

## **‘Safer Together’ – Aligning Queensland’s Natural Gas E&P Industry ‘Safe Systems Approach’ for Improved Road Safety Outcomes**

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### **Abstract**

Formed in 2014, Queensland’s Natural Gas E&P Industry Safety Forum (‘Safer Together’) is comprised of CSG Operators and 80+ Contractor partners. Travelling 100 million kilometres (estimated) annually and an overall occupational injury frequency rate (IFR), per million hours worked, at 3.9 (2013) - improved safety standards were necessary including road safety. The industry has targeted an IFR of <1.0 by 2018 in addition to reducing life threatening incidents.

Through aligned industry standards targeting fleet and telematics – including a common industry road data set and tracking of key driving risks - safer outcomes for reduced spend, are attainable. Safety performance is measured not just in reducing incident numbers, but also using leading indicators reflecting driver behaviours.

### **Background**

Unlike more conventional mining operations, Queensland’s CSG industry is spread over vast areas of the State, with the majority of vehicle movements occurring across south-west Queensland (the ‘Upstream’ area). The industry works collaboratively with landholders, often positioning CSG facilities amongst farming operations. In addition to the 11,596 km of public roads comprising the Upstream (1), are thousands of private roads where industry vehicles and communities interact.

Based on community road crash statistics, industry lassitude would result in 14.7 hospitalisations / 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled (2). This was an unacceptable position. CSG Operators implemented individual vehicle safety programs delivering reduced safety incidents compared to the statistical norm. However, as peak construction concludes, the industry identified the opportunity to collaborate, clarify and standardize – achieving improved safety and efficiencies.

With leadership core to its success, Safer Together set out with a charter to review the current road safety strategy – aimed at improving safety and countering the negative portrayal of poor driving attributable to industry (3).

A whole of industry review identified inconsistent fleet requirements; driving expectations (speed and other); In Vehicle Monitoring Systems (IVMS) exception parameters and reporting – leading to both contractor confusion and frustration – and ultimately eroding the cornerstones comprising the Safe Systems approach.

Working groups comprised of key personnel from Operators and Contractors focused on clarifying and standardising across key areas:

**Safe Vehicles** – minimum standards for both light and heavy vehicles developed – achieving contractually imposed vehicle specifications.

**Safe Driver/Speed** – IVMS is an industry critical safety control - yet rules were inconsistently measured and reported.

**Safe Journey** – non-existent mapping of common industry roads encouraged potential non-compliance by drivers. A common industry map-set was a foundation piece for safer roads. Some telematics systems couldn't accommodate the volume of data-points necessary to map all common industry roads. Innovation was required.

Working groups engaged with telematics providers and other key stakeholders to develop an industry IVMS technical specification standard underpinned by Transport Certification Australia's National Telematics Framework. Launched on 1 December 2015, the IVMS Standard provides clear direction to industry participants on:

- ❖ Telematics system requirements, including data structures, system set-up;
- ❖ Industry speed limits;
- ❖ Consistent IVMS exception parameters for critical safety areas (eg. speed, seat belts, fatigue);
- ❖ Monthly industry reporting on all driving data (eg. kilometres driven; sub-contractors utilised; and individual IVMS exception data).

Common vehicle standards (light and heavy vehicles) have been developed and published.

With thousands of drivers engaged in the CSG Industry, success of the initiative is dependent on effective education and information reaching all tiers of an organisation. A fully detailed communications strategy encompassing top down implementation by Safer Together leaders has launched, along with an industry website.

The elimination of death and serious injury on roads utilised by the CSG Industry is a target worthy of investing (4). Yet, arguably it does not require a significant financial investment rather a collective will to engage; consult; share learnings and collaborate for solutions.

Safer Together members may contend for business, but they stand side-by-side in achieving safety solutions. With many organisations engaged in other industries, opportunities to further standardise and simplify driving requirements would achieve more agile, innovative, effective and safer outcomes at a reduced cost.

## References

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