

Strictly embargoed until 9.00am CST/9.30am AEST, 7 November 2015

Media Release

7 November 2015

Driverless cars hit the road in Adelaide in Australian first

Adelaide, Australia: ARRB, the nation's leading authority in road research and technology, has today given Australians a glimpse of modern motoring as driverless cars hit Australian roads for the very first time in Adelaide.

ARRB Group Managing Director, Gerard Waldron, described the milestone demonstration as a major turning point for the evolution of driverless car technology in Australia, and said the organisation is proud to be spearheading the Australian Driverless Vehicle Initiative.

"This demonstration marks the first of a series of research and field trials nationally to identify and assess what needs to be done to make driverless cars appropriate in an Australian context, with particular emphasis on those human factors that are often encountered behind the wheel," he said.

The demonstrations were the first to have occurred anywhere in the Southern Hemisphere, and were successfully conducted on a closed, controlled section of Adelaide's Southern Expressway.

"We brought together a range of industry, government and academic partners from around the world and closer to home, and particularly appreciate the efforts and involvement of the South Australian Government and Volvo to make this happen," Mr Waldron said.

Ministers and media from across Australia were among a handful of people to be the first to travel in a driverless Volvo XC90, which demonstrated automatic lane keeping, adaptive cruise control, and active queue assist under the supervision of a trained Volvo operator.

The vehicles travelled at speeds of up to 70km/h and the addition of a 'pace car' (standard vehicle) to simulate traffic showed first-hand how the driverless vehicle technology interacts with other road users and adapts to changing conditions.

South Australian Premier, Jay Weatherill, said South Australia was taking the lead nationally and internationally by embracing driverless car technology.

"We are encouraging the development of a new technology which not only promises to improve safety and lower emissions, but also offers countless opportunities for the South Australian economy," he said.

"This industry has the potential to revolutionise transport in Australia.

"We want to be at the forefront of this paradigm shift towards an industry which is anticipated to be worth more than \$90 billion globally by 2030."

Volvo Car Australia Managing Director, Kevin McCann, said “As a global leader in the development of autonomous drive technologies Volvo Cars is pleased to be part of the first trial in Australia. Volvo’s aim is to make this technology available for real customers in production cars in the near future.”

“The demonstration marks the beginning of a long and important process”, continued Mr Waldron. “With European researchers having a roadmap for the introduction of driverless vehicles by 2020, Australia needs to keep pace. Legislation urgently needs to be amended, like it has been in South Australia.

“It’s also vitally important we educate Australian road users on the benefits driverless technology will bring to their lifestyles, to their safety, and in relieving congestion issues on our roads,” he said.

The Initiative is supported by a number of leaders in the field including the South Australian Government, Volvo and Telstra.

– ENDS –

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Supporting media assets and content:

A b-roll of vision showing the driverless car in action will be sent via Channel 7 Adelaide at 10.30am CST/11.00am AEST on Saturday 7 November. This feed will be gatewayed via Melbourne and Sydney – all network stations and affiliates should call on their Sydney news exchanges for this content.

Social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ARRBGroup>

Twitter: @ARRBGroup

Hashtag: #ADVIDemos

For more information on the Australian Driverless Vehicle Initiative:

<https://www.arrb.com.au/Transport/Self-Driving-Vehicles/ADVI-Media-and-News.aspx?preview=true>

About ARRB Group:

ARRB Group is a leading expert globally in road research and technology. For the last 55 years we’ve been helping transport, road and infrastructure bodies to identify and adopt best practices for developing and maintaining safe and sustainable roads.