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\$1 billion to remove Victorian level crossings - a safe and smart investment

The TrackSAFE Foundation has commended the Victorian Government on its announcement to allocate over \$1 billion dollars to upgrade level crossings in its 2014-15 Budget.

TrackSAFE Board Director and Australasian Railway Association (ARA) CEO, Bryan Nye OAM, welcomed the announcement saying that the Victorian Government's continued commitment to level crossing safety showed just how serious it was about tackling the issue.

"The commitment Coalition Government has shown to improve safety around level crossings throughout Victoria is admirable and a smart step in the right direction to reducing incidents at these notorious dangerous intersections," said Mr Nye.

"Level crossing safety is an ongoing national issue with thousands of near hits at level crossing every year and each one is just seconds' way from becoming a potential disaster.

"This billion dollar investment will see a further eight level crossings removed at key locations across the Victorian network, a significant investment in saving lives.

In addition to the \$1 billion, 13 grade separations are being delivered as part of the Regional Rail Link project. The removal of five level crossings has been completed or is well under way, including Springvale Road, Springvale, Mitcham and Rooks Roads, Mitcham, and two level crossing removals at Anderson Road, Sunshine.

The Government has also invested \$35 million to upgrade 75 regional level crossings with fully active controls including lights, bells and boom barriers. To date, 58 regional level crossings have been upgraded as part of this safety blitz.

"Level crossing safety remains one of the rail industry's highest safety priorities. The destruction caused by a collision between a heavy vehicle and a fully loaded passenger train at a level crossing has been, and will continue to be, the most costly single incident in terms of potential catastrophic loss of life and economic impact.

"This is why TrackSAFE actively campaigns to keep this issue on the agenda and carry out education and awareness campaigns to highlight safety issues.

"To have practical support in the engineering space from government can only further help our cause," Mr Nye concluded.

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