



# Keynote Speech at the International Standards Organisation Technical Committee 204 Gala Dinner

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Speech

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KS02/2012

19 April 2012

Zinc at Federation Square, Melbourne

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Good evening everyone.

Thank you for the invitation to join you at this distinguished gathering and thank you for the warm welcome Dean (Director Road User Services, VicRoads).

Before I begin I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and offer my respects to their elders past and present.

I would also like to acknowledge:

- ISO TC 204 Chair, Michael Noblett
- VicRoads CEO and Austroads Chair, Gary Liddle
- TCA (Transport Certification Australia) CEO, Chris Koniditdiotis
- sponsors, distinguished guests and
- overseas delegates.

As Dean said, one of my roles in the Australian Government is as Parliamentary Secretary supporting the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Anthony Albanese.

I have particular responsibility for promoting and implementing the Australian Government's road safety initiatives—including the National Road Safety Strategy, and national standards for vehicle safety.

Clearly critical to future developments in these areas are technological advances including Intelligent Transport Systems—your particular area of expertise.

## Australia's role in ITS

Here in Australia we have always been an innovative lot. We have companies such as Cohda Wireless, which are continuing to gain international recognition for their cutting edge work in communications technology, and government-created entities such as Transport Certification Australia playing a leading role in international standards development.

Indeed it is a very high compliment, and an indication of Australia's growing international reputation in ITS, that you have chosen Melbourne for your 2012 meeting.

I am pleased to be able to join you this evening and I do so with the awareness that I am speaking directly to the technical experts and policy makers that can have a direct influence on the implementation of global standards for ITS.

## Role of ITS in Road Safety

This is important work—work that will allow the fullest possible use of ITS technology to achieve marked improvements to road safety and traffic congestion.

And, it is clear to me that there is an emerging role for the technological advances achieved through ITS to achieve our road safety and environmental aims.

This was highlighted in your *Beyond 2012* forum held over the last couple of days, which I understand looked specifically at road safety benefits driven by ITS technology.

It was a great initiative to introduce non-ITS practitioners to the potential benefits of ITS, and in particular to the growing area of connected vehicle technologies and applications.

I appreciate there is a high level of complexity in the work you do. And I also understand the benefits that can flow if cars can communicate with each other and apply safety systems before drivers are even aware there is a problem.

I'm sure the local attendees found much food for thought to feed the Australian experience.

And on that note, I would like to emphasise that since coming to office, the Australian Government has vigorously pursued a national transport reform agenda aimed at putting in place a safer, more productive, sustainable and efficient transport network.

# National Road Safety Strategy

A key part of this agenda is the 10 year National Road Safety Strategy which the Government released last year in conjunction with the states and territories.

The strategy signals a shift away from the old 'blame the driver' paradigm to focus on developing an inherently safe road transport system.

The strategy is firmly based on the internationally recognised Safe System principles of Safe Roads, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles and Safe People. It aims to reduce the annual numbers of both deaths and serious injuries on Australian roads by at least 30 per cent by 2030.

Above all, it recognises that road safety is a responsibility that must be shared by anyone and everyone capable of influencing the safety of the system.

Whether we are road engineers, vehicle manufacturers, fleet operators, government policy makers and regulators, business innovators, or individual road users going about their everyday activity we all have a shared responsibility.

## ITS Framework

ITS has great potential to contribute to addressing the significant emerging challenges for Australia's transport networks—efficiency and sustainability as well as safety—but the full benefits can only be realised through national cooperation.

That is a key reason why in November last year, Australian Transport Ministers endorsed the Policy Framework for Intelligent Transport Systems in Australia.

The framework includes agreed policy principles as well as outlining the responsibility and timelines for important projects being carried out in the ITS area.

In Australia, as elsewhere, there is a risk that the technology will run ahead of the policy framework in which it operates, and avoiding this risk is a key goal of the policy framework. Having new technology solutions that are looking for problems to solve is not to anyone's advantage.

You can access a copy of the framework through the Department of Infrastructure and Transport's new ITS web page.

As well as providing easy access to the framework the new web page is intended to become a hub for information on ITS developments in Australia, with useful links to industry, research and government organisations operating in the ITS sector.

In addition to specific applications, ITS is increasingly being recognised as a key tool to reduce burdens on transport infrastructure.

## National Smart Motorway Trial

While in some cases, new roads or substantial upgrades to existing roads are needed, there is an important, emerging role for technology in making sure we get the most out of our existing road infrastructure.

To this end, the Australian Government announced \$60 million over three years (2011/12–2013/14) for projects under a National Smart Managed Motorways Trial.

Funding was committed for four initial projects in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth that were identified by Infrastructure Australia. The projects involve the implementation and investigation of technologies to manage motorways in real time.

The Sydney project is looking at the feasibility and project development for the introduction of a managed motorways system, including ramp metering and potential freight prioritisation, on the M4 (Western Motorway).

In Melbourne, the intention is to upgrade the existing intelligent transport system on the M1 West Gate Freeway between the Western Ring Road and Williamstown Road to level 3.

In Brisbane, the aim is to introduce pole mounted variable speed limit signs, ramp signalling, travel time signs and variable message signs on the Gateway Motorway between Nudgee and the Bruce Highway; while in Perth, the project includes feasibility and technology trials including ramp metering.

These are innovative, technology based solutions that improve the productivity of our existing infrastructure.

These sorts of projects can deliver significant benefits in the form of travel time savings, improved travel time reliability, improved road safety and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

## Vehicle Telematics

I am also aware of the work Transport Certification Australia is doing in the area of vehicle telematics—through their work with the Intelligent Access Program, the expertise they bring to broader in-vehicle telematics initiatives and through their contribution to standards development.

Monitoring heavy vehicle speed and location through satellite tracking and wireless communication has obvious advantages, both in achieving current road safety goals, and with the advent of higher productivity vehicles that will be needed to fulfil the growing freight task facing our nation.

The challenge is to match the technology with the other critical elements of our approach to regulating heavy vehicles—including compliance and enforcement—and I know that TCA is closely involved in important work with the New South Wales Government in the area of heavy vehicle driver fatigue. This work will be of interest internationally.

And as I said at the opening, industry is continuing to innovate with Australian companies finding international success.

Cohda Wireless is currently working with the U.S. Department of Transportation, in their 'Connected Vehicle Safety Pilot Program'.

This is a major research initiative that will test how ordinary drivers in real-world driving conditions respond to a range of warning systems made possible by connected vehicle technology. 'Connected vehicles' technology promises to be a key means of delivering improvements in vehicle safety, with widespread global deployment of in-car connected vehicle technology currently expected to commence around 2018.

As such, I anticipate ITS featuring very prominently in future Australian National Road Safety Strategies.

## **Conclusion**

In closing, I wish you well for the remainder of your conference and I encourage you to take in the sights and attractions of Melbourne which is often rated as the most liveable city in the world.

Thank you.