C-MARC welcomes national level crossing strategy

The Curtin Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC) has welcomed the new National Rail Level Crossing Safety Strategy released late last week.

C-MARC's Director, Associate Professor Brett Hughes said the new strategy is an important step towards improving the safety of level crossings, which is amongst the most significant safety issues for railways.

"On average 37 people are killed at level crossings nationally in about 100 incidents every year, "C-MARC welcomes the strategy's six areas of focus, rather than older road safety responses which only focussed on one area.

"Level crossings are a complex location where road and rail are in conflict. So, a range of issues need to be addressed and multiple strategies are therefore necessary.

"The new strategy has been developed with strong leadership and commitment of Main Roads WA which illustrates WA's active intention to reduce accidents.

"Importantly, the national strategy reflects the WA State Government's road safety strategy known as Towards Zero.”

The six areas of focus in the new strategy are:

- Safe System - Adopt an approach to rail crossing safety that recognises that people make mistakes and that the human body can only withstand limited force
- Governance - Nationally consistent and coordinated arrangements across jurisdictions.
- Risk Management - Inform the development of counter measures and strategies to reduce accidents.
- Technology - Identification and implementation of appropriate new technology.
- Education and Enforcement - Improving knowledge and understanding of rules by drivers.
- Data Improvements and Knowledge Management - Provide data and information to inform decision making by government and guide implementation.

Associate Professor Hughes, who was the principal author of the previous national strategy, congratulated Main Roads WA and the Australasian Railway Association's Rail Industry Standards and Safety Board in taking the initiative nationally and working together in a productive collaboration between Governments and the private sector.

"The new approach is a significant step forward in targeting level crossing safety, and the new strategy reflects the most modern thinking about integrated approaches and greater recognition in road safety about level crossings as a significant issue," he said.

More information on C-MARC is available on the website http://www.c-marc.curtin.edu.au

**Contact:** Associate Professor Brett Hughes; Director; Curtin Monash Accident Research Centre (C-MARC); 08 9266 9591; 0431 658 131; brett.hughes@curtin.edu.au

CRICOS provider code: 00301J