

23 January 2009

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government
PO Box 6021
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FREIGHT COUNCIL



Submission No: 8
Date Received: 23-1-09
Secretary: <i>MC</i>

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission to enquiry on Train Illumination.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment into the review of the Standing Committee's 2004 report titled: *Train Illumination: inquiry into some measures proposed to improve train visibility and reduce level crossing accidents.*

The SA Freight Council is the State's peak, multi-modal industry group that advises both the Federal and State governments on industry related issues, and is funded by both governments. It represents road, rail, sea and air freight modes and operations, and assists the industry on issues relating to freight logistics across all modes.

Level crossing accidents are of significant concern to the land transport industry as well as the general community. Australia - as a sparsely populated nation interspaced by huge distances - requires a transport system that is efficient and effective in order to compete in international markets. Coupled with this is the requirement to make each workplace safe, whether it is in motion or stationary.

Australia needs both road and rail transport systems to be operating efficiently and effectively - either mode working alone or at a significantly reduced efficiency will damage Australia's ability to compete. Banning trucks or trains and closing crossings is not an optimal solution.

SAFC believes that the five recommendations of the *Train Illumination* report are still valid today, and that a review of how fully implementation has occurred in all jurisdictions should be undertaken. This is particularly required for Recommendation 1 (train illumination requirements).

SAFC supports Recommendation 2, that a national level crossing risk scoring system be implemented. We suggest that this system be transparent to the public, and that the ability for the public and transport industry to provide local information on changes at a crossing that may impact on safety (for example tree growth obscuring line of sight, or vandalism) be implemented. This could be done through traditional means (including telephone hotline) and/or the internet.

Recommendations 3 and 4 promote the safety benefits of relatively minor infrastructure upgrades, and recommend continued research into the efficacy of some possible improvements. We believe it is important that the review of the *Train Illumination* report provides an update on how fully these recommendations have been followed, that new investigation is undertaken where new technologies have arisen, and that installation of safety measures at "high risk" crossings proceeds as a priority.

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SAFC also believes that there is also a lesson that can be learnt from Commonwealth and State jurisdictions "Black Spot" road funding programs – investment of a small amount of funds at high risk locations can have a significant impact in reducing accidents. SAFC suggests that such a program may provide benefits for rail at a significant cost-benefit ratio.

Lastly, SAFC would like to commend to the Committee the recent agreement between the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) and Australian Trucking Association (ATA) to work together to promote level crossing safety. To see two traditionally adversarial organisations working together on this issue of mutual concern is a great step forward, and deserves to be recognized and supported. Moreover, this partnership has the potential to provide improved information on individual crossing risk, by providing both train and road vehicle perspectives and knowledge.

If you have any questions regarding this submission, feel free to contact me on the numbers listed below.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Murphy
General Manager
SA Freight Council Inc