

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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## **NICTA Queensland Developing Technology To Make Australia SAFE**

National ICT Australia (NICTA), Australia's Centre of Excellence for information and communications technology (ICT), today announced the launch of a third Priority Challenge Strategic Project, Smart Applications For Emergencies (SAFE). SAFE aims to help save lives and minimise economic impact from natural and man made disasters by improving prevention, detection, prediction and recovery co-ordination.

Advanced video surveillance systems have attracted a great deal of attention since they were used to track the movements of the terrorists responsible for the July 2005 attacks on the London Underground. According to NICTA, the challenge now is to develop systems that can help prevent attacks, rather than just record events as they unfold.

"Extending the capabilities of surveillance systems will help deter activities such as assault and property damage, and help detect terrorist acts before they occur," said Chris Scott, Research Director of NICTA's Queensland Laboratory.

NICTA's SAFE Project will develop and trial demonstrators of advanced surveillance technologies where computer systems assist humans to monitor all surveillance footage all the time, such as is required in train and mass transport security. The aim is to enable operators to quickly and reliably identify specific people or suspicious activities.

A key component of SAFE is the development of advanced surveillance technologies to help prevent crime and terrorism. This element of SAFE will be partly funded through an A\$634,000 grant from the Australian Government's Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet under the Research Support for Counter-Terrorism program. NICTA will collaborate with Queensland Transport and other commercial partners on the project.

The demonstrator will feature state-of-the-art video management technologies based on systems used by the US Defense Force. Rather than operators looking at a bank of video monitors, live video surveillance will be presented in the form of a 3D model so operators are immersed in the scene and can quickly move from camera to camera if they need to follow a person or vehicle that is on the move.

The project will also develop reliable person-identification systems that can detect, track and monitor persons of interest. Researchers from NICTA's Brisbane, Canberra and Sydney laboratories will collaborate on this project, which will be based on reliable recognition software developed by NICTA and its partner universities.

NICTA's Priority Challenge Strategic Projects harness expertise across the organisation to address large and complex contemporary problems. They provide excellent opportunities for NICTA to collaborate with external companies to address issues of national and international concern. NICTA's existing Priority Challenges, From Data to Knowledge and Trusted Wireless Networks, are focusing our research efforts to change the way people use technology in their everyday lives. In 2005, NICTA launched its first two Priority Challenge Strategic Projects, Water Information Networks and Smart Transport and Roads.

**Note:** This project is supported by a grant from the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**About NICTA**

National ICT Australia (NICTA) is a national research institute with a charter to build Australia's pre-eminent Centre of Excellence for information and communications technology (ICT). NICTA is building capabilities in ICT research, research training and commercialisation in the ICT sector for the generation of national benefit.

NICTA is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and the Australian Research Council through *Backing Australia's Ability* and the ICT Centre of Excellence program.

NICTA was established and is supported by its members: The Australian Capital Territory Government; The Australian National University; NSW Department of State and Regional Development; and The University of New South Wales. NICTA is also supported by its partners: the University of Sydney; University of Melbourne; the Victorian Government; the Queensland Government; Griffith University; Queensland University of Technology; and Queensland University.

**For further information**

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