

ROAD SAFETY COMMITTEE

Inquiry into vehicle safety

Melbourne—19 November 2007

Members

Mr J. Eren

Mr S. Leane

Mr P. Weller

Mr D. Koch

Mr I. Trezise

Mr T. Mulder

Chair: Mr J. Eren

Deputy Chair: Mr D. Koch

Staff

Executive Officer: Ms A. Douglas

Research Officer: Mr D. Baker

Witnesses

Mr T. Warin, Executive Director, Intelligent Transport Systems Australia.

The CHAIR—Thank you very much for attending and making yourself available for this very important inquiry that we have. Of course you know that we are investigating vehicle safety. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the Constitution Act 1975 and further, subject to the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003. Any comments you make outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. As you know, we are recording the proceedings and we will provide a proof version of the *Hansard* transcript at the earliest opportunity so you can correct it if need be. I will introduce you to the members: Sean Leane; myself as the chair; David Koch the deputy chair; Paul Weller; Ian Trezise; our executive officer Alex Douglas. If you could start with your name and the organisation that you belong to, and if that is okay, as you proceed with your presentation, if we could ask questions.

Mr WARIN—Yes, sure. Terry Warin is my name, from ITS Australia. Excuse the accent, but you know I am originally a New Zealander. This is my first ever time in front of one of these committees. Please feel free to make sure I am on the right track. I thought I would tell you in the first couple of slides about what ITS does.

Slides shown.

Mr WARIN—I do not know whether you know, but ITS is a worldwide—

The CHAIR—Sorry, Terry, keep going—a bit close there, like sitting in the front stall at the pictures.

Mr WARIN—Nearly every country in the world, even now including China, have ITS organisations where they act as a facilitator between governments and local private industry to facilitate things like road safety and vehicle safety, stuff like that. Obviously some of our main focuses today are vehicle and road safeties, congestion and air pollution. It is interesting; ITS in Australia where also we run an organisation called the [NETC]—you would not have heard of this probably, it is the National Electronic Tolling Committee. We in Australia were to the forefront in getting interoperability so that the CityLink tag you have here will work in Queensland. We have meetings with these people every two or three months. It is quite interesting sitting in a room filled with road owners and they are talking about how their roads are performing. This will be a very important element of road safety in the future. I think it is very important that you understand ITS Australia is a member based organisation. Do you know about ITS Australia at all?

The CHAIR—No.

Mr WARIN—Okay.

Mr KOCH—We are listening, Terry.

Mr WARIN—Okay. Good. We are pretty lucky because ITS Australia was set up in 1992 and it was housed in Nauru House in with the DOI people. Now we have our own premises in Port Melbourne. It is quite a big two-storey operation. We have a huge data centre that was put in by NEC. The fit-out and the building—how can I say this? The building's long-term strategy was funded by the Victoria government. You may not be aware of that. They gave us \$1 million. With that we have put in fibre into the system. At some stage in the future we will be able to host traffic data from the agencies not only in Victoria, in the whole of Australia, that collect the data and do not know what to do with it. Our role is really to encourage networking between researchers, developers, regulators. We are very close to the Monash University Accident Research Centre MUARC. We are very close to TAC. They are good for ITS because in our facilitation role we need numbers to make people aware of what is happening.

The CHAIR—Terry, in relation to how you are funded, it is an incorporated not-for-profit.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

The CHAIR—How do you operate? Who funds it?

Mr WARIN—Members.

The CHAIR—Members.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

The CHAIR—Which are?

Mr WARIN—I have some CDs here I can leave with you.

The CHAIR—Sure.

Mr WARIN—This tells you all about ITS in Australia. We have members that go from car companies through to suppliers to this organisation, through to toll road owners, toll road suppliers. Anybody that is in the technology part of road or vehicle safety, they join. We have about 80 corporate members at the moment and about 300 individual members. Some companies pay anywhere from \$10,000 a year to belong to these things. We run events. Every couple of months we have a breakfast. In fact, I can tell you that in the new year Mr Pallas will be there, and we will invite our members to a breakfast. He can tell us, and our members, about what his issues are in terms of congestion or whatever in Victoria and what can we do to provide him with a solution. Our members, we facilitate this, ITS Australia. We bring something together which is then presented to the government and finally it will get to him. If there is a test bed to be run, they will fund it. That is how it works. John, anything else?

The CHAIR—No, that is fine.

Mr WARIN—For instance, at the moment we are project managing a thing called Smart Freight. Have you heard of this work?

Mr KOCH—No.

Mr WARIN—I will tell you.

Mr KOCH—Sorry, others may have—

The CHAIR—No, go on.

Mr WARIN—We are project managing for DOI at the moment a project called Smart Freight. Now, we all know that down at the wharves, down at the port, empty trucks come and there is a queue two kilometres long. What we are trying to do is put in place a program—in fact I have another meeting this afternoon about the next steps. We have installed some CCTV cameras down at Patrick's and we can now look at all the trucks that are there. A website is being developed and a transport operator will be able to, with a login, get in and see either where his trucks are in the queue or what the queue is like so he can get down and get his goods. The next step to this is—now we have proven that there is a problem and you can see it visually—what can we do if there is a transport operator in Echuca and he is going to come all the way to Melbourne. It would be nice for him to know what the queue situation is like, or when his container is ready. He may be ready to get this information from the website in the future. These are some things that are happening that we are involved in.

Mr KOCH—Is it going to give him priority loading? If it does not, he has a fair lead time out of Echuca.

Mr WARIN—Exactly. The end point we are discussing this afternoon: our idea is to use technology, either radio, to tell the people exactly, maybe within an hour, when the stuff would be ready. We can pass this on. But these are some of the things that we are involved in at the moment. As I said, we have been well supported from the Victorian government; we have a close relationship with the people, but now we are really getting to the stage with the demands throughout Australia, not just Victoria, but throughout Australia, on heavy freight congestion et cetera. We are going to be looking for some federal support early next year. But to come back to today's points, what I have done is—can you see that?

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—I have identified a few technologies that ITS is quite familiar with. Some of our members are in this business; something that reduces crashes, some technologies that can reduce injury. From our perspective, the best thing that has to happen is, we have to reduce the number of crashes. If we do that then we solve all problems. I have listed some things there. I have some other pages about this that I can give you some detail. Anything there you do not understand?

Mr MULDER—That is not in order of priority?

Mr WARIN—No.

Mr WELLER—So runflat tyres, they do not shred when they are flat?

Mr WARIN—No. I have a picture of it here, I can show you in a minute. They have a strengthened sidewall, Paul. When they do go flat the strength of the sidewall of the tyre will stay up enough to get you to—I think you can drive 50 K, 60 K on it. BMW are putting these now on all their new 5 Series from this year in Germany. I am going to talk a little bit about digital logbooks. I do not know whether you have heard about these before, but to me I think these are a real must in Australia.

To start off, has anybody not heard of the TAC Safe Car Project? You are all aware of it? The interesting thing about this is, and I have to say it, is when you read the report, it worked. Intelligent speed adaptation works. At the moment the driver got into another car, they did not keep to the rules. It was an interesting conclusion. In the UK they are also running an ISA project and it is a mandatory thing. If you are cruising down the Hume Highway at 110 and you hit 80, it will stop you to 80 immediately and you cannot go any faster at all. There are a lot of 'fors and againsts' with this, because if you ever wanted to get some speed to get yourself out of trouble, you cannot do it. It is still a trial. I think this is what the TAC did in their trial; they had an override button so that if you got yourself into trouble you could hit a button and get some more power.

The CHAIR—Terry, we know about most of these technologies because the manufacturers who research and develop these technologies have informed us of what they are doing. In relation to ITS, are you a lobby group or do you do research and development?

Mr WARIN—No.

The CHAIR—In terms of research and development, do you invest in that, or are you lobbying for your members in terms of—I am trying to get a grip of—because we know all this from the manufacturers.

Mr WARIN—Okay.

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—I would not call ourselves a lobby group. I come back to what I said before: we are a network of organisations where we bring these ideas and we take them and we can facilitate things. That is all. We do not do any research; we get research from other people. If you know about these things, then we can go through it pretty quickly.

The CHAIR—Yes. Go at your leisure, but there are time constraints.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

The CHAIR—Most of these things have been highlighted to us from the manufacturers.

Mr WARIN—Good. I am not aware of that. You know about active or adaptive cruise control. Runflat tyres—

The CHAIR—You can go through that one, that is interesting.

Mr WARIN—I think the only difference between the standard tyre and a runflat tyre is this reinforced sidewall. You can see that even flat it is strong enough to hold a car, whereas a normal tyre will go down.

Mr MULDER—What material is used to reinforce that sidewall?

Mr WARIN—I think it has a little more steel in it for the sidewall to hold it up.

Mr MULDER—Yes.

Mr KOCH—Do you replace runflat technology; you do not repair it or restore it.

Mr WARIN—I think you can repair it; I think, I am not sure. But from my research it showed that you can.

Mr TREZISE—Terry, how available is that technology in tyres? What percentage of cars on the road currently would have that type of technology?

Mr WARIN—As I said, the BMW 5 Series have it. It is available through tyre companies like Bob Jane et cetera. They have these things available; what the price is I am not sure.

Mr TREZISE—Yes.

Mr WARIN—You know about this. You know about lane departure warning.

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—You know about this because everybody talks about it.

Slides shown.

Mr WARIN—You know about this. If you are not aware of this, this is called a digital tachograph. In Europe it is mandatory in all trucks today. This ensures that the truck drivers get enough rest and that it is the driver who is getting in and driving that truck. Every driver, your licence is now the smart card. When you get in, it logs. At any time a policeman who stops you on the side of the road, you can give him the card and he can read it. When you think about it, with all the increases in technology over the last 10 years, and yet our truck drivers still have a paper logbook to fill in which is quite amazing.

Mr TREZISE—Is it Lindsay Fox; Linfox have trucks now that have a lot of the new technology in their fleets?

Mr WARIN—He has one truck. It is a new Mercedes. He has one with some of the material, but that tachograph does not meet ADR in Australia. It is built in the truck in Europe and then removed before it is exported to Australia. If you want to, you can put it in as an aftermarket option from VDO.

Mr KOCH—There must be a big market for removing all this stuff out of Europe into Australia. It is incredible, right across whether it is truck series, motor car series or what have you, that a lot of this technology is decommissioned before it gets to our shores which is very concerning to our own committee, especially from the point of view of VSC and curtain airbags and some of those things that we see essential for our travelling public today.

Mr WARIN—I was at a road safety forum in Canada two weeks ago. I will not mention his name, but there was a guy there from [DOTARS] and he argued that—because our argument is it is taking too long to get technology into the design rules. He brought up a plan that showed it was very simple; as long as you

had the evidence, it could be put in very quickly. We have learned it is many years it takes to get these things put in. It is taking too long. You know about curtain airbags.

Mr TREZISE—Terry, what are your thoughts with regard to how we would speed up that process?

Mr WARIN—Relating to anything, or ADR?

Mr TREZISE—New technologies in general.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

Mr KOCH—Incorporating that into the ADR. Where would ITS be on that—not only your own thoughts, but ITS is important from our point of view.

Mr WARIN—ITS should be driving these things because that is what it was designed for. At the moment, it is a very Victorian organisation. We call ourselves ITS Australia, but ITS needs to be driving these things. But to do this we have to interface very closely with all the researchers and developers and all the companies that are involved in this stuff in Australia, and then prove the point because that guy the other day, he had a slide which showed the process and he said that this does not need to take even one year if you have the right evidence.

Mr KOCH—And the willpower.

Mr WARIN—That is true.

Mr KOCH—So out of your 80 corporate members, are they spread nationally or are they a majority in Victoria?

Mr WARIN—No. We have members all over Australia, including Western Australia.

Mr KOCH—Why does ITS Australia remain Victorian centric if your corporates—and I see them as probably the most important part of your contributing membership make-up—they would be leading the charge for the other 300 members you speak of who I assume are very interested to glean what ITS is professing on how they are going to go about it. Why would you see this as a major impediment?

Mr WARIN—Being in Melbourne? We are seen to be very Victoria centric, we really are. Even on our building, if you want to come down and have a look, it has the Victorian government on the top of it because they threw in a lot of money; John Brumby did a couple of years ago. Because of this, it works for us and it works against us. From a Victorian point of view, all of our members here think we are great and we are well supported. When you get to Sydney and you have to deal with the [RTA], it is a different kettle of fish. We are now looking at the plan of putting somebody in Canberra. We are looking at the funding of it at the moment, of having somebody full-time in Canberra, who is from this industry and who can lobby for us. That is what we need to do, and then I think we will bring all the country together. It does not matter where our head office is, as long as we are seen to be acting nationally.

I know that you are getting pounded with [ESC], but the reason is it is the only technology at the moment where we have global statistics. Even things like night vision and radar, there are no statistics about this yet; it is too early. Because ESC has been going for more than 10 years, there is now a wealth of information around. That is why the world is saying we are going to get in on this. The US has mandated this from 2011; you would know that. But when you look at the numbers, on a country basis the latest figures, Australia is not too bad compared to the rest of the world.

Mr TREZISE—For example, Terry, with this technology, ITS, do they believe it should be consumer driven, ie customer asking for ESC, or should it, as the United States have taken the lead and mandated a particular time that all vehicles will be fitted with ESC?

Mr WARIN—I think if the consumers drive it hard enough it will be mandated. I know that

[ANCAP]—and you people are well aware of ANCAP. You saw the press release last week; they have now told all fleet managers to only specify the vehicles with ESC. That is a major step. As more than 50 per cent of new cars are bought by fleets, that figure could rise to 50 per cent within a year; it could. This is one of the problems. We have come back to the ADR thing and what we are talking about. There are all these statistics—not only from Australia, from every developed country and underdeveloped country in the world—about ESC, but there is still a reluctance on people to mandate. I do not know why. Seat belts happened pretty quickly. Has anybody here driven in a controlled situation in a car with and without ESC?

Mr KOCH—Yes.

Mr WARIN—You have done it. Anybody would like to do it, because we can organise it if you want to try it.

Mr KOCH—It is only at its best if you take it to its extremes though. Alex and I had the privilege of rollover at Ford's testing ground in Detroit.

Mr WARIN—Did you?

Mr KOCH—It is very obvious when it gets to extremes where you can feel what is taking place within the vehicle.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

Mr KOCH—It would not generally come out unless it was put under that sort of duress.

Mr WARIN—Those are the latest—David, you have seen a lot of these figures again anyway. You have seen this one which was released last week that shows in Australia we are still behind target. We are still behind—this is the projections; we are still a little bit behind but the trend is good. You have seen this, the press release from last week; the latest result from MUARC. I think the interesting thing from—you are the Road Safety Committee, but the interesting thing, one of the final conclusions that whatsaname Newstead made was this final point, that if we implemented it today on the rate that is forecast, 500 crashes could be prevented between now and 2015. Now, what the value of that is, serious crashes, is something we should be thinking about.

Mr KOCH—Terry, I think one of the frustrations of not only the marketplace but ourselves is the way that any options are being bundled and you cannot particularly have an option in its own right; you have to take—I went to order a motor car the other day and I requested curtain airbags and they said 'Yes, they were available,' but I had to take leather seats.

Mr WARIN—Really.

Mr KOCH—The airbags were 700, but the combination was \$2,500. Now, this is general, right across the marketplace. I switched from General Motors—that was a General Motors quote. I switched across to Ford; I would give them a little bit more time to work it out, I would go to Ford. Ford have not even got it as an option. It is not even available in their range of sedans. That is a frustration.

Mr WARIN—Curtain airbags?

Mr KOCH—Yes. That is the frustration that we are confronted with as a Road Safety Committee. I am very interested to know what ITS in their own right are doing with their membership to try and promote this type of road safety and use its clout with its membership—and 80 corporates is not a sneeze in trade. Collectively, that is a lot of corporates. I think that there is room for them to be dedicating a lot of their time and resources into trying to make the opportunity safer for our travelling public both in the vehicle and the highways. I am very interested in, as we go along a little bit further, your enabling technology and what that is going towards and where you are driving that from and what outputs you are trying to achieve.

Mr WARIN—It is difficult for us because as I said, we are really a networking organisation. I can

tell you straight up: Ford is not a member; Holden is, Ford is not, because their agenda is written for them. It does not matter; they are not members. I personally have contacts in Ford from my automotive background, but from an ITS perspective, it is difficult to engage them. It is the same with any of the car companies. We are committed; our job is to expose, to get this technology out into the open. Every two years we have an event called a SmartDemo. Have you heard of this? I have brought some DVDs if you want them of the last event. We do all we can to get these safe technologies; we have had the TAC car there. We have a thing called sleeping machines, I think it was called, which was driver fatigue. We had ESC tests. All of this we get into the media; we make television. We do everything. But then it stops. We need to be a bigger hitter and we are not.

Mr KOCH—What is the make-up of your 80 corporates? Not the motor industry?

Mr WARIN—As I said, we have—

Mr KOCH—If you do not have Ford Motor Company, are there other major manufacturers in Australia that are not corporate members of ITS?

Mr WARIN—Mitsubishi. Toyota and Holden are members. Many of the importers are members; Volkswagen, Peugeot, a lot of these people are members. Some of these other big organisations are not.

Mr KOCH—That is disappointing.

Mr WARIN—As Alex knows, I have only been there three months and I am learning all this myself. We are putting together a strategy to involve all of these people. We need greater engagement. We have to get out there. It is not going to happen overnight. Are you aware of the European *ChooseESC!* program?

The CHAIR—There will be mandating by 2012.

Mr WARIN—But at the moment this is supported by what's name Schumacher. This is put up by the European Commission and NCAP. Schumacher is the spokesperson for this. Have a look at the website. What they are doing is, they are really making this a fun thing; they are aiming at kids and young families and everything to put the pressure on their folks to choose cars with ESC. It is good, yes, they are mandating it, but this *ChooseESC!* thing has been going for a couple of years. We have suggested doing something similar in Australia and ITS may do this.

The CHAIR—That is good.

Mr WARIN—I think that an organisation such as ours, this is what we should be doing and then marketing this thing out into the marketplace not only with ESC; this is only one thing. We can arrange live demonstrations. Again this is the kind of thing we do; we engage with our members. If there is anything we can do for you guys, you have to tell us and we can put on a demonstration.

The CHAIR—I do not think we need to be convinced of how the ESC is.

Mr WARIN—No.

The CHAIR—We have seen it—

Mr WARIN—Not just with ESC, with anything.

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—All right. I am going to leave it there because this is our—I cannot answer the last few comments in the inquiry; (d) and (f). I am too new for this. But, as I said to Alex before, I really would like ITS Australia to be closer to people like yourselves, to a group such as yourselves. We have not been, not to my knowledge. I think we need to be.

Mr KOCH—Terry, have you come to ITS with an agenda to take ITS forward? Is that part of the uptake of your position?

Mr WARIN—Yes, sure.

Mr KOCH—Is the agenda that you hope to push forward, is that going to encompass some of the matters that have been raised here for ITS?

Mr WARIN—Yes, it will. I have learned some also this morning. We have to make ITS, in the vernacular, a big hitter in this business because at the moment we have been a facilitator. I think we have to be more of a voice.

Mr KOCH—There has to be some independence in the whole operation.

Mr WARIN—Yes.

Mr KOCH—With the people who have spoken to their own submissions here, I think all have indicated, no, they are not lobbyists. Until we get some serious lobbyists in the marketplace and encourage our fleet managers and our motor companies and what have you, we will only see some of this great technology come forward on a far slower basis than obviously we would like to see it, and I think the travelling public has a right to see it.

Mr WARIN—Yes, true.

Mr KOCH—I think there is a big role for an ITS or whoever to put themselves in that position. If you can gain further corporates amongst your membership, especially including the motor industry, which we see as the major driver of a lot of this activity, with support from lobbyists such as yourself or others who want to get involved in that arena, I think the Australian travelling public can be the major beneficiary as the organisation who is in fact driving the change.

Mr WARIN—I agree.

The CHAIR—Terry, in relation to ITS Australia, what are you doing to advance the implementation of the overseas ITS technologies, especially in relation to vehicle safety aspects into Australian vehicles?

Mr WARIN—Such as?

The CHAIR—For example overseas in Japan there was a number of—in terms of ITS, around bends on certain locations.

Mr WARIN—Yes, they have it in Europe too.

The CHAIR—Yes. They would have on their GPS a warning of some sort to say that the traffic was banked up around the corner so you stopped speeding. They are obviously trialling a fair bit of that technology. How is ITS Australia, compared to Japan and others, how are you thinking about implementing some of that technology into the vehicles here?

Mr WARIN—I am aware of what you are talking about because I moderated a presentation by Panasonic who briefed a group about what they were doing with this around the corner technology. ITS Japan did not do it; their members are involved in this. This is what we do. At ITS Australia we have companies as tenants in our building that are in the ITS space. When we attend these conferences or receive notices of these new technologies that are around in other countries, this is when we get together with our members, or we bring them together. We ask them, say what can we do. As I say, John, we are a facilitator; we tell them what is around. What can we do? How can we do this in Australia? What are the impediments? What are the barriers? The one in Japan is they have a signal that goes through the intersection. It can go through buildings and it can work out where a car is coming. The one in Germany works totally differently. It is a more exact GPS based item. It has a warning; you get a warning in your nav system that shows there is a vehicle coming

from the right or the left because it has a proximity GPS thing that knows exactly what is around. Yes, we are aware of these things. We ask our members to—all we can do is get it in the press at the moment. We cannot do any research at the moment.

Mr WELLER—Terry, it is fairly timely you coming in this week. This week in the parliament we have a bill that is dealing with fatigue in heavy vehicles. How would you see ITS Australia facilitating the roll-out of digital tachographs in heavy vehicles.?

Mr WARIN—In regards to?

Mr WELLER—To get these digital tachographs into the heavy vehicles in Australia?

Mr WARIN—We would have to get some people to do some research, get some numbers, and the likes of Lindsay Fox we are very close to with the Fox Group. We are very close to VDO, members of ours. We can run a test bed. We can get the government to run a test bed. That is what we could do. That is all, at the moment.

Mr WELLER—Why would you get the government to run a test bed when you probably have information from the rest of the world where surely if these digital tachographs have been in trucks in other parts of the world could you not use the findings of how that has reduced the number of accidents in heavy vehicles?

Mr WARIN—But it has not worked yet, Paul. Even Lindsay Fox himself has this data and he has said that, 'In Europe they are mandated. Why do I have to get it taken out of my truck before I can import it to Australia?'

Mr WELLER—Go another step. To help stop getting them taken out before they come to Australia, because if it has not reduced the number of accidents in Europe why then would you continue pursuing it, but if it has—and that information should be there from the research of what it was before you had the digital tachographs and the number of accidents—

The CHAIR—You do not need to recreate the wheel is what I think Paul is saying.

Mr WARIN—We can get that data but who do I give it to?

Mr WELLER—You would give it to the committee.

Mr WARIN—Up until a few weeks ago I was not even aware you existed, to be honest. I had just returned here.

Mr WELLER—The data from overseas that is already there would be useful for us to—

Mr WARIN—I can get that to you. I can get it on everything. Do I send it through to Alex?

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—No problem. Would you like that specifically to start with?

The CHAIR—Yes.

Mr WARIN—We can do it.

The CHAIR—Thank you very much.

Witness withdrew.

Hearing suspended.