

## INTELLIGENT ACCESS TECHNOLOGY OFFERS BENEFITS FOR ALL

*What if technology could provide a solution to assist road freight operators to comply with specified operating conditions while delivering social and commercial benefits?*

It was this question that led to a 12 month study on the feasibility of an “Intelligent Access Program” or IAP. The project sought to assess the need for, and possibility of, implementing a system that would monitor freight vehicles using technology known as ‘satellite based telematic services’ to better demonstrate compliance to regulations.

Telematics technology – using satellite tracking and mobile telecommunications – has successful applications in navigation and security. In their efforts to increase revenue and better manage costs, some commercial vehicle operators are now using telematics to manage their fleets and consignments.

Australia's state and territory road transport agencies set road network access conditions for vehicles, taking into account such issues as vehicle type, dimension and mass. The ability to accurately monitor compliance provides new set of opportunities for agencies to optimise performance of the road freight task for efficiency and safety, and to maximise the performance of their road infrastructure.

Demonstrated compliance would be a requirement for transport operators to benefit from the improved access arrangements. These benefits, along with other commercial fleet management services, would provide transport operators with the incentive to voluntarily participate in the IAP.

With freight movements expected to double over the next 15 years, the task for governments to better manage safety, road network access and the environment is a very real one. IAP is an innovative mechanism to address these issues.

IAP is not only a means of ensuring compliance but also provides a degree of confidence to the regulator and wider community that freight operators and drivers are complying with preset conditions. Technology is being used for greater assurance of compliance in order to manage the risks and security of all road users.

The feasibility study found that IAP can provide significant benefits to jurisdictions across all areas of activity including improved road safety, reduction in infrastructure wear, reduction in environmental effects, better managing public perceptions and expectations of heavy vehicle movements, and optimisation of the road freight policy and operations tasks.

Importantly, the transport industry can benefit from improved productivity.

Australian Transport Ministers approved the implementation of the IAP on May 23, 2003, following the tabling of a report addressing the feasibility of the IAP concept. In line with the findings, the success of the IAP is reliant on a staged implementation.

One of the major challenges is to deliver a cross-jurisdictional initiative that will permit the operation of the IAP across state and territory boundaries. This represents a decided shift in the business of managing the road transport compliance task.

The introduction of a nationwide scheme affecting so many businesses and industries requires close cooperation. Managing the transport task is a national responsibility because it affects us all in one way or another. And the task is getting bigger every year.

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