for this campaign. Network Rail pushed this out with the parents' wishes and encouragement.
      - Looking for similar materials if anyone has material to be shown during the next TreSPAD.
    - Rail Safe Friendly is a way to get railroad safety information into schools that might otherwise not get these messages. (<https://railsafefriendly.com/>)
      - Go into highest risk schools to educate them.
      - Funding by railway companies and RSSB

- Regular quarterly meetings for TreSP Network:
  - Last meeting: in-person in Stockholm, Sweden on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December
    - Conference in Stockholm on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December about suicide prevention accompanied this meeting.
  - Next meeting will be March 6-7<sup>th</sup> in Madrid and will be hybrid to accommodate remote participants.
    - For those in-person this was a 3-day event – meeting about suicide on day 1, technical visit on the second day, and a grade crossing meeting on the third day.
- Other ongoing work in the UK:
  - Conducting a review of warning and prohibitive signs. A questionnaire has been sent out to members about their signs.
    - QUESTION – Do you have any thoughts on consistency of messaging as opposed to novelty to potentially capture attention?
      - The focus seems to be more on consistency of messaging over uniqueness.
      - The other interesting question is how to message out about trespasser safety while not highlighting the lethality of the system in these locations.
  - Blue light intervention – a wide variety of use cases with different types of lights and locations.
- [TreSPAD 2024](#) will be in Buenos Aires – 5 June, 2024
  - Vulnerable persons will be the focus – suicide, trespass, mental health all being discussed.
- Artificial Intelligence for safe behaviors – UIC project going through final process before this research effort will launch.
  - Drawn upon Asim Zaman's (Rutgers University) work for inspiration and involves work from the TreSP Network and Global Level Crossing Network.

## Norway

*Update provided by Tore Dyrhaug Mo.*

- Tore wrote his master's thesis in 2018 about railway suicide in Norway. Since that time he has written a new article that was published in December in Norway. The article is not currently published publicly, as the precise locations of suicides were seen as inappropriate for public dissemination.
  - This work was funded by the Norwegian Infrastructure Manager.
    - Worked for Atkins to help with this.
- This was published in *Suicidologi*, an academic journal in Norway.
  - The article addresses what is happening with suicide prevention on Norwegian railroads.
  - Numbers are not high in Norway, generally. About 10 individuals per year die by suicide on Norwegian railways.
  - The articles mentions there is a need to continue to strengthen the prevention efforts in Norway. It also includes a comment that it could be made stronger with a systemic perspective on prevention in other areas such as in the health sector.
- Suicide prevention has been harder to convince people when compared with accidents which are seen as a priority.
  - There are some types of barriers which may be effective for both trespassing and suicide.
  - Much of the work here was inspired by Rådbo (2008):  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0925753507000045>
- They are mapping the location of suicide incidents in Norway. This allows the infrastructure managers to focus their efforts.

- The research article benefitted from Kim Larsen, a psychologist who helped to co-author the article.
- *QUESTION: There were a few cluster locations on your maps; what factors were related to the clustering locations?*
  - o The data are often not completely reported – the police often draw the conclusions and therefore the statistics are biased by those data.
  - o Would like to get more data about suicides if possible.
- *QUESTION: The research article mentions the value in integrating prevention aspects in a more systemic way – this is something that is being thought about in the United States as well. Do you have any thoughts about the successes and challenges of this sort of approach?*
  - o Prevention methods may be different in different modes. For example, it can be harder to prevent suicide in road traffic because vehicles can choose when and how to move their own vehicle. For railroads – you can be more specific with the locations where fencing can be implemented.
  - o Last year did a branch study in Norway to look at the tunnels.
    - Issues with suicides in tunnels. Potentially some collaborative opportunities where different modes of transportation align.
    - Perhaps more coordination about planning and signage in these locations could be helpful.

## **Netherlands, Pro Rail**

*Update provided by Bart Hoogcarspel*

- Netherlands has about 17.8M people in the country.
  - o Overall they experience 1,916 suicides, 11 per 100,000 suicides per year and 11% (210) of those suicide fatalities occur on the railway.
  - o The network is very dense (3000km of network length and 157Mkm of trains) and there is frequently access to the system. There are 400 train stations and 2,500 level crossings. For every km of track there are an average of 1.5 easy access opportunities.
  - o Average waiting time between trains is 7.5 min.
- Suicide incidents were plotted across the country. The hotspots moved every five years, and upon investigation it appears that the hotspots were removed when measures were introduced to prevent suicides.
- Research Project Question: What effect does a crossing closure have on suicides? Is there displacement to nearby tracks? (1991 - 1998)
  - o The research included three groups to investigate.
    - Influence: Within 500m around a closed crossing
    - Adjacent: The next 1000m of tracks on both sides of that area
    - Control: All level crossings that were not closed
  - o They investigated the difference before and after at a closed crossing.
    - Influence area saw a 42% drop in suicides. The drop potentially had three levels, which may have been influenced by the time it would take for these infrastructure projects to be completed.
    - Adjacent tracks show a smaller drop of only 13%.
    - Control group shows a smaller drop still of only 10%.
- Research Project Question: How can visibility measures impact the number of suicide incidents near the track area?
  - o Heard from train engineers – people would often jump out from behind things at the last minute. What if we were to remove these hiding locations? Decided to try to implement certain measures to solve this at 30 different locations:
    - Improve lighting
    - Fencing the track 100m and between tracks

- Remove bushes
- Found a drop in suicides at both intervention locations (38% reduction) as well as adjacent track locations (24% reduction).
  - Wanted a better control group since the specific impact wasn't as clear from these results.
  - This investigation revealed an even bigger drop for the control group, paradoxically. Conversations with infrastructure managers revealed that there was a lot of money being spent on rail suicide prevention at the sites that were being used as a control.
  - When more carefully controlled – were able to see big drops at intervention sites.
    - The more carefully controlled group seems to follow the suicide rate generally.
  - When you see increasing suicide rates in the country you will see it in the railway system.
- Research Project Question: Can the installation of entrance gates reduce suicide events at stations?
  - This included the activation of these gates as well as camera surveillance in these stations.
  - Data from the first two years were promising – rates came down below what we being averaged at these stations. However, there was a big spike to higher-than-normal levels the next few years. And then the numbers were reduced again. These mixed results make it harder to know what is happening and why.
  - At the control stations (without entrance gates), the general suicide rate seems to predict suicide rates at those stations.
- Van Houwelingen (2021) analyzed railway suicide in the Netherlands and showed that the things that the railways are doing is working. (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34003022/>)
- A valuable factor to consider is that all interventions start on the level of the infrastructure status of the moment before. If there are a lot of hiding places and you remove them, the effect will be greater. Removing fewer hiding locations will have a smaller effect.
  - Australian study – closed many level crossings on high frequency line – found a reduction of 60%.
- *QUESTION: How does the Netherlands determine risk when assessing a new crossing?*
  - This has been done for stations and is being proposed for crossings, but the crossing parts have not been completed.
    - For stations it is based on the results of a model of variables that influence suicide risk.
    - These models have been calibrated and validated with suicide rates at those locations.
    - They investigated data on a station level to learn what variables were important and then developed a 3-level output for station risk. As one example – the number of fast trains coming through was one key factor.
    - Starting now with level crossings
- *QUESTION: When a crossing is closed – what are common practices that are used to eliminate risk?*
  - This will depend on the setting. In a rural setting, crossings are removed and a fence put up. Pedestrians and vehicles will need to go to a nearby crossing to get to the other side of the tracks.
  - If a crossing is busier with pedestrians – then may change it into a small tunnel.
  - In some more secluded areas – don't have many suicides because of population.
- *QUESTION: When you've closed level crossings – did you put in pedestrian specific treatments?*
  - Yes – we always have a lot of local interaction with various people to see what is needed.
- *QUESTION: You have more people and railways in NED than in NOR – and 21x higher suicide rate – thoughts about why?*
  - One major difference is that there are so many trains – train traffic intensity is one of the factors for where suicides occur. The availability of lethal means is higher.

## United States, Volpe Center, FRA and FTA

*Update provided by Danielle Hiltunen, Mike Grizkewitsch, and Kristen Fredrich.*

- Danielle Hiltunen (US DOT Volpe Center)
  - Volpe is assisting FRA with an ongoing review of Critical Incident Stress Plans (CISP) that have been mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) since 2014.
    - Railroaders' exposures to stress and potentially traumatic events, including, close calls, have the potential to greatly impact their life and career. Even hearing about a critical incident or a close call can have impacts.
    - There are two phases of this work:
      - Phase 1: Better understand the CISPs that have been submitted to FRA and identify potential best practices in the literature to support employees.
      - Phase 2: Understand what rail carriers are doing in practice, understand the employee experiences of CI response, and identify rail carrier challenges and best practices.
  - Volpe and FRA continue to host the Suicide Prevention for US Rail (SPUR) working group. SPUR is a working group for commuter rail carriers to discuss rail suicide and trespass prevention initiatives.
    - SPUR has quarterly meetings that are topic driven. Topics are selected by members and include presentations from experts in the topic area or stakeholders with experiences with that topic.
    - Recent meeting topics:
      - Employee Training Programs (QPR)
      - Partnerships with Outside Organizations
      - Public Messaging
      - Mobile Crisis Units and Quality of Life Teams
      - Effective Data Use
      - Critical Incidents
  - Volpe continues to support a collaboration with Operation Lifesaver (OLI) on messaging for rail safety. Volpe's role is often to help consider the potential impacts on those who may be at risk for suicide in the messaging that is developed. While OLI does not directly discuss suicide in their safety campaigns, certain messaging may be triggering for someone at risk for suicide or for a rail employee who has experienced a critical incident or other potentially traumatic event.
  - In 2022, FRA launched the Trespass & Suicide Prevention Toolkit ([TSP Toolkit](#)). In April 2023, the first major update of the content was completed. This update included the addition of information from [TCRP 233](#), a 2022 report on trespassing and suicide prevention as well as other content and editorial updates. Future updates to the TSP Toolkit will include the integration of equity information into the existing measures. Additionally, FRA and Volpe are exploring ways to incorporate the CARE model into the TSP Toolkit.
    - In addition to the TSP Toolkit, FRA is also working to launch a Grade Crossing Toolkit which follows a similar format to that of the TSP Toolkit. There is no proposed launch date, but anticipate that it will be available in the coming year.
      - RSSB provided a link to a similar GX Toolkit, which may be informative:  
[LXRMTK - Home](#)
  - Volpe has also partnered with FRA to start a pilot project of a community approach to suicide and trespass prevention, building on the CARE model that was developed by FRA with Transport Canada in 2011. While the CARE model is still valuable, when it was developed there was very little known about socio-behavioral aspects of trespassing and suicide data was not being collected. The hope is to identify how to consider these elements into this sort of planning process.



- Collaboration opportunity was identified in West Palm Beach, FL county with the town of Lake Worth Beach.
  - An initial meeting was held in December 2023, and we currently have a stakeholder group including emergency response officials, law enforcement officials, local behavioral health partners, crisis intervention services and several local government individuals.
  - Local challenges that have been identified include encampments near the tracks, city planning challenges, neighborhoods with higher crime rates and language barriers.
- Mike Grizkewitsch (Federal Railroad Administration Office of Safety)
  - When talking to law enforcement agencies about trespassing, FRA would always hear the same thing: they needed dedicated funding to pay for overtime to police trespassing. There are other types of activities that will be prioritized unless they have a specific time dedicated to doing that work.
  - Over the past 3 years FRA has given out over \$3M for trespassing enforcement.
  - With the latest round of funding, FRA worked with a third party at the University of Maryland to develop a form to collect information from LE agencies who are policing trespassing. The data gets sent to this group and while FRA can be provided access, this creates a way that an agency can voluntarily submit data that will not be provided to FRA.
    - Open to anyone in the US to complete voluntarily, but filling this out is mandated if you are receiving funding from FRA. Officer submits the data via the online form that was developed. This then gets reviewed by a manager who submits the report to the system.
    - The form includes information about who the individual was, their awareness of the dangers/illegality of these actions, why they were crossing the tracks there and how often they do this.
    - Revealed differences between fatal outcomes and safe outcomes – what is the difference that drives lethality? Thus far we are seeing that the types of individuals who trespass and survive are different than those who trespass and die.
    - Thus far, in 4 months, over 2000 reports have been submitted (and 2,500 trespassers – as some reports have more than one trespasser per contact). Over 87% of the trespassers contacted were interviewed.
      - 89% of the time the main outcome was education rather than a citation or ticket or arrest.
  - *QUESTION: It would be great to collect this information systematically. Do you need funding to have these police officers fill out a form?*
    - Since 2018, FRA has determined that anyone who is an eligible applicant for these grants such as, law enforcement, can ask FRA for funding for trespass/suicide activities. As part of accepting the grant they will complete this form and put it in FRA's database. It is a requirement, but agencies that do not get a grant from FRA, can still voluntarily fill out these forms.
- Kristen Fredrich (Federal Transit Administration)
  - Rail suicide fatality and injury event data:
    - Relatively flat levels of suicide fatality and injury over the past decade (56 – 80 fatalities; 67 – 103 injuries per year).
    - While there is no clear upward or downward trend to report, these numbers are still higher than we would like to see.
  - Safety advisory on signage was published in December 2022
    - Encourage transit agencies to implement or update and expand suicide prevention signage and promote messaging campaigns.
    - [FTA Safety Advisory 22-4: Suicide Prevention Signage on Public Transit | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)



- FTA hosted a webinar that accompanied the safety advisory described above. This was hosted in January of 2023 and included presentations from the SAMHSA and the BART system.
  - Link to a recording of the webinar:  
[https://usdot.zoomgov.com/rec/play/p5FjAd\\_jp5giZRvsPgbAH4e9jigCOb9K-EcFTl1m4pPzuj95Bxv458qH9AYjSndMgOHAreSMk-GXKP.2hSzV0AsVlScxKO?continueMode=true](https://usdot.zoomgov.com/rec/play/p5FjAd_jp5giZRvsPgbAH4e9jigCOb9K-EcFTl1m4pPzuj95Bxv458qH9AYjSndMgOHAreSMk-GXKP.2hSzV0AsVlScxKO?continueMode=true)
- Mental health resources are now available on the FTA website.
  - Transit industry resources for mental health, wellness and self-care, suicide prevention, and active shooter preparedness.
  - [Mental Health Resources for Transit Workers | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)

## Australia, TrackSAFE and CQUniversity

*Update provided by Heather Neil, Hope Steele, and Anjum Naweed*

- Heather Neil and Hope Steele (TrackSAFE Australia)
  - TrackSAFE launched suicide prevention training for rail staff in September – available for anyone who works in the rail industry. (<https://tracksafetraining.com/> -- registration required)
    - This program was adapted from Network Rail in the UK to fit Australian and NZ environment.
    - The program is 30 minutes in length, online, and free.
    - The goal of the training is to build employee confidence in how to identify certain clear behaviors which may indicate the potential for suicide and what to do when an individual is identified.
    - Targeted at front line staff, but anyone associated with rail can take this training.
    - There is not currently a plan to systematically collect data on these interventions. This was discussed with operators but at this time the differences between reporting systems presents challenges that will make it too difficult to implement at this time.
    - Close to 1000 have taken the training to date and hope for every front-line employee to have taken the training in the coming years.
  - Commissioned and received a research report analyzing all deaths but suicide between 2015-2019 (<https://tracksafefoundation.com.au/resource/suicide-on-the-australian-railway-network-2015-2019/>)
    - This report revealed that there really is no magic wand for preventing rail suicide. It helped to confirm some things that were suspected and provided additional insights into who is coming to rail.
    - Additional pieces from Melbourne University will be added to delve deeper into issues in Victoria where 50% of incidents occur.
  - Commissioned an economic impact assessment of incidents in Victoria, including both suspected suicides as well as frequent presenters. This is to help with advocacy for fencing – showing the true cost of an incident which may help to justify spending resources on solutions.
    - The plan is for this work to be completed in April 2024.
  - Help-seeking advertising will be continuing, mostly in Victoria but also in coordination with other state governments.
  - The suicide crisis line has a digital toolkit (<https://toolkit.lifeline.org.au/>) and will be promoted to rail staff and the public. It provides the avenue to self-diagnose as well as tools to help cope.
    - This resource was developed with men in mind, but the data are that more women are using it. They noticed a younger skew which is in line with the nature of the issues currently in Australia.
    - 40% of lives lost due to rail suicide are under 40, showing a need to target this younger male skew.

- TrackSAFE has a trauma management framework for the rail industry which helps to support employees. (<https://tracksafefoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FINAL-TrackSAFE-Trauma-Management-Framework.pdf>)
- Metro Trains Melbourne has also launched an updated driver trauma recovery guide. They have a very strong peer support program and will develop a toolbox next with some best practice guidelines for peer support.
- TrackSAFE is going through a repeat process on the language that is supposed to be used when there are delays due to a train person collision. Twelve months ago, the industry was using a common set of language, but over the last month or two there has been a shift.
  - TrackSAFE is working with EveryMind to host a webinar with an expert in language and the importance of using the right language when talking about a potential suicide.
- In terms of rail safety, there are campaigns in regions of Australia with the highest incidents, which are going well by adding reminders about rail safety.
  - A rail accident occurred on New Years Eve at a crossing; two train drivers died. This caused governments to pull together a level-crossing roundtable in March 2024, and hope that it will help to accelerate rail safety activity.
  - Working with Mattel on another railroad safety campaign that is currently going through approvals for use with early childhood and primary school children.
- Rail RU OK? Day continues with a goal to increase skills for asking if someone is OK and equipping them with the ability to respond appropriately. (<https://tracksafefoundation.com.au/event/rail-r-u-ok/>)
- In the area of trespass, they identified a cohort of frequent presenters, not necessarily for suicide, but returning to the same location with mental health challenges – particularly in Victoria multiple times each week. These individuals are taken to get help and then come back to the rail after they leave the hospital. This comes at a tremendous cost to the railroad due to the resulting delays.
  - Partnering with various entities to initiate a program similar to the Hearts program in the UK.
- Anjum Naweed (CQUniversity)
  - Rail safety and suicide prevention are distinct from one another and require different approaches.
  - Anjum's lab is looking at rail suicide and the impacts on front-line workers, including train drivers and station staff.
    - It has been difficult to get rail operator support, which resulted in changes to the initial project plan.
    - However, there has been spectacular support from the unions.
      - Safe Work Australia statistics show that rail drivers are a major area of focus that is needed, particularly with mental health.
    - Currently seeking trauma counseling expertise to get the application in to start this work. Unions put together a package for local support.
    - Previously looking at organizational data, but it seems that this may not quite be enough.
      - Initial investigations have found that there are many problems.
        - There is a trauma response team in place and lot of incidents still fall through the cracks.
        - A lot of people that work as train drivers have stories that are concerning.
  - Currently involved in a systematic review about systems thinking related to rail suicide. Systems thinking is about thinking beyond a person interacting with the environment. What if the changes that you make at a local level will have repercussions in a broader context? How

can a change in one part of a system have ripple effects, positive or negative, in other parts of the system?

- Suicide is a clear systems issue. How have systems thinking methods been considered for this specific work area?
- Work collaborated with Gemma Read.
- Other systems thinking has been done in rail safety, including some work with ACRI about what kinds of innovations are being utilized internationally that may have a role in Australia.
- Working on a study focused on taboo and stigma. These are important to consider. This work investigates how best to communicate about an incident. There is a lot of literature about the Werther Effect (how reporting about suicide can result in copycat suicide attempts), but there is also the Papageno effect (that reporting, if done correctly, can also have a protective effect).
  - They are able to show a potential protective effect in some cases. Communication around this is very complex and needs additional consideration.
  - There confusion in the industry, for example, a belief that saying “suicide” could cause someone to consider suicide. This is false, but this stigma and mythology remains.
  - In the industry there is a belief that you cannot say suicide, which creates a situation where issues related to suicide are not talked about and therefore not prioritized.
- Starting to look at big data. One area of focus is that there are some locations that are seen as “hot spots” and those locations are prioritized (along with some myths about why they are hotspots). The goal of this work is to look more at predictors – what makes a hotspot a hotspot? Can we use big data and machine learning approaches to find where these vulnerable points are? They are working through the early stages of this work now.
- Identified issues with suicide in the heavy vehicle space, which is concerning.
- Question for Heather about data, nationally: How do you make sense of things through the data you get? There can be contradictory data – every state tends to do their own thing as far as data collection and what they collect. How do you reconcile?
  - Answer: Any fatality is a reportable event that must be reported within 24 hours, and then reports come in annually. A fatality has to be reported by every carrier through rail regulations through ONSA data.
  - The operator makes the decision about if a fatality is a suspected suicide. Coronial data would be a slightly lower number, but not significant across the year.

## **New Zealand, TrackSAFE**

*Update provided by Megan Drayton*

- Will be reviewing the overall strategy for TrackSAFE NZ in the coming week and expects to have a plan for potentially implementing new suicide prevention ideas in 2024.
- Working with the Mental Health Foundation to monitor any media reporting of rail fatalities that doesn't meet acceptable guidelines.
- The Mental Health Foundation is developing a new suicide prevention and postvention resource that is tailored to the needs of New Zealand employers and employees. The resource will provide guidelines, information and support for workplaces on how to respond in an event of a suicide attempt or a suicide death that has impacted employees in the workplace.
- Working closely with TrackSAFE Australia to promote suicide awareness training and Rail RU OK? Day in New Zealand. Rail operators have picked up Rail RU OK? Day over the past 3-4 years and it continues to grow. While there is no RU OK? organization in New Zealand, the rail industry values the campaign.
- Auckland One Rail (operators of Auckland passenger trains) recently set up a rail suicide prevention working group. In its early stages, the group has so far focused on sharing data and drafting a terms of reference.

## Acronyms

AAR	Association of American Railroads
AUS	Australia
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit
CAN	Canada
CARE	Community, Analysis, Response, Evaluation
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CISP	Critical Incident Stress Plan
FIN	Finland
FRA	Federal Railroad Association
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GRASP	Global Railway Alliance for Suicide Prevention
NED	Netherlands
NOR	Norway
NVDRS	National Violent Death Reporting System
NZ	New Zealand
OLI	Operation Lifesaver Inc.
RESTRAIL	Reduction of Suicides and Trespasses on RAILway property
ROW	Right-of-Way
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Safety Administration
SPAD	Signal Passed at Danger
SPUR	Suicide Prevention for US Rail
RSSB	Rail Safety and Standards Board
SWE	Sweden
TfL	Transport for London
TreSP	Trespass and Suicide Prevention Network
UIC	International Union of Railways
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States