



AUSTRALASIAN RAILWAY ASSOCIATION INC

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **ATSB RAILWAY LEVEL CROSSING INQUIRY CONFIRMS NEED FOR HEAVY VEHICLE PERMITS**

The Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) investigation report released today on the Birkenhead level crossing collision in South Australia reinforces the safety risks when unauthorised heavy vehicles access railway level crossings.

Trucks are getting heavier and trains are more likely to derail when the two collide. Heavy vehicle permits are crucial to ensure the safety of road and train users at railway level crossings.

The Australasian Railway Association Chief Executive, Mr Bryan Nye says the ATSB report highlights the dangers of heavy vehicles at railway level crossings supports the industry's efforts to ensure only approved heavy vehicles traverse railway level crossings.

"Fortunately no-one was killed at Birkenhead but heavy vehicle drivers need to be aware of road restrictions and realise the significance of their actions when they ignore them", Mr Nye said.

"Heavy vehicle permits are granted after careful consideration of the truck, the road infrastructure and most importantly, the safety of other road users. Truck drivers must acknowledge and abide by these restrictions because if they don't, they not only risk their lives but also the lives of others", Mr Nye concluded.

On 5 March 2008, a double road train entered the path of a locomotive pulling four empty fuel tanks. Not in possession of a heavy vehicle permit, the truck was not approved to access the street and according to the report failed to stop before entering the railway crossing.

Both vehicles were travelling at low speeds which meant only part of the leading locomotive derailed. However, if vehicle speeds were higher and the train was a passenger train, the consequences could have been horrific.

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