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(71) Applicant: **LOCKLIV HOLDINGS PTY. LTD.**

[AU/AU]; 760A Barrenjoey Road, Avalon Beach, Sydney, New South Wales 2097 (AU).

(72) Inventors: **APLIN, Richard**; Unit 4, 25 Munro Avenue,

Kirrawee, Sydney, New South Wales 2232 (AU). **TRIEU, William**; Unit 4, 25 Munro Avenue, Kirrawee, Sydney, New South Wales 2232 (AU). **REDDING, Matthew**; Unit 4, 25 Munro Avenue, Kirrawee, Sydney, New South Wales 2232 (AU). **BYKERK, Lili**; Unit 4, 25 Munro Avenue, Kirrawee, Sydney, New South Wales 2232 (AU). **LEARY, Andrew**; 760A Barrenjoey Road, Avalon Beach, Sydney, New South Wales 2097 (AU).

(74) Agent: **KROUZER IP**; Suite G15, Macarthur Point Building, 25 Solent Circuit, Baulkham Hills, Sydney, New South Wales 2153 (AU).

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(54) Title: MONITORING AND ALERT SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR LATCHING MECHANISMS

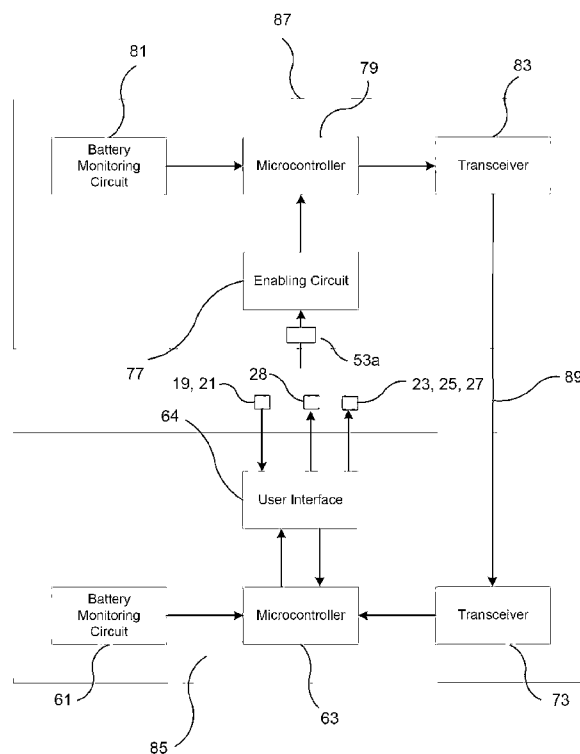


Fig 19

(57) Abstract: A monitoring and alert system for retro-fitting to latching mechanisms. A master control unit is located proximate to an operator of the system. It includes a user interface having: input means to enable an operator to arm the system and then allow it to operate with minimal interaction of the operator. It also includes output means for alerting the operator as to the status of the system in relation to a plurality of prescribed conditions. One or more slave units are attached to a discrete latching mechanism for detecting the latching status thereof. Each slave unit comprises sensing means to detect whether the latching mechanism is in a latched state or an unlatched state. Communication means comprising a master transceiver forming part of the master control unit and a slave transceiver forming part of each slave unit for wirelessly communicating periodically status and alert signals between the master control unit and each of the slave units. The master processing means and the slave processing means are designed to invoke various initialising processes during an initialisation involving interaction with the operator via the user interface. These initialising processes include identifying the latching status of each of the slave units. During a running phase the master processing means is designed to invoke: a system state process to ascertain the latest latching status of each of the slave units whilst ensuring minimal power consumption by the master control unit; a power state process to check with the slave power supply monitoring means that the local power level is not below the prescribed threshold; a user interface process to process input signals from the input means and update the output means to convey the latest latching and power state status to the operator. The slave processing means is designed to invoke a slave unit status routine to transmit a power alert signal if the slave power supply

monitoring means indicates that the local power is below the prescribed threshold, and the latching status of the slave unit, whilst ensuring minimal power consumption by the slave unit.



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