



MEDIA RELEASE

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AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES: TAKING THE RIGHT ROAD

Autonomous Vehicles have fired the public and political imagination, but reality will lag without community trust in, and adoption of, AV technologies – and appropriate laws and systems to guide infrastructure upgrades over time - says a report released today by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia, Advisian and the University of NSW.

“AVs could offer the biggest changes to transport since the invention of the wheel, but they also require the biggest changes to law and practice since the invention of the motor car,” said IPA Chief Executive, Brendan Lyon.

“The discussion about AVs rushes to a 40 year outlook and forgets that we need to make changes now to allow them to enter the vehicle fleet and to understand when, where and how many AVs operate on the road network.”

The joint IPA, Advisian and UNSW research recommends a four step process to prepare for AVs, including:

1. Engaging with transport industry partners and road users to benchmark community needs, hesitations and choices on AVs;
2. Developing concurrent Federal and state legislation and regulations to allow AVs to enter Australian roads;
3. Reporting on the number, type and de-identified location of AVs entering the vehicle fleet; and
4. Routinely assessing AV uptake in long-term infrastructure, land use and wider strategic planning.

“The research shows that while there’s excitement about AVs, there’s also question marks in the community’s mind about data, privacy and safety and hesitation about giving up driving at all,” said Mr Lyon.

“That’s why we suggest that Austroads and Infrastructure Australia both focus on engaging stakeholders on the laws and planning changes that may be needed, and good mechanisms to understand how the vehicle fleet changes over time,” said Advisian Principal, Zoltan Maklary.





“Ultimately, the community’s choices will dictate how fast and how well Australia captures the benefits of AVs and there is a good case for ongoing engagement to inform the community and policymakers.

“Infrastructure Australia or Austroads could consider coordinating a consultation period with industry to understand the impacts of AVs on the broader transport network, and should also work with the community to understand their concerns.”

“Research shows that over 80 per cent of Australians would still prefer to drive manually from time to time even if they owned a driverless vehicle, and 72 per cent of people are worried about the privacy of their data, these are issues that need to be discussed with the community before any decisions are made”, said Professor Travis Waller, Director of the Research Centre for Integrated Transport Innovation in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of NSW.

“There are also complex issues to resolve around legal liability and vehicle ‘control’, so we also recommend that the National Transport Commission extends its work on AV trials to develop national legislation and regulations to implement when AVs become ‘street legal’.

“Over time, data from AVs should also be captured by Austroads and utilised to better understand AV uptake, and make better infrastructure planning choices.

“If widely accepted by the community, AVs will not only change the way we use transport, they will change the way our cities work.”

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