In another significant step towards the full operation of the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, FreightLink has achieved rail safety accreditation allowing the company to own railway infrastructure on the new railway line.

The Minister for Business Industry and Resource Development, Paul Henderson, made the presentation on behalf of the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Kon Vatskalis.

Mr Henderson said the rail safety accreditation is required under the Northern Territory Rail Safety Act, and represents a co-regulatory approach to rail safety based on the latest principles of risk management.

"Rail safety is an essential part of railway operations and the accreditation process, which is based on a thorough audit of a rail safety system, has seen FreightLink come up trumps with a sound safety management system," Mr Henderson said.

For FreightLink to gain accreditation, all risks associated with rail transport were rated and controls put in place to reduce the risks to as low a level as reasonably practicable.

"Due to the very large-scale of the rail infrastructure, the development of the safety management system was a time consuming exercise demanding assiduous work from all people involved," said Mr Henderson.

"The Government’s Rail Safety Unit has spent several hundred man-hours covering the engineering and operational document control and other safety aspects required for the accreditation.

"This system will be regularly audited by the company and the Rail Safety Unit to ensure safety standards remain at the highest possible level.”

Mr Henderson congratulated FreightLink on their successful application for accreditation and the Rail Safety Unit for its diligence and efforts at managing this process.