



David Campbell
Minister for Transport
Minister for the Illawarra

Your Ref: STC487
ML09/08193

Mr Geoff Corrigan MP
Chair
Staysafe Committee
Parliament of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Geoff
Dear Mr Corrigan,

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of the Staysafe Committee of the NSW Parliament, regarding the Staysafe Committee's report on Updating Progress in Railway Level Crossing Safety. I have taken careful note of the Committee's report. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Level Crossing Strategy Council considered the report at its August 2009 meeting and I am forwarding you the Council's response, which I endorse.

Again, thank you for writing to me regarding this matter. Should you require any further information on this matter, please contact Ms Di Ford, Senior Policy Advisor in my office, on (02) 9268 3777.

Yours sincerely

David Campbell MP
Minister for Transport
Minister for the Illawarra

19 OCT 2009

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LCSC RESPONSE STAYSAFE JUNE 2009 LEVEL CROSSINGS REPORT

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the Level Crossing Strategy Council continue to give priority to reviewing the status of under-utilised railway level crossings with a view to recommending their closure, if appropriate, as part of a national railway safety agenda.

RESPONSE

Supported

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has an active program confirming the status of level crossings on its network in NSW, and this includes closing those which are underutilised. Since July 2004, 86 level crossings on the ARTC network have been closed, the large majority of which were private level crossings.

The Rail Infrastructure Corporation (RIC) has requested its contractor, ARTC, to undertake a detailed review of the status of all level crossings on the Country Regional Network (CRN) operational lines. This review, which is now complete, will also assist in the identification of underutilised crossings for closure.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee, conscious of the potential for creating confusion and potential complacency on the part of drivers approaching inactive railway level crossings recommends the removal, or bagging of all signs at such level crossings.

RESPONSE

Supported

To address the potential risk it poses, level crossing signage is removed from all railway level crossings on lines where trains no longer operate, noting that in some cases, because of the rail infrastructure at the crossing, signage to alert drivers to the change in road conditions may be required.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that road authorities honour their obligations under the Rail Safety Act 2008 (NSW) to ensure adequate implementation of Interface Coordination Agreements, thereby achieving the objectives of increased railway level crossing safety and coordination.

RESPONSE

Supported

The Rail Safety Act 2008 provides three years from 1 January 2009 for implementation of interface agreements between road and rail infrastructure managers.

The RTA is the responsible road authority for State roads, while Councils are the responsible road authorities for non-State roads.

To assist with implementation and to ensure all road and rail agencies are aware of their obligations, the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) conducted workshops across NSW in May 2009 to which all Councils and the RTA were invited. The ITSRR has also developed an interface template in consultation with all LCSC member agencies. The template is available from the ITSRR website.

The RTA is working with rail infrastructure managers in the development of interface coordination agreements for the state road network.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the Level Crossing Strategy Council conduct consultations with key stakeholder groups on how to implement its strategic plan to ensure there is general support for its provisions and scope.

RESPONSE

Supported

The LCSC will consult with key stakeholders on its Strategic Plan.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Committee recommends that as part of the Level Crossing Strategic Plan, and in order to reduce unnecessary duplication, the Level Crossing Strategy Council coordinate its activities relating to the design, trialling and implementation of new and existing intelligent transport technology applications for use at railway level crossings with the work undertaken by the relevant National Transport Policy working groups.

RESPONSE

Supported

In relation to the design, trialling and implementation of new and existing intelligent transport technology applications for use at railway level crossings the LCSC supports coordination of such initiatives through the National Rail Level Crossing Group on which NSW is represented. The Rail Level Crossing Group has identified technology as an important area and is developing related proposals for SCOT and ATC approval.

The RTA will review such work undertaken through the National Rail Level Crossing Group and assess its feasibility, cost effectiveness and other relevant factors in the application of proposals for the road network in NSW.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Committee recommends that the Level Crossing Strategy Council undertake a review of the impact of increased heavy vehicle traffic in collision risks at railway level crossings and include examination of the potential benefits of GPS tracking at railway level crossings to improve safety, as part of the review.

RESPONSE

Supported with qualification

Using ITS, including GPS tracking, to improve level crossing safety related to heavy vehicles has been discussed at the National Rail Level Crossing Group which is developing related proposals for SCOT and ATC approval. The Level Crossing Strategy Council will consider the issue following ATC's decision.

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Committee recommends that in order to ensure consistent standards in the determination of research and planning priorities and to minimise duplication, the Level Crossing Working Group include and build on the work of the Behavioural Change Group as part of its remit. This will assist in providing a national focus for consistency in future railway level crossing behavioural research initiatives and priorities.

Response

Supported

The National Rail Level Crossing Group is the appropriate forum to build on the work commenced by the Behavioural Change Group and to ensure consistent standards in research and planning priorities. The National Rail Level Crossing Group is developing education proposals for SCOT and ATC approval.