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Mind the gap train project aims to improve passenger access and safety

The Rail Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) is funding an innovative project to improve access for Australian rail passengers getting on and off trains.

Partnering with Downer Group and Monash University, this 18-month project involves manufacturing and testing a device for use between a station platform and the train door to close the gap when passengers board and alight the train.

The project's key goal is to support more accessible travel options for train passengers.

"To address transport objectives set in Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, this project is driven by the need to improve travel experiences for all Australian train commuters," said Dr Vincent Moug, the Lead Project Researcher within Monash's Mobility Design Lab.

The project will assess the design and engineering requirements for a gap filling polymer-based solution, invented by Monash University, including testing the product's safety, durability, engineering feasibility and operational functionality.

"A key element of the project is to assess whether the solution is best attached to either the train station platform or the train itself, which will be tested in field trials across Melbourne," said Mike Ayling, Downer's GM Digital Technology and Innovation.

The gap filling solution will be prototyped using 3D scanning and printing.

"Not only is the project identifying an innovative response to improving train station access for all users, but the team is also using key technologies when prototyping the polymer solution, so it will be exciting to watch this work progress," said Dr Stuart Thomson, CEO of the Rail Manufacturing CRC.

The project team has now commenced assessing rail networks to determine the design requirements before prototyping and product testing commences.

Worth \$2.4 million, this project is due for completion by February 28, 2020.

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For more information

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About the Rail Manufacturing CRC

The Rail Manufacturing CRC directs collaborative innovative research and commercialisation partnerships between key stakeholders in the rail manufacturing sector, looking to support the development of new products, technologies and supply chain networks to increase Australia's rail manufacturing capacity and competitiveness. The Centre was established in 2014 and will operate for a period of six years, funded by the Business Cooperative Research Centres Programme of the Australian Government's Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

About Downer

Downer is the leading provider of integrated services in Australia and New Zealand and customers are at the heart of everything it does. It exists to create and sustain the modern environment and its promise is to work closely with its customers to help them succeed, using world-leading insights and solutions to design, build and sustain assets, infrastructure and facilities. Downer employs approximately 56,000 people across more than 300 sites, primarily in Australia and New Zealand, but also in the Asia-Pacific region, South America and Southern Africa. It also owns 88 per cent of Spotless Group Holdings Limited. For more information visit downergroup.com.

About Monash University

Monash University is one of Australia's leading universities and ranks among the world's top 100. We help change lives through research and education. Monash's Mobility Design Lab combines evidence-based research methods and real world solutions with design-led innovations that challenge prevailing orthodoxy. Our research mediates connections between science, government, engineering and user experiences of mobility systems. We engage with user-centred and participatory research techniques to reveal new insights into passenger experiences. We are passionate problem solvers with a strong track record of realising our work made real in the world.

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