

ACPMH track record: client case study

Client: Queensland Rail

Queensland Rail (QR) is Australia's largest national rail service. The Human Factors Office, Passenger Services Group is responsible for a broad range of project initiatives aimed at enhancing operational, employee and passenger safety.

Needs

QR asked the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health to review and develop training, protocols and procedures to help prevent and manage psychological trauma to QR employees in the event of a critical incident, including fatalities and serious injury.

Solutions

ACPMH reviewed QR's existing post-fatality incident protocols, training and selection of incident commanders. This included a review of literature, international practice and comparable organisations. Following consultation with all of the staff concerned and visits to the incident sites, ACPMH recommended improvements that would reduce the likelihood of negative mental health consequences for QR staff. ACPMH recommended that QR:

- Adopt new and amended procedures and protocols to minimise the distress experienced by both the Controller and Traincrew following critical incidents
- Revise procedures and the key training messages for incident commanders and investigators to ensure that appropriate immediate emotional support is provided to Traincrew after a critical incident.
- Review emergency standards and training in order to remove unnecessary exposure of QR employees to the aftermath of an incident.
- Review the current selection techniques for incident commanders and investigators who are frequently exposed to critical incidents.

Results

ACPMH's recommendations have helped QR to develop practices that will reduce the magnitude, duration and number of staff suffering the mental health consequences of direct exposure to passenger rail fatalities.