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Deakin research to improve car and plane safety and energy use

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Cars and aeroplanes in the near future could be lighter, stronger, safer and more energy efficient thanks to research at Deakin University being showcased at the Victorian Universities Innovation Showcase in Melbourne event on World IP Day, Thursday 26 April.

Dr Bronwyn Fox, of Deakin’s Centre for Material and Fibre Innovation, leads a team of doctoral research students who are investigating the use of carbon fibre materials in car and aeroplane manufacture.

Their work could see a new generation of cars and aeroplanes with lower energy consumption and improved safety.

“There are enormous benefits in converting steel and aluminium parts in cars to lighter materials, especially in fuel savings,” Dr Fox said.

“Using carbon fibre composites produces lighter cars. Lighter cars are more fuel-efficient. Carbon fibre has a higher stiffness to weight ratio than steel, but it also absorbs more energy per kilogram, with the potential to make cars lighter and safer.

“Similarly, as well as making aeroplanes lighter and more fuel efficient, the melding process we are investigating also works to make them safer. The fewer the number of joints and rivets you have, the fewer points for fractures there are.”

Enter Quickstep, a new faster process for producing carbon fibre invented in Western Australia and being road tested at Deakin. The research is supported by Quickstep Ltd and the Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing.

These projects are examples of how Victorian universities, like Deakin University, are making a difference to industry and the community.

Ends

Dr Bronwyn Fox is available for interview. Photo opportunities with the new materials can be arranged.

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For details of the Innovation Showcase visit the website:

http://www.ipria.org/events/World_IP/index.html

Participating Universities:

