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Message from Mr Peter Reidy

TrackSAFE Foundation New Zealand (TrackSAFE NZ) is once again pleased to support the International Union of Railways (UIC) in the launch of International Level Crossing Awareness Day on 7 June 2018.

We are extremely proud to be part of a global community of organisations working together to raise awareness about safety at level crossings.

In New Zealand we have around 3,000 level crossings, or one approximately every 1.5 kms on around 4,000km of track. Since 2012, 34 people have died in level crossing collisions with trains.

Social and environmental changes in New Zealand are contributing to an increased risk profile at our level crossings, particularly in urban areas.

In particular, the introduction of faster and quieter electric trains, together with growth in commuter services in Auckland and Wellington is increasing the risk to pedestrians.

We are also seeing more people using personal technology which is contributing to pedestrian distraction around railway tracks. Three deaths at level crossings in the past two years reportedly involved the use of headphones.

New Zealand's new Government has just released a draft Government Policy Statement on Land Transport. It makes safety a priority and includes support for investment in rail safety, including partnering with KiwiRail to upgrade level crossings.

The policy also recognises the importance of the many stakeholders in New Zealand taking a coordinated approach. Those stakeholders include rail operators, Police and local government agencies.

TrackSAFE NZ believes the focus on investment and on taking a coordinated approach are positive steps which will contribute to a New Zealand rail network increasingly free of deaths and serious injuries.

We wish all organisations around the world all the very best for this year's ILCAD campaign, as we come together globally to address the issue of safety at railway level crossings.