Rail Crossing Technology will save lives – video transcript 25/09/12

Narrator:

Australian commuters have been riding the first train capable of talking to nearby cars in the world’s first and largest trial of a new and intelligent transport system. Developed at La Trobe University’s Centre for Technology Infusion, the system is designed to cut collisions between trains cars and trucks at railway crossings.

The Hon Terry Mulder MP:

There has been a lot of discussion over many years as to where we might find the next ‘silver bullet’ in relation to road safety following on from drug and alcohol detection technology, seat belts and quite obviously collision warning systems are in the eyes of the road safety fraternity, the next ‘silver bullet’ in road safety. And for this new technology to have been developed here at La Trobe University, in conjunction with the Victorian Government, the automotive industry, I think it’s a great step forward for road safety here in Victoria.

Narrator:

Based on GPS and mobile phone style short-range communication, the technology alerts cars to approaching trains. A six level in-car audio-visual alert escalates in urgency and volume as trains get closer to crossings.

Alert: *‘Caution train approaching, slow down’*

The Hon Terry Mulder MP:

This type of technology has the ability to do away with fatalities and serious accidents at level crossings.

Narrator:

There are some 9,500 level crossings on Australian public roads, only a third have flashing lights or boom barriers. The technology could save an average of thirty-seven lives a year, and an estimated 100 million dollars by eliminating collisions especially in rural and regional Australia.

Professor Jack Singh:

This technology will give you warning well before time, saying that you are in a level crossing zone; there is a presence of a train as you keep driving, or there is a danger of collision. So all these graded warnings come in as you are driving, and then you as a driver can make informed decisions.

Narrator:

The next step is to see the system fitted to all Victorian trains.

The Hon Terry Mulder MP:

When you look at what it costs to upgrade a level crossing, somewhere like $500,000 to fit boom barriers and flashing lights to a single crossing and we could roll this technology out across the entire fleet for $210,000, it would be a really sound investment.

Professor Jack Singh:

It’s a global technology, that all cars should be rolled out with this technology by 2014-2015, basically all units will be rolled so there will be no direct cost to anybody as it will be embedded into cars just like GPS these days.

Narrator:

The La Trobe system has been short-listed by the Queensland Government for trials in that state. Developed at a cost of 5.5 million dollars over three years, the project represents a significant investment by the Victorian State Government, AutoCRC, La Trobe University and its partners.

Professor Tim Brown:

The saving of lives at country road crossings and easing of congestion in the city will be very significant for the community. This project is a really great example of La Trobe University fulfilling a basic requirement of its act – that it serves the Victorian and broader communities through the relevance and significance of its research.

Narrator:

The results of the Victorian trial have exceeded expectations and attracted attention globally. Research and development agreements have already been established in China and India. Demonstrations will be held at the 2012 Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress in Vienna and Global Level Crossing Symposium in London.

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