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Government of South Australia
Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure

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The Secretary
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional
Development and Local Government
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

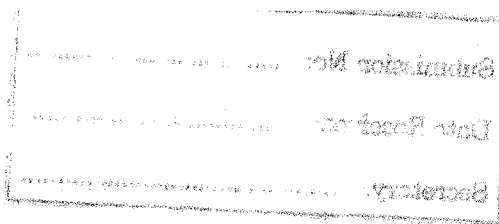
**SUBMISSION INTO UPDATE OF 2004 REPORT ON TRAIN
ILLUMINATION**

I write as chair of the South Australian State Level Crossing Strategy Advisory Committee. The Committee wishes to make a submission to the update of the 2004 Standing Committee report titled: *Train Illumination: inquiry into some measures proposed to improve train visibility and reduce level crossing accidents.*

The South Australian Government, through the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI), has implemented a number of processes and programs to improve level crossing safety in South Australia, including:

- establishing a State Level Crossing Strategy Advisory Committee and a Level Crossing Unit within DTEI
- surveying and assessing all level crossings on public roads in South Australia using the Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM)
- implementing a level crossing improvement program targeting traffic queuing at level crossings in metropolitan Adelaide, with around \$13m spent to June 2008, and
- producing the successful 'Don't Play with Trains' television and radio education campaign on the dangers at level crossings.

South Australia has had a State Level Crossing Strategy Advisory Committee for many years and in January 2007 the Committee was reformed with a strategic focus to provide advice on the best mix of infrastructure, regulation and policy strategies to improve



level crossing safety. The Committee has representation from DTEI, Australian Rail Track Corporation, Great Southern Rail, Local Government Association, Pacific National, Genesee and Wyoming, Australian Rail, Tram & Bus Industry Union, Royal Automobile Association, South Australia Police, Council of Historic Railways and TransAdelaide. The committee has provided advice to the government based on the "Three E's" of level crossing safety – Education, Engineering and Enforcement.

Using this framework, DTEI has led the implementation of a number of initiatives during 2007 and 2008.

Education

- Continued to promote level crossing safety through the 'Don't Play with Trains' television and radio campaign and with a new education campaign proposed in 2009, produced by the National Level Crossing Behavioural Coordination Group (BCG).
- Continued to promote safe and appropriate behaviour on trains and near railway lines through the school based SafeTrack education program delivered by TransAdelaide.
- Promoted level crossing safety through existing community road safety groups and local Councils.
- Coordinated activities for the Australasian Railway Association Rail Safety Awareness week in conjunction with TransAdelaide, DTEI and South Australia Police.

Enforcement

- Undertaking planning work to commence the installation of red light/speed cameras at high incident level crossings controlled by flashing lights.
- Increased penalties for offences at level crossings to match the penalties for similar offences committed at road intersections.
- South Australia Police has conducted targeted level crossing enforcement campaigns based on near miss incident data.

Engineering

- From 2008-09 a Level Crossing Safety Program will fund road infrastructure improvements at level crossings with poor visibility to approaching trains, insufficient room for vehicles to clear the tracks and those used by B-Double trucks. The focus is on improving safety where roads cross high speed main rail lines carrying both passenger and freight trains, which are predominantly in regional South Australia.
- From 2008-09 a new Level Crossing Black Spot program has been established, in partnership with local government, to jointly fund small scale improvements to level crossings on local roads only. The funding is for projects such as improved warning signs, line of site vegetation clearance, addition of lighting, traffic calming measures and closure of a crossing.

The committee will continue to formulate additional initiatives based on the "Three E's" of level crossing safety.

The Committee has the following response to the recommendations in the 2004 report into train illumination.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government take steps, through the Transport Ministers Council, to require that all locomotives and rolling stock in the Australian rail industry are fitted with standard reflective strips or reflective paint and that all locomotives are fitted with rotating beacons lights.

Response

We understand that reflective strips or reflective paint has been installed on rolling stock. Also, a trial was conducted in Western Australia to determine the effectiveness of rotating beacons on locomotives but it was never adopted and the industry, through the Rail Industry Safety and Standards Board, has adopted their own standard for lighting and rolling stock visibility.

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the Australian Government seek the national adoption of a level crossing risk scoring system based on the Queensland model and adapted for local conditions.

Response

The Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM) is used in South Australia to assess the risk at individual level crossings. There is a national project underway within Austroads to assess the future use of ALCAM or similar risk assessment models.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government initiate, through the Transport Ministers Council, a program to install, as a minimum, rumble strips at high accident risk level crossings.

Response

The Committee does not currently recommend the use of rumble strips on the approach to high risk level crossings as an effective measure to alert road vehicles of an approaching level crossing. If the level crossing is deemed to be high risk it would be more appropriate to increase the protection at the crossing to match this risk. It is not yet apparent what impact rumble strips will have on addressing the causal factors contributing to the high risk rating of a crossing. There have been studies, in particular in Western Australia, that question the effectiveness of rumble strips and the Committee will continue to monitor the effectiveness of rumble strips installed in Victoria before considering whether they should be adopted in South Australia.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government through the Transport Ministers Council, support continued research into the efficacy of train activated rumble strips with a view to the installation of these strips at the most dangerous level crossings.

Response

The Committee does not consider this would be cost effective. The biggest costs in providing active protection are the train detection and control systems. Therefore, if costs are to be incurred then the provision of warning lights and boom gates is considered to be a more effective treatment.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Department of Transport and Regional Services, with state transport departments, formally look at the Canadian based level crossing education program, 'Operation Lifesaver', for the possible adoption into Australian state road safety programs.

Response

South Australia has adopted the education campaign developed by the National Level Crossing Behavioural Coordination Group, as this is based on sound research into the current behaviour at level crossings. This program is considered more relevant to Australian conditions. The Committee understands that all Australian jurisdictions have agreed to use this campaign. It is possible that Operation Lifesaver may be discussed by the newly formed national level crossing group.

This submission has been authorised by Mr Jim Hallion, Chief Executive, Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure.

Yours faithfully,



Phil Allan
Executive Director, Safety & Regulation Division
Chair, State Level Crossing Strategy Advisory Committee

21 January 2009