

Received  
Road Safety Committee

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- 4 OCT 2007



BY:.....

Queensland Transport

Our ref: DG7642

4 OCT 2007

Mr John Eren MP  
Chair  
Road Safety Commission  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne Vic 3002

Dear Mr Eren

Thank you for your letter of 20 August 2007 inviting Queensland Transport (QT) to make a submission to the inquiry into improving safety at level crossings. QT acknowledges the need to address safety at level crossings from a number of angles, including the development and implementation of new technologicis.

QT would like to take this opportunity to provide a submission in the form of a summary (Attachment 1) of Queensland's current programs and policies, and its involvement in related national initiatives, which are designed to improve level crossing safety. The Queensland Department of Main Roads was also consulted with respect to providing input to this submission.

If you require any further information regarding QT's submission, please call Ms Julie Bullas, Director (Rail Safety) on (07) 3137 8900. Ms Bullas will be happy to help you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Wilson".

Bruce Wilson  
Director-General

Enc (1)

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## ATTACHMENT 1

### ***Queensland Initiatives***

#### **Level Crossing Safety Steering Group (LCSSG)**

The LCSSG was established in 1995 and contains representatives from Queensland Transport (QT), Main Roads (MR), Queensland Rail (QR), the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), Queensland Police Service and the Queensland Sugar Research Institute. The charter of LCSSG is to:

- Monitor the safety of road and rail users at rail level crossings;
- Prioritise rail level crossings for integrity (for safety enhancements);
- Recommend cost effective strategies for rail level crossing safety in Queensland to implementing agencies; and
- Monitor and report to stakeholders on the implementation of, and effectiveness of, improvements.

LCSSG initiated the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalise the management and funding responsibilities for level crossing safety in Queensland. The MOU signatories are QT, MR, QR and LGAQ. The stated objectives of the MOU are to:

- Establish the Statement of Institutional Responsibilities;
- Outline the objectives and responsibilities of the parties; and
- Review operational effectiveness and establish a resolution process.

LCSSG convenes regularly and national level crossing safety developments, discussed at the Australian Railway Crossing Strategy Implementation Group (ARCSIG) and Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model (ALCAM) Group meetings, are considered along with other level crossing safety issues raised by members. LCSSG also identifies issues and developments relating to level crossing safety that may warrant forwarding to ARCSIG or ALCAM for consideration.

#### **Queensland Open Level Crossing Protection Strategy**

This strategy encompasses the assessment, and where necessary, upgrade of all 1817 public level crossings on the non-commercial QR network throughout Queensland. The upgrade budget associated with this strategy is \$30 million over 14 years to 2013. All crossings in this regard have now been assessed with resultant upgrade works continuing. QR and the Queensland Government are also currently assessing the requirements for possible upgrades to the network's 290 public crossings on the commercial network. ALCAM is used to assess all of the network's public crossings for identifying possible required upgrades.

ALCAM is the nationally endorsed scientific tool used to assist stakeholders in identifying the level of risk at level crossings and controls to mitigate these risks. The model takes into account factors such as road vehicle driver-train sight clarity, distances and angles, road and rail vehicle speed and numbers, and other local conditions existing at crossings when determining what level of controls are to be installed.

### **Vehicle based speed limits**

Section 24A of Queensland's *Transport Operations (Road Use Management – Road Rules) Regulation 1999* provides for the imposition of speed limits for certain vehicle classes at locations with marginal factors of safety such as railway level crossings. This provision is implemented under Part Four – Speed Controls of Queensland's *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). Vehicle based speed limits typically apply to tractors, oversize vehicles requiring escort, road trains and buses over five tonnes, and other vehicles over 12 tonnes.

Part Four of the MUTCD was recently amended to also include a speed limit for road trains. The Road Train Speed Limit is used to indicate the speed limit that applies to road trains on a section of road. This sign is generally used where a reduced speed limit is considered necessary for safety reasons such as limited visibility in advance of a hazard or conflict.

### **Traffic related penalties**

QT has recently conducted a review of penalties and sanctions in relation to road traffic related offences. The most recent phase of this review included increasing penalties for level crossing offences and was implemented on 1 March 2007. The majority of level crossing offences now impose an on-the-spot penalty of \$225 (maximum court imposed penalty of \$1500) and three demerit points. These penalties help reinforce to the public the link between the offence and the potential outcome of behaviour resulting in road crashes at level crossings.

### **Safe driving information and licence testing**

QT has recently increased the amount of rail crossing safety information in its *Driving in Queensland* publication. This publication is designed to enhance all potential, new and experienced drivers' knowledge of the state's road rules and expected general safe driving behaviours. New material has added to this document includes further information relating to the rules and behaviours of drivers at or around rail level crossings. Additionally, QT has increased the number of level crossing related questions within Queensland's driver licensing written test.

### **Queensland's Involvement in National Initiatives**

#### **Australian Railway Crossing Strategy Implementation Group (ARCSIG)**

Queensland is represented on this group and is also the Rail Safety Regulators' Panel representative at ARCSIG meetings. ARCSIG, which reports to Standing Committee On Transport (SCOT) Rail Group, is responsible for the coordination of the Level Crossing Safety Strategy Management Plan (the Plan) which contains approximately 20 actions to improve level crossing safety.

Membership of ARCSIG is drawn from all state and the Northern Territory level crossing safety committees. Through national bodies such as ARCSIG, information about new technological developments is provided which may be considered and evaluated by Queensland and other states for national consideration and implementation.

**National Level Crossing Behavioural Strategy**

A key deliverable of the (aforementioned) Plan is the National Level Crossing Behavioural Strategy. Queensland is significantly involved in the implementation of this strategy which aims to develop model educational, media and enforcement campaigns to raise awareness of the dangers at level crossings. The strategy was initiated by the Australian Railway Association (ARA) and later endorsed by the Australian Transport Council (ATC), at its meeting in June 2006, for delivery over a two year period. The Strategy is funded by governments and industry from all Australian jurisdictions. The Strategy is currently completing Year One projects and has commenced work on Year Two projects. This work includes developing a national inventory of level crossing safety initiatives and a national survey of the public's perceptions of the dangers present at level crossings. Queensland will consider adopting recommended initiatives arising from the Strategy's projects.

**Proposed New Legislation**

As part of the national Rail Safety Reform Agenda, proposed new legislation relating to responsibilities of road and rail managers for managing the risks of public crossing interfaces is expected to be considered by Australian Transport Council (ATC) before 2008.

The draft model legislation is designed to provide that rail infrastructure managers and road owners/managers must ensure safety risks are considered, assessed and mitigated where required at all road/rail interfaces under their control. Where appropriate, Interface Coordination Agreements will be required between parties. Queensland expects to adopt this model legislation if approved by ATC.