

Media Release

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A national action plan for safer more efficient transport

The two-day Intelligent Transport Systems Summit held in Melbourne last week achieved an Australian first by defining a national vision to make the country's transport safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly.

The 2009 ITS Summit was co-hosted by the Victorian Government and ITS Australia. Victorian Minister for Roads and Ports Tim Pallas demonstrated his strong support for the Summit by his personal involvement in the sessions. With input from 10 international and 42 Australian speakers, the 360 Summit delegates collaborated to draft a vision document that will maximise the value of modern electronic transport technologies for Australian road and rail transport networks.

ITS Australia President Dr Norm Pidgeon said the focus of the 2009 Australian Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Summit was bringing together representatives of the Commonwealth and State Governments to review that vision document. This government roundtable included representatives from Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Commonwealth, and called for a final report from the Summit by March 2010.

"While Australia was an early adopter of ITS technologies and is a leader in the development of many technologies, this plan for the future of ITS is our most exciting national achievement," he said. "ITS technologies streamline transport networks by providing real time data to facilitate scheduling and to minimise the impact of system or vehicle breakdowns. We now use ITS widely to reduce city centre traffic congestion and to speed up public transport services.

"The keys to improved transport safety and efficiency are uniformity of standards and systems. This is critical in inter-modal operations. For example, we can leverage the benefits of our existing single systems by linking different public transport networks, such as buses and trains, or delivering freight with rail and road services.

"Working at national level, with cooperation between Governments and networks, we can apply modern ITS technologies to greatly enhance our existing and future transport investments. More efficient transport will reduce emissions and increase our competitiveness in international markets.

"Distance, whether it is across our country, or to reach our markets, has always been Australia's number one transport challenge. This challenge has been magnified by the lack of consistency in standards across state borders.

"This Australian ITS vision document will be translated into an action plan for agreement by the major stakeholders. This will provide our transport industry with a master plan so each sector can capitalise on the benefits that ITS technologies offer," said Norm Pidgeon.

ITS Australia Vice President Dean Zabrieszach will lead the action plan team and invited industry stakeholders, who could not attend this Summit, to forward their ideas to ITS Australia Administration Manager Lauren Kneebone at kneebone@its-australia.com.au.

National smart infrastructure enquiry

Norm Pidgeon said the ITS action plan will also form the basis of an industry submission to the national enquiry on smart infrastructure announced at the Summit by Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Anthony Albanese.

Minister Albanese advised delegates that the House of Representatives Standing Committee enquiry on smart infrastructure will invite submissions from stakeholders for three months commencing in early 2010.

Minister Albanese said he has a strong personal commitment to ITS and the timing of the announcement was inspired by his attendance at the Summit. He emphasised that smart technology is not a side show. He described it as the main event in improving productivity and increasing the safety and security of our infrastructure.

Norm Pidgeon welcomed the national smart infrastructure enquiry. "Although our industry focus is transport, there are great national benefits to be gained from a whole of government approach across key portfolios, including transport, infrastructure, health, industry, trade, and others. For example, investment to improve transport safety has been proven to reduce public health costs and lost productivity due to transport accidents," he said.

"Another strong emerging theme throughout the Summit was the recognition of the benefits of aligning and converging intelligent system applications across the parallel sectors of energy, communications and water services. ITS Australia will begin building bridges to the appropriate industry associations and thought leaders in these areas, as part of our ongoing strategy to build smarter infrastructure," Norm Pidgeon said.

2011 ITS Summit

To monitor progress on the ITS national action plan and to realign the vision for the future, it was agreed that a second Summit will be held in 2011. Minister Pallas announced that the Queensland Minister for Roads Craig Wallace had offered to co-host the 2011 Summit with ITS Australia in Queensland.

2009 Summit outcomes

The themes addressed at the Summit included improving road and rail safety, network management, public transport operation, efficiency in the freight industry, security and emergency planning, travel and traveller information and reducing environmental impact. The Summit outcomes included the following action points:

Improve road and rail safety –

- Apply ITS to ensure zero harm arising from road and rail use.

Reduce environmental impact –

- Use ITS as a key enabling technology to reduce the environmental impact of transport.

Improve public transport operation –

- Exceed customer expectations with public transport to make it the mode of choice.
- Achieve multi-modal Integration of passenger information and fare management.

Facilitate more efficient freight industry –

- Establish government sponsored national body to set ITS goals and standards with enforcement authority.
- Develop a national open ITS communications and data architecture to support a range of applications.

Improving security and emergency planning –

- Achieve national integration of best practice international ITS solutions to deliver superior security and emergency management outcomes.

Improving road network management –

- Achieve uniform national adoption of best practice international systems to achieve zero avoidable congestion across all modes.
- Achieve a national road network that is priced, operated, and used to maximise cross-modal efficiency, increase safety and reduce emissions.

Better travel and traveller information

- Develop a common multi-modal transport information portal, with a pilot project by 2012.
- Develop a business case for funding whole of life ITS equipment.
- Adopt where possible international standards for network instrumentation and data exchange.
- Create a regime allowing service providers free access to data for all government owned modes.

Australian ITS capabilities in road safety and network management

- Adopt a common architecture and standards for communications, data treatment and sharing across all modes.
- Establish the contribution made by ITS initiatives in achieving Government transport objectives.

Photo caption DrNormPidgeon.jpg: *ITS Australia President Dr Norm Pidgeon.*

Photo caption DeanZabrieszach.jpg: *VicRoads Director Road User Services Dean Zabrieszach.*

Photo caption MinisterTimPallas.jpg: *Victorian Minister for Roads and Ports Tim Pallas.*

Photo caption MinisterAnthonyAlbanese.jpg: *Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Anthony Albanese.*

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What is ITS?

ITS technologies increase the safety and efficiency of transport networks – from public bus, tram and train transport, to rail and road freight transport, and private and commercial road transport. ITS systems include the software and hardware for new electronic vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-infrastructure communication/information systems.

Successful ITS uses are transport scheduling, live road traffic management, satellite navigations products, road tolling / congestion taxing, rail and road freight management, heavy road vehicle regulation and safety products such as active cruise control and lane control (alerts when vehicle is too close to vehicles ahead or behind or moves out of its lane into the path of another vehicle).

For example, a state-of-the-art road and vehicle system recommends to drivers the best roads to use, advises what their estimated travel time will be, alerts them to traffic hazards ahead, warns them when they stray out of their lane or get too close to the vehicle ahead, suggests where to buy the cheapest fuel, and tells them where to park.

About ITS Australia

Established in 1992, Intelligent Transport Systems Australia (ITS Australia) is the nation's principal organisation focused on facilitating the development and deployment of advanced technologies across all modes of transport – air, sea, road and rail. ITS Australia is an incorporated, not-for-profit organisation representing members of the Industry including government, consumer organisations and academia.