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BY: .....

Mr John Eren, MP  
Chair  
The Parliament of Victoria Road Safety Committee

Submission No. LC/4  
Received  
Road Safety Committee

28 August 2007

Dear Mr Eren

Re: Call for Submissions

Thank you for your invitation for a submission to the Inquiry into Improving Safety at Level Crossings.

CSIRO's activities in Manufacturing Technologies for Transport encompass weight reduction, sustainable materials & manufacturing and safety & durability. In terms of road safety, our focus has been on vehicle based solutions improving the safety of vehicle occupants and possibly pedestrians. CSIRO has capabilities in vision systems and blast/impact resistant structures that may be useful in addressing safety at level crossings.

While we have not worked on the specific issue of level crossings, I can offer a few suggestions:

1. Road texture to warn of the approaching crossing. This helps to address the issue of lack of signal recognition (e.g. When one is behind a truck or otherwise distracted).
2. Improving driver warning systems – radar speed detection technology and vision systems could be used to detect vehicle speed on approach and if the vehicle is outside safe limits a very high intensity warning would be triggered. This addresses the issue of speeding drivers and perhaps driver fade out.
3. Barriers – off set the road at the crossing such that all vehicles must turn or they will be restrained by the barrier. This addresses the issue of driver loss of consciousness and speeding drivers. It may be possible to prevent driver fatality with appropriate barrier design.

We would anticipate that VicRoads and MUARC would be across such issues and would contact CSIRO if they felt that they needed our input. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. R. Finin'.

Barrie Finin  
General Manager – Manufacturing Technologies for Transport  
CSIRO