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**ROAD SAFETY: IT TAKES A VILLAGE…**

***With safety for Australian road users a perennial issue, Isuzu Australia Limited Director and Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Harbison, looks at the current truck technology landscape and where equipment suppliers can affect tangible change.***

In the world of trucks and commercial road transport, there has been seismic shifts in recent years when it comes to the development and application of new and emerging technologies.

On the truck safety technology front, this has certainly been the case here in Australia.

And whilst challenges remain, for example the average age of our national truck fleet currently sits at 14.8 years – the trucks rolling out of dealerships across the country today for the most part boast a safety feature set that is comparable to some of the best passenger car offerings.

A compelling argument can be made that the commercial vehicle industry has turned a corner on this front, and not before time either.

Understanding the workings of the domestic truck safety space can be a complex task, with a range of variables feeding into the broader picture.

It’s important to note that whilst playing a key role, safety technology systems form one part of the solution, however they’re not a silver bullet.

So, whilst one view of the purported effectiveness of safety tech is the ultimate price of road safety…the road toll, the reality is that road user behaviour plays an outsized role.

**Infrastructure key**

A further central element is the state of our road infrastructure.

Road funding remains a tussle between local, state and federal governments and as any weekend road warrior can attest, when travelling our country’s byways and backroads, one glance to the side of the shoulder-less, single carriage, choppy ribbon of bitumen reveals a stand of immovable Australian native eucalypts and the like.

A moment’s inattention, a risky overtaking manoeuvre, or worse, avoiding the careless driving of another road users becomes an immediate roll of the dice in avoiding these obstacles or other roadside furniture.

Governments of all stripes have attempted to reckon with the mammoth task of funding safer and more efficient roads, but once again, the vastness of the Australian landscape and our relatively small population renders this an unending battle.

**A collective reckoning**

As mentioned earlier, this is a complicated issue and not simply a case of safe truck, safe roads.

Road safety is everyone’s responsibility; it is not solely a transport issue and not exclusively a government problem.

It’s far reaching and intersects multiple societal touchpoints. From health to justice and social services, through to education, planning and industry – we all need to use the roads, most of us every single day.

Just like we did with cigarette smoking, waste recycling, even the current shift towards renewable energy use - we must continue our efforts to create a genuine road safety culture across Australia.

Road safety must become business as usual, a non-negotiable if you like.

This can only be achieved using a layered approach of influence, ultimately bleeding into the thinking and action of us all as individuals.

Collectively and as individual road users, we’ve got to want to change our own attitudes, we’ve got to want to advocate for change and lift our road safety culture. Afterall, these are preventable deaths, preventable trauma and injury – in theory they don’t need to take place at all.

**Leaning in**

This approach is nothing new, but it is something global automotive groups are more recently tapping into in earnest. Our own parent company in Japan, Isuzu Group, is one such entity placing safety at the very core of its new 2025 product line-up, be that active, passive or foundational safety features.

Having watched the evolution of the Isuzu product over many years, I can’t recall a period in time whereby safety, in its various forms, has been more of a global priority and for good reason.

In nearly every developed nation around the world, the broader subgroup of ‘transport and warehousing’ takes top spot as the most dangerous profession, causing more deaths and serious injury than any other vocation. Here in Australia, trucking and transport has unfortunately held that unsavoury mantle for many decades now.

**No apologies**

This is why we’re extremely proud to stand behind the safest product line-up we’ve ever released in this country and indeed in our history as a brand.

An immense investment has been made to ensure this next generation of on-road product is bristling with aids, alerts and corrective measures to keep drivers and all manner of road users safe and injury free.

We at Isuzu make no apologies for this.

Audible alerts and visual cues in our trucks might not be every operator’s favourite feature, but the day it works to save your life, or the life of another road user, will be a day you’ll never forget nor regret.

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