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REALITY CHECK FOR IAP IMPLEMENTATION IN NSW & QLD

victoriantransportassociation inc.

Two week's out from the mandatory requirement for heavy vehicles operating on Higher Mass Limits (HML) in NSW and QLD to be enrolled in the Intelligent Access Program (IAP), the Victorian Transport Association (VTA) has shone the torch of reality on the process.

"There has been a lot of hype about the number of trucks pre-enrolled in NSW for IAP, and plenty of speculation about the likely number of trucks to be actually enrolled in IAP in NSW & Queensland for HML access come 1st July 2009." commended Philip Lovel AM, CEO of the VTA.

"We put it to the test with the VTA's Long Distance & Regional Freight Group late last week, and the operators around the table gave us their pragmatic views in spades!" Mr. Lovel noted.

Twenty two operators responded to a survey asking them for their pre-enrolled figures, and for their intentions regarding actual IAP enrolment come 1st July 2009. The 22 operators responding have a combined truck fleet of over 3,000 trucks on Australia's roads servicing the nation's freight task.

Nine operators said that they had a total of 585 trucks pre-enrolled for IAP HML access in NSW. But, when asked how many would be enrolled from the beginning of next month, the answer was only 88 trucks in NSW (15% of the total) and 81 in QLD.

"Why is the number so low?" Mr. Lovel questioned.

The answer was predominately that HML route access had been denied or was unclear, that the costs of meeting HML requirements (including the costs of installing and operating IAP-compliant tracking devices) outweighed the potential benefits, or that operators had simply decided that the need for HML was just not a requirement for them or their customers.

"There are some really simple messages for the NSW and Queensland Governments in all of this" Mr. Lovel offered:

- More needs to be done to declare HML routes in NSW and QLD, and for the authorities to work with industry to overcome seemingly insurmountable "last mile" access constraints;
- Don't believe any hype that IAP will solve route access issues ... it won't ... it's simply a technology tool, and road asset managers, especially local councils, aren't convinced that IAP alone will help protect local roads from increased damage.
- The likely number of trucks enrolled in HML in NSW and QLD will not provide the massive "fillip" to the fledgling IAP-technology provider industry which many thought it would. This will have a negative affect on the future price for IAP service provision.
- While we now have four approved providers of IAP services, the costs of installation & operation of IAP compliant tracking devices are still an issue for some.

The NSW Minister for Roads and the NSW Roads & Traffic Authority should immediately free up the information on available HML routes and work closely with the industry to address the access issues.

“IAP is the focus at the moment, and it shouldn’t be. The focus should be squarely on HML access.”

“Let’s have clear & transparent information about what’s possible and what’s not, and clear updates on new approved routes. It is the lack of clear route access that is leading to a lukewarm take-up of IAP enrolment.”

If we can remove artificial barriers, operators are in a better position to make sound commercial, operational and investment decisions.”

“After all, the benefits obtained are passed to freight customers and, in turn, benefit business activity in these tough economic times.” concluded Mr. Lovel.

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