**Driving into an intelligent motoring future, steered by progressive policy**

**By Tony Weber, Chief Executive, Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries**

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**Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to open today by presenting to you the motoring future of this country, as it will be framed by prospective government legislation.**

**These proposals will determine whether we take a First World approach to our motoring, or a Third World approach.**

**It hinges on policy sitting before government right now.**

**This is policy which will dramatically affect the safety and effectiveness of Co-operative Intelligent Transport Systems across Australia in the years to come.**

**For those who may not be aware, there are legislative changes mooted for concessional vehicle imports into Australia.**

**Specifically, this is a proposal by the Government to allow vehicles, most of them luxury cars, to be imported from overseas provided they have:**

* **less than 500kms on the odometer; and**
* **are less than a year old.**

**The government’s own modelling indicates as many as 30,000 cars a year would be imported this way.**

**So let’s examine this policy development against the technical developments coming down the pipeline for C-ITS around the world.**

**From early next year, the EU standard bandwidth of 5.9 Gigahertz is almost certain to be adopted for C-ITS in Australia.**

**This will be the future, quarantined broadcast language of the industry;**

* **the accepted communication standard for the vehicle-to-vehicle**
* **and vehicle-to-infrastructure information sharing.**

**This is the foundation on which C-ITS sits – and that on which infrastructure builders and designers, vehicle manufacturers, and engineers will fully depend.**

**And yet our Government plans to open a back door for parallel imports in which tens of thousands of cars a year from Japan; as many as 300,000 over a 10 year period.**

**These vehicles can never be part of the future network that we are discussing here today.**

**So my safety, your safety and the safety of hundreds of thousands of people out there on our roads will be compromised by what amounts to a senseless bug in the system.**

**How, you may ask, can a smart country like ours allow this to happen?**

**Good question.**

**In the proposed private import scenario let’s forget about the range of issues ahead for that private import buyer such as: who services the car, how does a recall occur, what petrol quality does my new vehicle need, and whether its cooling system is going to cope with our conditions.**

**However, for simplicity’s sake, let’s forget all this today and focus just on C-ITS.**

**Tens of thousands of privately imported cars a year will be shut out of Australia’s C-ITS because in Japan, they broadcast on a different bandwidth.**

**These cars will be built to be used in Japan, where they do not use the EU bandwidth. They will talk a different language that no other cars, no other infrastructure in Australia can hear.**

**Imagine, for a moment, if an established small to medium importer like Subaru or Volvo wanted to bring its cars to Australia on a different bandwidth. It simply wouldn’t be allowed.**

**And nor it should.**

**And yet under this new proposed legislation, anyone individual can do so. How does that seem rational, or even fair?**

**Also, with these private imports locked into this unapproved bandwidth, there’s the very real risk of interference with things such as mobile phone coverage and electronic toll collection.**

**This isn’t scare-mongering, either; it’s already happening across the Tasman in New Zealand.**

**The Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development’s website states that before these cars are imported to Australia, their transmitters will need to be deactivated.**

**How many countries would endorse the importation of cars with reduced safety systems?**

**As we all in this room, plan for the future, the question we must ask ourselves is this: what smart Government, which continually says it wants to stimulate innovation and make us the clever country, would endorse such a short-sighted outcome?**

**There is a convincing “public good” case here in which the safety of the driving public, and the benefits that C-ITS will bring to our roads, is being compromised for no particular reason.**

**Think for a moment about the potential savings to the health budget alone that C-ITS will bring . . .**

**The C-ITS technology which will drive us into the future is embedded tech. That is, multi-layered and fully integrated in the vehicles**

**It will arrive gradually – indeed, a large portion of it is here now – and it will change everything about how we drive.**

**Australia is but a small market in a global industry sense, with our 1.1 million new vehicle sales a year representing a bit over 1.5 per cent of global production. Our source markets are international and we have a high saturation of ownership, with over 714 vehicles per 1000 people. That’s more than countries like Germany, Spain, Italy and France.**

**In world terms, Australia is a mature motor vehicle market with around 18 million vehicles on our roads and yet we have experienced encouraging growth in new car sales in recent years.**

**The challenge is in maintaining these growth levels into the future to deliver the newest technology and in doing so, safer, more efficient vehicles to the Australia public.**

**So it is important that Australia’s policy framework, all the C-ITS planning, must be cohesive.**

**As an industry, so as to optimise all the benefits that C-ITS will bring, we must have one standard to ensure inter-operability. That will require government to take the lead, to set the standard and to ensure that all vehicles imported here fit that standard.**

**So why our insistence on this homogenous approach?**

**Fully integrated C-ITS, a truly co-operative system as the name suggests, is vital in so many ways to enrich our driving future.**

**Hugely improved occupant safety is a given.**

**Hundreds of lives will be saved because human error will be all but eliminated, as will the death and trauma caused by fatigue, misjudging the road conditions, and failing to see that pedestrian.**

**So many lives will be saved and injuries avoided.**

**But consider, too, the greatly reduced emissions in situations where traffic flow is optimised in the so-called green wave effect in which every vehicle in that optimised movement of all traffic from trucks and buses to commuter vehicles across a network is producing the minimal amount of tailpipe emissions.**

**Our lifestyles will be enhanced in a fully integrated C-ITS network;**

**traffic congestion will be reduced and parking will be made easier.**

**Delays and time wasted in traffic will be minimised because the flow will be managed more evenly and more fluidly.**

**That’s less time in the car, and more time at home or, I suspect, for some among us, in the office.**

**The flow-through of C-ITS will be much like all new vehicle technologies.**

**Stand-alone intelligent vehicle technology such as radar cruise control, lane-keeping and autonomous braking are with us now.**

**Vehicle to vehicle communication is following and vehicle to infrastructure is another important element.**

**Government owned and operated infrastructure such as traffic lights and signage, will be part of the network so we need to future proof that infrastructure as it is built.**

**High-end technology always arrives first in prestige cars, but there will be a rapid trickle-down effect because for many manufacturers,the on-board systems to run C-ITS will be integrated within their electronic architecture.**

**Just as anti-lock braking and electronic stability control were mandated on new cars, the safety benefits alone brought to our roads by intelligent cars, operating in synch with each other, saving lives and reducing travel times, should be irresistible to government.**

**Any Government that is serious about reducing road trauma would embrace C-ITS with gusto.**

**Finally, as we contemplate this exciting future of a networked, intelligent transport system,**

**we have to consider whether we want a First World solution,**

**or a Third World solution; an integrated system or a piecemeal system.**

**The First World solution is where we have a government strong enough to make a decision for the greater good; to mandate a system which applies to all vehicles now and into the future.**

**The alternative is compromise and failure.**

**At the FCAI, we are pushing the government hard to get the policy framework right – and soon – and for the government to provide leadership on this issue.**

**All our members, Australia’s vehicle manufacturers and importers, are in complete agreement on this issue.**

**It’s called a Co-operative Intelligent Transport System for a reason.**

**So let’s close this back door now, before it’s too late.**

**Through good policy – smart policy – we can have a better transport system, we can reduce road trauma, and we can save hundreds of lives on our roads.**

**It’s hard to believe in 2016 we are still debating this issue.**

**THANK YOU**