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Rail Manufacturing CRC closes its doors

The Rail Manufacturing Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) has ceased operations, ending the Centre's six-year focus on delivering industry-leading research to support the growth of Australia's rail industry.

The Centre was established in July 2014, and subsequently funded the delivery of 65 projects, supported the studies of 51 Australian-based PhD students, and worked with 35 rail organisations and universities. In terms of project successes, these include:

- Dwell Track™ passenger tracking technology (developed by the University of Technology Sydney and Downer) patented, trademarked and trialled by the Sydney Trains rail network from August to November 2019
- Projects with CRRC and CSIRO which resulted in enhanced supercapacitor technologies to support catenary-free rail, with the impending commercial trials of the CSIRO-developed energy management system
- Arc welding software developed by CSIRO for use by CRRC to enable optimised welding parameters to be modelled and predicted
- Bombardier and the University of Queensland axle bearing projects that developed modelling software for use by for rolling stock maintainers to understand wear and maintenance cycles of axle bearings, with optimised maintenance cycles forecast to provide substantial savings and increased efficiencies
- Smart Rail Route Map process, delivered by Deakin University and the Australasian Railway Association as a complementary subset to the On Track to 2040 roadmap, bringing together rail industry leaders to develop a digital and communications roadmap and to support solutions implementation through an industry-led steering committee
- Melbourne SME Airlinx completing computational fluid dynamics modelling on air conditioning diffusers and airflow in train cabins to develop a model for improved thermal and air quality properties in passenger trains, even a more key focus now following the current COVID-19 pandemic
- Data analytics and predictive maintenance algorithms developed by Deakin University and the University of Queensland implemented into Downer's TrainDNA system for train component monitoring
- High performance brake discs using advanced metal matrix composite materials with improved wear resistance and heat dissipation properties manufactured by CSIRO.

For more information

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With rail investment likely to hit \$150 billion in the coming decades, greater opportunities are required to leverage such investment, in an aggregated way, to grow and enhance the national rail industry of the future.

“To achieve this, new models of cooperation between industry and researchers, individual state Governments and the Commonwealth Government will need to be explored. A national strategy for rail and rail innovation would be a great impetus for ensuring a future innovative rail sector,” said Dr Stuart Thomson, CEO of the Rail Manufacturing CRC.

“There is a need to strengthen the domestic rail supply chain. By providing incentives for SMEs to invest in research and development, and encouraging global suppliers currently not investing in local innovation or local supply chains to invest in the long term future of the local rail sector, this will create future advanced manufacturing businesses and employment opportunities.”

Following the Centre’s closure, the Rail Manufacturing CRC has launched a legacy website at www.rmccr.com.au, containing project achievements, publications and outcomes all in the one location, with a number of video profiles included on key projects and a full suite of PhD student profiles.

“The Rail Manufacturing CRC legacy website will remain online to recognise the efforts of our participants and students in the delivery of industry-leading rail research. It is hoped that the online materials will be a vital resource used when future rail research is being proposed and conducted,” said Dr Thomson.

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About the Rail Manufacturing CRC

The Rail Manufacturing CRC was established in 2014, operating for a period of six years before ceasing operations on 30 June, 2020. The Centre was funded by the Cooperative Research Centres Program of the Australian Government’s Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. The Rail Manufacturing CRC worked to foster, sponsor and direct 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.

For more information

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