



Australian Government  
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

**ATSB**

# Corporate Plan 2022–23

Australia's national transport safety investigator

## INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to present the Australian Transport Safety Bureau's (ATSB) Corporate Plan, which covers the period 2022–23 to 2025–26.

This Corporate Plan has been prepared consistent with paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the relevant provisions of the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (the TSI Act), which establishes the ATSB. The Corporate Plan is also consistent with the Minister's revised Statement of Expectations 2021–23 (SOE) for the ATSB, as notified under Section 12AE of the TSI Act. The SOE sets out clear expectations that the ATSB's resources be used in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical way, following best practice principles and guidelines.

I look forward to working with the newly elected Federal Government, to ensure the Bureau is well positioned to meet the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government's expectations for the ATSB's role in improving transport safety. I acknowledge the ongoing uncertainty for Australia's transport industries operating in an evolving COVID-normal environment and the challenging economic conditions that these sectors face. I am also mindful that such challenges will need to be internally managed to ensure the ATSB maintains its ability to undertake and meet prescribed functions and key deliverables.

I have been the ATSB's Chief Commissioner for 12 months now. I am aware of the calls stemming from a number of inquiries and associated reports, seeking to extend the ATSB's services through an expanded remit. The ATSB will provide input into those inquiries as required. However, any decisions to change the ATSB's remit are a matter for Government. It is my immediate priority to address the ATSB's existing budgetary challenges – specifically the shortfalls in rail investigation resources resulting from unsustainable funding arrangements outside our core appropriations.

In my time as Chief Commissioner the ATSB has demonstrated itself to me as a highly capable organisation. In the past 12 months we have released a number of complex and industry significant reports that carry wide-ranging safety implications to the relevant transport modes; one such report is the ATSB's investigation into the mid-air collision near Mangalore Airport in Victoria in 2020. The investigation highlighted the importance of air traffic hazard assessment and the value of aircraft owners installing Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) devices to assist pilots with the identification and avoidance of conflicting traffic.

An investigation into a level crossing accident north-east of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia in 2021 highlighted the risks of driver distraction and the consequences when heavy vehicles and trains operate in the same geographical space. At the time of the accident the truck driver involved was reattaching a dash mounted mobile phone in its cradle. In addressing the over-representation and increasing occurrences of level crossing collisions between trains and heavy vehicles in Australia, the ATSB has also commenced a level crossing safety study to support learning opportunities for both the rail and road modes of transport.

In the maritime environment, an investigation into a collision between a bulk carrier and a fishing vessel off the entrance to Port Adelaide in South Australia in 2020 highlighted the need for crew to keep a lookout by all available means including use of radar, radio and automatic identification systems. Unfortunately, the safety of fishers and people in small boats remains of concern to the ATSB as collisions between trading vessels and small boats continue to occur. In this regard the ATSB is currently



providing assistance to an Independent review of Domestic Commercial Vessel Safety Legislation and Costs and Charging Arrangements. This review is considering, amongst other issues, whether the ATSB's role should be expanded to include domestic commercial vessels.

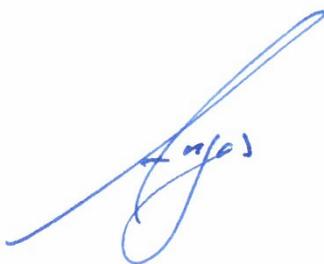
As a relatively small operationally-focused agency, the ATSB will need to anticipate change and adapt to ensure we are meeting the needs of government, industry, and the traveling public. Accordingly, I have been working with staff from across the agency to develop a strategic plan that clearly identifies the key objectives, strategies and actions to be given priority over the short to medium term. The plan, to be released this financial year, will have a focus on:

- enhancing our products and stakeholder engagement for improving transport safety
- fostering organisational resilience
- affirming our role as the national transport safety investigator.

An example of the immediate action we are taking, is the greater utilisation of audio-visual content which will increase consumption of our investigation reports and advance important safety messaging. Stakeholders can also expect the ATSB to produce more statistical and research-based outputs ensuring we are making the best use of available data and the specialist capabilities of our people. We will balance these actions with our core occurrence investigation activities which must continue to be managed within our demand/capacity limitations as this will enable us to expedite production and publishing timeframes.

The strategic plan will position the ATSB to be able to provide greater value for persons and organisations seeking to use our products to take safety action.

Based on my recent interactions with a range of prominent overseas safety investigation bodies, it is evident the ATSB is considered a highly reputable agency and world leading. As Chief Commissioner, I am fully committed to continuing to work innovatively and collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to enhance and amplify our contribution to improving transport safety both domestically and internationally.



Angus Mitchell  
Chief Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer

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## ABOUT THE ATSB

The ATSB is an independent statutory agency of the Australian Government. It is governed by a Commission and is entirely separate from transport regulators, policy makers and service providers. The ATSB's function is to improve transport safety in aviation, rail and interstate and overseas shipping. The ATSB does this through:

- the independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences
- safety data recording, analysis and research
- influencing safety action.

In accordance with the *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003* (TSI Act), the ATSB cannot apportion blame, assist in determining liability or, as a general rule, assist in court proceedings. Its sole focus is the prevention of future accidents and the improvement of transport safety. The ATSB is also required to be independent, in the interests of avoiding conflicts of interest and external interference in its role.

## **VISION**

Transport without accidents

## **MISSION**

We improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.

## PURPOSE

The ATSB's purpose is defined by its mission statement:

*We improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.<sup>1</sup>*

In prioritising the public benefit:

- We focus on the public interest where the safety of passengers and crew on an aircraft, train or ship is concerned. Our job is to prevent deaths and serious injuries.
- We focus on the public interest when it comes to the significant costs that can result from an accident, particularly where there is significant damage to public infrastructure or an impact on the national economy.

Through our independent investigations, we seek to identify safety issues for action by organisations with responsibility for managing that safety risk. Our approach to identifying safety issues encompasses targeting safety improvements for the greatest public benefit. The safety issues we identify are characteristic of an organisation or a system rather than a characteristic of a specific individual. We direct our resources to investigations that have the broadest safety effect on transport systems.

The ATSB does not have powers to force operators, manufacturers or regulators to take action. Instead, the ATSB relies on its ability to influence. An influencer uses their authority, knowledge, position and relationship to shape the decisions of others. We are building relationships with others to support safety action. We have stakeholders willing to be advocates for our safety messaging. Where we are concerned that not enough is being done in response to safety issues being raised, we will work to campaign for action that prevents accidents.

The ATSB's vision for transport without accidents is an aspirational vision for safe transport that stretches well beyond the reporting period of this Corporate Plan. What we can do during the period this Corporate Plan covers is raise expectations for government safety agencies and industry to be proactive about identifying and mitigating hazards and risks in transport systems that have the potential to result in accidents.

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<sup>1</sup> The ATSB's purpose is consistent with the outcome statement in the Portfolio Budget Statement for the ATSB: improved transport safety in Australia including through: independent 'no-blame' investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences; safety data recording, analysis and research; and influencing safety action.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

The ATSB improves transport safety through the following activities:

### **Independent investigation of transport accidents and other safety occurrences**

The ATSB conducts two different types of investigations — occurrence investigations and safety studies.

Occurrence investigations typically examine a single accident or incident in detail. The sequence of events and factual background information are documented, and findings are presented along with a safety analysis to explain those findings. These investigations may identify safety issues — ongoing systemic risks to safety — and the safety actions taken by organisations to address these safety issues. The ATSB may also issue formal safety recommendations where we assess those safety issues have not been adequately addressed.

Occurrence investigations vary in terms of scope:

- Short investigations: Limited scope and generally office based. The findings are confined to safety factors identified as proximal to the occurrence.
- Defined investigations: May involve onsite activity or be office based. The defined scope results in a limited set of findings which may include safety issues.
- Systemic investigations: Involve onsite activity and several ATSB and potentially external resources. A larger scope means these investigations are more likely to identify several safety issues.

Safety studies typically investigate multiple occurrences of a similar nature, or a potential or emerging safety issue. They are conducted as an investigation under the TSI Act and aim to uncover safety issues through the analysis of occurrence and other data.

The ATSB also publishes occurrence briefs, which are concise reports that detail the facts surrounding a transport occurrence, as received in the initial notification and any follow-up enquiries. These briefs provide an opportunity to share safety messages in the absence of an investigation.

### **Safety data recording, analysis and research**

The ATSB maintains the national aviation occurrence database and makes the content publicly available. Over 17,000 notifications of transport accidents and incidents are received every year. For rail and marine the ATSB receives notifications and data via the regulators.

The ATSB uses data and information it collects to identify transport safety matters that may lead to further safety enhancements through investigations, research and targeted safety education. The ATSB generally produces official Australian aviation occurrence statistics each year, and aviation wildlife strike statistics every two years.

The ATSB also operates the voluntary and confidential reporting scheme (REPCON) for the aviation, marine and rail and industries. Any person within these industries, or member of the travelling public, may submit a REPCON report of a reportable safety concern. The scheme is designed to capture safety concerns — including unsafe practices, procedures and risk controls within an organisation or affected part of the industry.

## **Influencing safety action**

The ATSB interacts with a broad audience including governments, the public and industry. Within industry there are different participants, ranging from operators and manufacturers, to individual staff with specific safety-critical responsibilities. These audiences often require different communication styles and messages to ensure they take appropriate safety action.

The ATSB recognises that not all stakeholders who need to be informed of the ATSB’s safety messaging will read detailed investigation reports. Therefore, the ATSB identifies the different audiences we engage with and the best means to educate and promote our safety messaging. Channels for communicating include social media, mainstream media such as television, radio, print media, trade media publications and news websites, and participation in industry events and forums.

The ATSB invests in studying and contributing to the methodologies and techniques used by accident investigation authorities in transport and non-transport modes across the world. We do this by employing academic discipline, supported by our continuing partnership with RMIT University. The ATSB’s partnership with RMIT to deliver transport safety investigation qualifications commits the ATSB to investing in the training and skill development of people in a position to support improvements to transport safety.

The ATSB is committed to close engagement with its international counterpart agencies and relevant multilateral organisations. In line with Australian Government policy, the ATSB places a specific emphasis on engagement with countries in the Asia–Pacific region, particularly with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

The ATSB is also actively involved in the work of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and is an active member of the International Transportation Safety Association (ITSA).

## OPERATING CONTEXT

### Environment

The work the ATSB is able to undertake to improve transport safety through its investigations is contextualised through changes in the operational environment for transport industries. The impact of COVID-19 continues to be a significant factor affecting these industries, and uncertainty still remains about the pandemic's ongoing impacts. Changing economic conditions with inflationary pressures and supply chain disruptions are also factors we know transport industries must contend with.

The ATSB can offer our safety knowledge and expertise in this changing environment when operators are experiencing budgetary pressure. Our experience in investigating accidents and incidents that occur amidst organisational change in a cost-pressured environment can help with applying safety lessons from the past to today.

Internally, the ATSB is working to consolidate the benefits of a significant change management program over the last few years:

- A greater focus on how we engage with our stakeholders with enhanced use of digital mediums which we know amplifies our safety messaging.
- We have evolved our recruitment strategies and practices by defining and targeting core competencies for multi-disciplined and multi-modal investigators. We are upgrading information, communications and technology infrastructure to enable a more data driven approach and drive further improvements to investigation management.
- We are furthering our relationship with RMIT to deliver university qualifications in transport safety investing ation.
- A de-centralisation approach to property holdings is resulting in more state-based resources being readily deployable to transport accident sites throughout Australia.
- The *Transport Safety Investigation Regulations 2021* will be amended to align accident and incident reporting requirements when ATSB investigation and analysis of data is most likely to be used for the greatest public benefit.

### Jurisdiction

Currently, the ATSB's jurisdiction covers the transport sectors as outlined below.

<b>Aviation</b>	Civilian Australian-registered aircraft anywhere in the world
<b>Marine</b>	Civilian interstate and overseas shipping involving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian-registered ships anywhere in the world</li> <li>• foreign-registered ships in Australian waters</li> <li>• foreign-registered ships en route to Australian ports</li> </ul>
<b>Rail</b>	Civilian rail vehicles in Australia

The ATSB does not have the resources to investigate every one of the thousands of accidents and incidents that occur in these sectors each year. In order to provide assurance that the ATSB's finite resources are being used for the greatest safety benefit, the ATSB will continue to work with government and industry stakeholders to clarify the priorities for its existing jurisdiction and the potential for its expansion.

Consistent with the Minister’s Statement of Expectations for the ATSB, the ATSB provided input into the recent Productivity Commission inquiry into National Transport Regulatory Reforms. The final inquiry report recommended that the Australian Government:

- *provide a sufficient annual appropriation to enable the ATSB to carry out its functions, both existing and as proposed in this inquiry*
- *formalise the role of the ATSB in conducting investigations and research involving Domestic Commercial Vessels and rail*
- *amend the TSI Act 2003 to enable the ATSB to conduct research and investigate incidents involving heavy vehicles, and autonomous vehicle technologies*
- *direct the ATSB to undertake a clearly defined, phased transition into the heavy vehicle role, including an initial period of data collection and research to identify any systemic issues and incident types with the potential to inform policy.*

The ATSB will be prepared to support the response to this inquiry being facilitated by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts. The ATSB will also be prepared to provide input into other government-led work examining potential roles for the ATSB in investigating accidents and incidents involving space launches and returns, domestic commercial vessels, and heavy road and automated vehicles.

The ATSB will take account of international agreements when reviewing its current jurisdiction. In aviation this includes the Convention on International Civil Aviation and in marine, the Safety of Life at Sea Convention. Under these conventions and supporting documents, there are expectations relating to investigating certain categories of accidents and incidents. The ATSB will have regard to these expectations but will have as its primary focus, using its resources to investigate those occurrences that provide safety lessons of the greatest public benefit.

## **Technology**

New technologies are increasingly being adopted in transport. These technologies are improving efficiency, enabling new types of transport operations, improving safety and much more. Into the future we can expect new advancements in technology and subsequently, further change in how transport operates.

### **Automation**

While the aviation sector has seen increasing levels of automation for decades, fully automated transport is now expanding into other transport modes. For example, Australia’s first fully-automated passenger rail service, the Sydney Metro started operating in 2019. These trains are monitored by controllers in a central control centre but have no drivers on-board. The use of fully automatic trains continues to expand in the Pilbara region.



**Big data and complex systems**

Transport operators are collecting and analysing vast amounts of data about asset tracking, scheduling, route optimisation, and equipment repair to improve efficiency and reduce costs<sup>2</sup>.

For example, shipping companies are starting to employ predictive maintenance programs. Instead of only relying on a standard maintenance schedule or waiting for engines to fail, sensors monitor engine performance and alert engineers of potential maintenance issues before they become a more significant issue<sup>3</sup>.

**Remotely piloted technology**

Remotely piloted technologies are increasingly being adopted – replacing some existing piloted operations and enabling other new operations. The number of remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) is growing rapidly in Australia. The ATSB is also increasing the use of RPAS in its own investigations, including for site mapping.



<sup>2</sup> Solomon, Mark B, 2016, 'Big data, analytics could be a welcome tonic for the beleaguered liner shipping trade', *DC Velocity*, [www.dcvelocity.com/articles/20161024-big-data-analytics-could-be-a-welcome-tonic-for-the-beleaguered-liner-shipping-trade/](http://www.dcvelocity.com/articles/20161024-big-data-analytics-could-be-a-welcome-tonic-for-the-beleaguered-liner-shipping-trade/)

<sup>3</sup> Oyku, 2017, *Maersk and digital revolution in shipping industry*, <https://digit.hbs.org/submission/maersk-and-digital-revolution-in-shipping-industry/>

## PERFORMANCE

We have set performance measures that seek to demonstrate our ability to achieve our purpose of improving transport safety. The performance measures balance effectiveness, efficiency and investigation outputs. While the targets for each of these measures are quantitative, as appropriate, the results will be supplemented by qualitative information to give greater context and meaning.

### Effectiveness

- 1. Outcome:** Improve transport safety for the greatest public benefit through our independent investigations and influencing safety action.

KPI	Target 2022–23	Target 2023–24 and beyond
Number of safety issues that are addressed through safety action.	a) 65% of safety issues addressed in the last financial year b) 85% of safety issues addressed in the previous financial year.	

**Comment:** The performance targets for outcome 1 recognise that some safety issues will take time to be actioned by stakeholders. We expect that some of safety issues not actioned in the year they are identified will be addressed the ensuing year. There also needs to be some tolerance for a minority of safety issues identified not being actioned. The ATSB does not have powers to force operators, manufacturers, and regulators to take action. The ATSB relies on its ability to influence.

- 2. Outcome:** We identify safety issues additional to those identified by industry and government safety agencies for the greatest public benefit through our occurrence investigations and safety studies.

KPI	Target 2022–23	Target 2023–24 and beyond
Number of Systemic, Defined, and Safety Study investigations completed by ATSB that identify safety issues.	65% of investigations identify a safety issue.	
Percentage of all investigations that identify at least one safety issue not already identified by others.	Perform better relative to the 2021–22 baseline established.	Perform better relative to the 2021–22 baseline established.

**Comment:** The measures for outcome 2 are targeted towards demonstrating that the ATSB adds value. If we commence a systemic investigation there should be a strong prospect of finding a safety issue. We intend to be able to demonstrate that a certain percentage of those safety issues are ones that have not been identified by another entity. When reporting on these measures, additional qualitative information will be provided summarising the significant safety action taken in response to the safety issues identified.

## Efficiency

- 3. Outcome:** We efficiently use our resources to conduct investigations through selective investigation processes and project management discipline.

KPI	Target 2022–23	Target 2023–24 and beyond
On an average annual basis, the ATSB will be conducting around twice the number of investigations as it has available investigators.	Projecting 90 active investigations	Projections to be revised annually based on known full time equivalent investigators.

**Comment:** This outcome and KPI focuses the ATSB’s attention on managing its limited resources. The performance measure has been set with a target consistent with resourcing and investigation output expectations for similar investigation agencies internationally.

Over 2022-23 the ATSB also intends to set a baseline target for the cost of its investigations. This will be calculated taking into account recorded labour inputs.

## Outputs

- 4. Outcome:** ATSB safety-related information is shared in a timely manner for the benefit of those needing awareness of relevant hazards, risks and trends or taking safety action, through publishing information in accordance with committed timeframes.

KPI	Target 2022–23	Target 2023–24	Target 2024–25	Target 2025–26
Median time to complete investigations.	Short: 7 months Defined: 14 months Systemic: 20 months	Short: 6 months Defined: 12 months Systemic: 18 months	Short: 6 months Defined: 12 months Systemic: 18 months	Short: 6 months Defined: 12 months Systemic: 18 months

- 5. Outcome:** Investigations of transport occurrences, and safety studies are defensible, to ensure industry and government confidence in our work, through the use of evidence based and systemic investigation processes.

KPI	Target 2022–23	Target 2023–24 and beyond
Number of changes to the ATSB’s published investigation finding over the previous financial year.	Zero	Zero

**Comment:** These measures focus on the timeliness and quality of the ATSB’s investigation products. Timely sharing of safety information is important for our stakeholders with responsibility for managing risk. Our stakeholders need to have confidence in that information to be able to act.

## CAPABILITY

The ATSB has a highly-qualified and skilled workforce employing tools and techniques that other agencies around the world respect and rely on. Continuing to build the ATSB’s capability is important for positioning the agency to improve transport safety into the future.

In a rapidly changing transport environment, the ATSB, and agencies like it, will need to be flexible to anticipate and respond to changing demands. New technologies will require different skills and equipment; changing workforce expectations will require greater flexibility in the way people work.

The ATSB seeks to be adaptive and flexible by pursuing both in-house capability and strategic partnerships with organisations which can provide access to the people and equipment needed to do the job. Increasingly, the ATSB expects that it will be through these strategic partnerships that the ATSB will gain the flexibility to respond to changing demands for the performance of its functions.

### Workforce

The ATSB’s Workforce Strategy is designed to outline the agency’s approach to meeting and maintaining its future workforce needs, within the level of available financial resources. Our strategy will be aligned with the APS Workforce Strategy 2025 during 2022-23. Given the finite nature of ATSB human capital, representing an associated employee cost of approximately 65 per cent of the agency’s current and projected budgets, it is imperative that strategies are developed and implemented to maximise the utilisation of all available resources.

These strategies include:

***Reshaping the workforce*** – advancing tools that support a systemic and rigorous workforce planning process and focus on maintaining our operational efficiency, bringing to bear the collective core skills and knowledge within the agency.

***Developing an agile and high-performing workforce*** – with a particular focus on our Transport Safety Investigators and establishing flexible arrangements where there is an identified shortfall of capabilities with the required industry-based technical skills and knowledge.

***Attracting and retaining staff from diverse backgrounds*** – despite increasing market forces and our salary rates being below the APS median, and less competitive in comparison with other portfolio agencies.

***Building management and leadership capability*** – through enhancing leadership and management skills to enable our managers to utilise and harness our workforce’s capabilities to greater effect.

***Ensuring a healthy and safe workforce*** – through careful application and analysis of a range of health and wellbeing initiatives, includes monitoring benchmarked data sets.

### Infrastructure

In the period of this Corporate Plan, planned infrastructure investments include:

- Updating regional office fitouts with a particular focus on physical security (PSPF), and post occupational operational improvements
- Pursuing a market sweep for the expiring tenancy lease for 179 Turbot Street, Brisbane. The current lease has an extension option available, however due to current market forces it is necessary to start the process early to allow for effective negotiations and/or relocation and fitout consideration prior to lease expiry

- Upgrades to investigation equipment such as software and hardware including the replacement of mobile handsets and tablet computers which are now due for replacement.

These investments will assist the ATSB to use its resources in a more efficient manner and support the agency's core work relating to transport investigations.

Over time, the ATSB's estimated capital injections fall short of the deficits associated with the non-funding of depreciation and amortisation. Without adequate injections by the Government, this represents a challenge to the ATSB in maintaining its underlying equity and asset capability going forward.

The ATSB continues to take a conservative approach towards its capital investment strategy, as the capital available to the agency is quite low for the forward years. The majority of this allocation will be used for maintaining plant and equipment on a needs basis, to ensure the agency has the necessary equipment to conduct its investigative functions.

### **Information and Communications Technology**

The ATSB's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategic Plan and Roadmap is designed to provide a plan for information, communications and technology in support of our organisational objectives. Improvements in collaboration will continue as the ATSB moves away from owning and operating our ICT infrastructure towards consuming these as a service where possible. The ATSB continues to leverage cloud technologies and transition to an alternative managed services model.

This work is motivated by a number of factors, including:

- the need to better support ATSB core operations that involve collaboration between staff and other stakeholders at partner and client sites and in the field
- greater emphasis on post-investigation functions such as leveraging data and publishing findings to a broad audience to affect changes in behaviour and policy that improve transport safety outcomes
- the current Whole-of-Government emphasis on a cloud-first approach to IT service delivery outlined by the Digital Transformation Agency (DTA).

The ATSB's core business system (AIMS) has now been in operation for 12 months. This next 12 months will see an investment of resources to continue to enhance the productivity and capability of this asset in partnership with operational staff.

The ATSB will continue to work with the Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics (BITRE) which is leading the development of an integrated aviation data sharing platform.

### **Financial resources**

The ATSB's funding varies by transport mode. Aviation activities are funded through Commonwealth appropriation. Marine activity is also funded through Commonwealth appropriation, consistent with our established jurisdiction of certain civilian interstate and overseas shipping. The ATSB is not resourced for domestic commercial vessel investigations.

A comparatively small amount of our funding is for rail. The majority of the ATSB's rail investigation resourcing is supplemented by fee-for-service and up-front agreements with some states and voluntary provision of investigation resources by others. The ATSB has provided advice to government inquiries that the fee-for-service model has led to inadequate resourcing for rail safety investigations. The ATSB cannot predict whether it will receive funds from a state in any given year, which is an obstacle for retaining trained and qualified investigation resources. A further factor is that the ATSB has been unable to negotiate new agreements in three states to cover the costs of investigations. The ATSB may not be able to investigate rail occurrences in some states due to being

unable to retain resources for those states.

The ATSB has not been able to absorb increasing employee and supplier costs to the extent that it has only been able to maintain an average staffing profile of around 100 personnel (presently 98). Historically the minimum critical staffing level has been 110. While the ATSB is employing strategies to improve efficiencies there is a risk to the ATSB's ongoing ability to maintain service levels.

Detailed information regarding ATSB funding for 2022–23 can be found in the Portfolio Budget Statements [Portfolio budget statement 2022–23](#).

## COOPERATION

The ATSB can identify safety issues but cannot make others take safety action. The ATSB is actively engaging with stakeholders who are already safety advocates and who may be able to work with the ATSB on influencing others to improve safety. The ATSB has memoranda of understanding with a number of industry associations who are in a position to reach out to their members with messaging that is tailored to their working environment.

In addition, the ATSB will use domestic and international forums hosted by others to share priority safety messages. The ATSB will also engage with stakeholders directly where it is appropriate for the ATSB to provide information on its role and explain its reasoning for making particular findings.

Where the ATSB is concerned about inaction on areas of safety concern, the ATSB will seek to work with others, such as Coroners, regulators and government-led safety inquiries, to influence safety action.

Identifying safety risks is a shared responsibility, and regulatory authorities, industry and others investigate, research and conduct data analysis where the ATSB does not. From a safety systems perspective, the ATSB needs to have confidence that others are properly identifying the hazards and risks from the occurrences and data where the ATSB is not involved. The ATSB will continue to engage with governments and industry to ensure appropriate organisations are involved for different occurrences. The ATSB's partnership with RMIT University for the delivery of investigation courses supports the enhancement of capability in others, where required.

To deliver rail safety investigation services in New South Wales and Victoria, the ATSB has a collaboration agreement with independent investigation agencies in those states. The agreement provides for resources from those agencies to be used to conduct investigations under the Commonwealth's *Transport Safety Investigation Act 2003*.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

As Australia’s national aviation, rail and marine safety investigator, the ATSB is experienced in risk management for the purpose of identifying safety risks in industry so that they can be effectively managed. In a risk management framework, these safety risks are shared risks where the ATSB, the regulator and industry participants need to work together to improve safety.

### Risk approach

Risk management in the ATSB is about improving organisational performance and resilience, providing the ATSB with confidence to make difficult decisions, and identifying and exploring opportunities.

The ATSB has revised its agency risk management framework to align with the introduction of a new online risk management system. This revision has included an updated risk management policy, and risk management guidelines. The new online risk management system aims to provide an enterprise view of risk for the agency, aggregating risks managed in the upgraded investigation information management system and the planned work health and safety system.

The ATSB is working to embed the revised risk approach into business planning and operational processes by developing training material to advance risk capabilities.

As the ATSB responds to a new government with a new Chief Commissioner, further development of the agency’s enterprise risk profile will align with development of strategic priorities.

### Our critical success factors

The ATSB’s appetite and tolerance for risk is mapped to defined categories of critical success factors which relate to the agency’s organisational objectives.

Category	Tolerance Statement
Strategic	We have long term aspirations to meet our vision goals and achieve a sustainable operating model through pursuing strategic priorities. We have a medium risk tolerance for being more strategically adept, and to explore avenues for greater value for money from Commonwealth resources.
Delivery	We focus on identifying and raising awareness of safety issues to effectively influence proactive safety action to improve transport safety. We have a low risk tolerance for failing to provide public deliverables that are evidence based and defensible. This applies to non-investigation deliverables as well as enabling projects delivered internally that have a significant effect on what we are able to deliver publicly. We must efficiently deliver sustainable investigative arguments with technical accuracy and completeness to obtain the most benefit from limited available resources. We have a low risk tolerance for poor planning, scoping or management of resources that adversely affects timeframes for completing and publishing investigation products or adversely impacts the timelines set for investigations and major projects.
Financial	We need to efficiently use Commonwealth resources to continue to serve our purpose and to achieve our strategic priorities. We have a low risk tolerance for mismanagement of the ATSB’s resources. We have a low risk tolerance for dishonest or fraudulent behaviour.
Compliance	As a Commonwealth Government agency, the ATSB needs to comply with a diverse range of Commonwealth legislation and policies including the <i>Public Service Act</i>

	<p>1999, Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, Whole of Government procurement policies and Protective Security Policies. We must also comply with our own internal policies, and obligations we are committed to under commercial contracts and Memoranda of Understanding.</p> <p>We have a low risk tolerance for breaches of external obligations or breaches of internal policies and procedures, particularly those which damage national interests or impair cooperation with transport safety participants.</p>
Work Health, Safety and Wellbeing	<p>The ATSB is required to comply with the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Cth) and <i>Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988</i> (Cth), as well as subordinate legislation. We are committed to ensuring the physical and psychological safety of staff, external consultants and members of the public who are exposed to hazardous conditions in the course of a transport safety investigation and in the workplace. We have a low risk tolerance for actions that would compromise the health or wellbeing of any person required to work with the ATSB on an investigation, or work in or visit an ATSB place of work.</p>
Reputation	<p>We depend on the ability to remain independent through the provision of impartial and unbiased advice, in order to influence transport industries and regulators to take safety action in response to our safety findings. We have a low risk tolerance for actions which erode trust and confidence in the ATSB's credibility or integrity.</p>

## Enterprise Risks

Risk	Controls and Treatments
<p><b>The ATSB does not have enough financial resources to make an effective contribution to improving safety across the modes.</b></p> <p>The context for this risk is inconsistency with state government funding for rail investigations and the increasing employee and supplier costs versus appropriation.</p>	<p>The ATSB continues to seek to negotiate new funding agreements with the states for rail safety investigations. The ATSB is also working with the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to address policy issues surrounding the ATSB's funding in rail as well as its overall budgetary position. The ATSB continues to seek to implement best practices to manage its allocation of resources.</p>
<p><b>The ATSB fails to share safety information in a timely manner resulting in a delay in safety action that could prevent an accident.</b></p> <p>The context for this risk is the challenges the ATSB has experienced in meeting timeliness targets for the publication of reports.</p>	<p>The ATSB does not rely on publication of reports alone to share safety information. The ATSB shares safety information as soon as practicable with stakeholders who need to act on it. This often occurs before the publication of a report.</p> <p>The ATSB cleared a significant backlog of investigations in 2021–22. New efficiency performance measures assist the ATSB with managing its case load. Leadership training has focused on accountability for performance.</p>

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The ATSB has systems and controls in place to ensure we manage resources efficiently, effectively, and ethically in accordance with the provisions of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013*.

While protecting our independence, we work closely with transport safety regulators and the aviation, marine and rail industries. We approach our work in accordance with five key principles intended to maintain trust in our organisation:

- Independence – we think for ourselves
- Engagement – we work with others
- Rigour – we rely on evidence
- Innovation – we are open to new ideas
- Relevance – we make a difference.

The ATSB fosters a culture where we:

- treat each other with dignity and respect, valuing our people as our greatest resource
- work across the ATSB as ‘One Team’
- search for the truth to enhance transport safety.

Our five key principles and culture are backed by our commitment to the Australian Public Service (APS) Values set out in the *Public Service Act 1999*:

- **Impartial:** The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
- **Committed to service:** The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.
- **Accountable:** The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
- **Respectful:** The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
- **Ethical:** The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity in all that it does.

## PGPA RULE REQUIREMENTS

The ATSB has prepared this Corporate Plan in accordance with the requirements of:

- Subsection 35(1) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013 and
- The PGPA Rule 2014.

The table below outlines each relevant requirement and where it is covered in the Corporate Plan.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Page</b>
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