November 18, 2024

**SAFETY STILL KING OF THE ROAD**

**2024 Isuzu Future of Trucking Report Thought Leadership Series**

***Matt Sakhaie, Isuzu Australia Limited Chief of Product***

Safety is still king. That’s the overwhelming finding emerging from Isuzu’s latest *The Future of Trucking* (FoT) report data and with so many competing priorities for Australian businesses right now, it’s comforting to see.

At the core of it all is a collective desire to see safer conditions for all road users, and in the truck world at least, a laser focus on driver wellbeing in its many forms.

We’ve all watched the steady march of improvements in automotive safety technology over the years, from seatbelts, airbags and stability control in the nineties, to some imaginative and highly effective developments we’d never thought possible only a few short years ago.

What we’ve seen of late, especially in the truck world, is Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and regulators working in tandem to lift the safety bar, ensuring cutting–edge safety technology can be a more viable proposition for many brands competing in global and domestic markets alike.

One glimpse into the cabin of a modern truck these days and you can see how far this corner of automotive research and development has come. Powered by smart cameras and sensors, the list of safety acronyms applied to modern trucks nowadays is comprehensive to say the least.

**Driving forces**

Encouragingly, Isuzu’s findings indicate that all fleets are continuing to adopt technology that leads to a safer environment for both truck drivers and other road users alike.

Alongside total cost of ownership equations, safety technology remains a headline purchase consideration for many business types—from those whom transport *is* their business, to those that *rely* heavily on road transport as a critical function of their business.

Undisputable too are the links between compliance observance and the winning of profitable contracts, especially at the top end of fleet and logistics operations in Australia.

In some ways, safety technology adoption is as much about compliance obligations as it is about ensuring people are kept safe, whilst also leveraging systems that help boost revenue generation and keep people in a job.

It’s no surprise then that improved truck safety features are more widely prioritised by businesses with larger fleets and given the scale this group operates at, logically there’s a higher uptake across all major safety technology markers.

This is of course fantastic news. For so many reasons, the broader industry craves guidance in this area and the safety-compliance example set by our larger transport fleets is as welcome as it is necessary.

**Active adoption**

So, what are Aussie fleets using right now, and why?

According to FoT data, active safety features, classified as ‘pre-collision’ safety systems, continue to be sought, with many being ‘non-negotiable’ for larger transport fleets with multiple trucks and a growing freight task.

Right now, the ‘big two’ are Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) and Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB), with 44 per cent of Australian fleets actively using ACC and 43 per cent relying heavily on AEB, according to FoT data.

The success of these features in the car world meant that these systems have been swiftly adapted for use in trucks. Rightly so, given the sheer volume of uptime experienced by a working truck as opposed to a passenger vehicle, for example.

Applying a short- to medium-term outlook, we can see that a combination of sensor-based, driver-aid technology, including Lane Keep Assist and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) all came in high up the list of new safety technology that businesses are considering in the coming five years.

The trend here is more heavily weighted towards collision prevention and ensuring the longevity and resale of critical capital equipment.

**What’s next?**

When you consider how quickly we’ve arrived at heightened sensor and camera-based solutions, one can only imagine the state of the truck safety space over the coming five to 10 years.

With the average age of Australia’s truck parc hovering at around the 14-year mark, the ongoing challenge for transport and transport-reliant businesses will be the requirement to update and maintain the veracity of truck safety and new technology features.

With more advanced, safer capital equipment comes greater efficiencies in numerous areas, including reduced emissions, improved fuel economy and superior overall business efficiencies.

More than that though and as the trends suggest, our ongoing collective value of onboard vehicle safety technology can only equate to more lives saved, along with safer roads and working conditions for truck drivers.

**ends**

***About the 2024 Isuzu Future of Trucking Report Thought Leadership Series***

*The Future of Trucking Report (FoT) Thought Leadership Series is a collection of comment pieces penned by industry experts within Isuzu Trucks and informed by the largest and most comprehensive report of its kind in the Australian truck industry.*

*The 2024 FoT report examined and identified key insights influencing transport businesses in the coming years and presents survey data collected from over 1,300 Australian stakeholders across the trucking and road transport sector.*

***About Matt Sakhaie: Chief of Product, Isuzu Australia Limited***

*Matt joined Isuzu Australia Limited in 2010 with almost 30 years of experience across the Automotive, Power & Energy solutions, and engineering service sectors within Australia and internationally.*

*Responsible for Isuzu Power Solutions (IPS) Department, Matt stepped up to the role of Chief of Product in 2023. Since then, Matt has championed a combination of systematic and innovative approaches to transform the Isuzu Product Department to make the solutions portfolio future-proof.*

*Matt is also a valued member of Engineers Australia and the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers.*

**For further information, please contact:**        **For Isuzu Trucks releases and photos:**

Sam Gangemi                                                      Arkajon Communications

Isuzu Australia Limited                                       Phone: 03 9867 5611

Phone: 03 9644 6666                                           Email: isuzu@arkajon.com.au