

29 June 2017

## First ever level crossing safety university scholarship awarded

In an Australian-first, the TrackSAFE Foundation together with the Rail Manufacturing CRC have awarded two PhD students level crossing safety internships.

The two recipients are Don Kushlani Ranmal Ranasinghe and Zheshuo Zhang from QUT who have been granted 'top-up' scholarships to contribute to their current PhD studies. As part of the offer the students will each be awarded a full time, three month paid internship working at Queensland Rail and Aurizon (with support from the Queensland Government's Department of Transport and Main Roads) on key industry level crossing projects.

"Level crossing safety has been, and will continue to be, one of the rail industry's number one priorities. This level crossing safety scholarship is a unique and exciting opportunity for the recipients to transform the frontiers of level crossing safety and potentially turn new ideas into reality," said Naomi Frauenfelder, Executive Director of the TrackSAFE Foundation.

Both recipients, Kushlani and Zheshuo, are currently completing their PhDs at QUT, working under Professors Manicka Dhanasekar and David P Thambiratnam to develop an innovative raised road pavement infrastructure system capable of mitigating level crossing accidents.

By working actively with Queensland Rail and Aurizon during the 12 week internship, as well as the added ongoing support from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, the students will have an ideal opportunity to combine their academic research with real world level crossing projects being delivered by the Queensland rail industry.

"TrackSAFE, together with the Rail Manufacturing CRC value the contribution of the students who will work to advance level crossing safety solutions for Australia in the pursuit of excellence in safety research," said Ms Frauenfelder.

According to the Rail Manufacturing CRC another priority for the internship is the desire to increase the number of university graduates who go on to work in the Australian rail industry.

"The current percentage of rail employees with post graduate qualifications is estimated to be less than one per cent, so this internship program is a great step towards encouraging the next generation of research-ready rail graduates to seek work and make a real difference in Australian rail," said Dr Stuart Thomson, Chief Executive Officer of the Rail Manufacturing CRC.

TrackSAFE and the Rail Manufacturing CRC congratulate the two internship recipients and look forward to seeing the students' expertise grow in the area of level crossing safety to benefit the Australian community.

-ENDS-

### Media Contacts

Sara Ross | National Corporate Affairs Manager

T +61 402 419 962 | E [sross@tracksafefoundation.com.au](mailto:sross@tracksafefoundation.com.au)

W [tracksafefoundation.com.au](http://tracksafefoundation.com.au)

Katie Rizzo | Communications Manager

T + 61 414 942 253 | E [katie@rmcrc.com.au](mailto:katie@rmcrc.com.au)

W [rmcrc.com.au](http://rmcrc.com.au)