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Australia steps up to next level of ITS deployment

The successful 2013 Australian ITS Summit held in Sydney 18 to 20 September revealed that Australia is moving rapidly from test beds and pilots to real world applications of new ITS technologies – especially in the vehicle sector.

The busy speakers program featuring 145 presentations and debates, and a sell-out exhibition with 32 displays, attracted 390 delegates to the event. International input to the program came from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Japan, Taiwan, New Zealand, Norway, UK and USA.

ITS Australia President Brian Negus said Australia's third biennial Summit demonstrated an energised convergence of government, industry and academia to focus on both the forward strategy for national ITS, and the actual projects and initiatives required to deliver improved mobility, safety and sustainable travel.



“Governments are recognising that ITS applications can ‘sweat the asset’, but clearly the challenge is to get more funding into the sector. This amplifies the need to demonstrate the real benefits from the trials being run,” said Brian Negus.

“There is a strong need for governments to proactively work to enable emerging innovations. Technologies such as cooperative ITS and autonomous vehicles can potentially bring massive efficiency and safety benefits.

“These technologies are rapidly progressing beyond trials into deployable systems. However, governments will need to make significant changes to prevailing legislative and regulatory frameworks to enable many of these technologies to achieve their full potential.

“The radio spectrum bottle neck is another example of the need for clear vision across broad stakeholder groups. We have known that radio frequency allocation must be addressed since cooperative ITS technologies appeared many years ago. We now have the radio tools that can link vehicles and infrastructure to each other to increase safety and infrastructure efficiency.

“The Summit also highlighted that the drive for national harmonisation in many areas of ITS – such as equipment standards, specification, approval and procurement – is stronger than ever. This aspect should progress well over the next couple of years.

“Deployment of new ITS technologies will take time to achieve. To gain the huge safety and economic benefits early, we need to identify and resolve road blocks, and collaborate to help ease growing transport congestion as quickly as possible,” said Brian Negus.

The Summit identified some next steps in technology to improve Australia's transport networks:

- Integrated public transport systems.
- Interoperability of communications and ITS platforms.
- Totally integrated multi-modal, real time traveller information.
- Roll out of managed motorway systems.
- Autonomous vehicles and “platooning” to increase road network capacity and safety.

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Australian technology at the forefront

Summit delegates learned there is great synergy between the strategies and initiatives across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific, and Australia was recognised as a leading developer and deployer of ITS.



Chairman of ITS America Peter Sweatman, who was a keynote speaker, emphasised the renowned capability of Australia in the international ITS industry, highlighting in particular the areas of road safety and freight where he considers Australia to be a world leader.

An example of Australian ITS innovation accepted globally is the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS) developed and implemented during the 1970s by former constituents of the New South Wales Roads and Maritime Services. SCATS was then first introduced in Victoria in the early 1980's and progressively across all capitals in Australia during the 1980s and has since been rolled out in 180 cities worldwide.



In addition to real time adaptive traffic signal management to increase road efficiency, SCATS also provides priority for emergency and public transport vehicles to increase safety.

Other international ITS leaders contributing to the Australian Summit included ITS Japan President and Chief Executive Officer Hajime Amano, ITS Taiwan Vice President Prof SK Jason Chang and 19th ITS World Congress Austria Chair Dr Reinhard Pfliegl.



ITS Australia leadership role



ITS Australia Chief Executive Officer Susan Harris said it was satisfying to see a wider range of ITS representatives at this year's Summit, including delegates from spatial and mapping, transport and logistics, transit, traffic sensing and other specialist fields.

"The varied inputs at the Summit reflected the need for and importance of clear policies and strategies to ensure that key industry issues are addressed. This is critical to get traction in priority areas in an industry that is so diverse and technically complex," said Susan Harris.

"The *ITS Australia Industry Strategy* plan plays an important role here, as does the Australian Government *ITS Policy Framework*. The leadership role played by ITS Australia in this fast paced industry helps to inform debate, as governments struggle to tackle congestions issues and infrastructure funding priorities. ITS Australia has facilitated a dramatic increase in engagement by diverse industry stakeholders to help address and resolve these challenges.

"This Summit was a great example. Participation this year expanded from a traditional technology focus to include reviews of real world trials and case studies on implementation of solutions. This reflects a level of maturity in emerging ITS connected mobility as practitioners move to deploy proven solutions.

"Delegate and exhibitor feedback about the 2013 Summit has been very positive. The combination of high level Australian input, and participation by top international professionals, provided a sense of benchmarking that was valuable to all.

"The great attendance, generous sponsorship and exhibitor support created a high energy 'buzz' throughout the Summit. This was complimented by the elegant Sydney Opera House and Rocks District harbour side settings for the social activities, which inspired the busy networking. Perhaps one attendee best summed up the Summit when he said: 'It saved me months of travel and work!'

"ITS Australia is grateful to the dedicated and creative Organising Committee chaired by ITS Australia Director Andrew Mehaffey, the committed sponsors, enthusiastic exhibitors and the 100+ speakers for their contributions, which made this Summit a big success," said Susan Harris.

ITS Australia members can access papers presented at the 2013 Summit on the ITS Australia website.

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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. Visit <http://www.its-australia.com.au/>