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October 22, 2007

Submission No. LC/48  
Received  
Road Safety Committee

Mr. John Eren PM  
Chair - Road Safety Committee  
Parliament House  
Spring Street  
East Melbourne VICTORIA 3002

Dear Sir,

### **Call for Submissions for Inquiry into Improving Safety at Level Crossings**

As the largest manufacturer of tactile marking systems in Australia we believe that our manufacturing technologies could reduce the incidence accidents at level crossings.

Present traffic engineering use of tactile road markings have been generally limited to the role of assisting drivers maintain lane discipline – or to warn drivers that they are straying onto the road shoulder. Especially in the rail crossing environment a well engineered tactile marker can provide significantly greater safety for drivers, well beyond simply providing an audio and dynamic tactile stimulus as a vehicle passes over it.

AS 1742.7 - 2007 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices - Part 7: Railway crossings specifies new sign formats and high performance materials for the RX series sign assemblies for improved rail crossing visibility. Additional warning of the rail crossing in the immediate area is limited to the use of RAIL XING letters painted on the road surface, and do not incorporate any tactile elements to warn the driver.

Some safety proponents suggest using train actuated signals to warn of a train's approach, but it is our belief that it is more consistent with safety to provide multiple cues to motor vehicle drivers to warn of the approach to a rail crossing. This allows the driver the opportunity to exercise care – and perhaps stop at the crossing prior to proceeding across the tracks.

In support of this approach, Pathfinder Systems Australia Pty Ltd is developing a tactile marker incorporating design features utilizing wireless and pressure actuated technologies for use on rail crossing approaches. The marker would provide a tactile stimulus sensed by the driver as well as activating the signals at the crossing. Additionally the marker would incorporate retro-reflective elements to provide position and visibility cues during hours of darkness in a form agreed with the State Road Authority in Victoria.

*providing innovative tactile solutions*

Pathfinder Systems Australia Pty Ltd is aware of the current research projects under consideration by the CRC for Rail Innovation and suggests that the performance effectiveness of this enhanced tactile marker might demonstrated by its inclusion in an appropriate research project.

While the view that the rail industry is largely the victim of level crossing accidents is not surprising – the trucking industry also finds itself in a similar position in regard to many truck/car collisions.

Consequently as this enhance tactile marker will provide additional warning and protection for all road users encountering a rail crossing, it would be useful to have input from road user groups, the trucking industry, and both rail and road authorities in determining the final design characteristics of the marker.

Thanking you for the opportunity to make this submission to the committee

Yours sincerely

*C McCuskey*

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