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MEDIA RELEASE

ARTIO NSW Welcomes Mobile Phone Detection Reforms with Safeguards

In a submission to a NSW parliamentary inquiry, the Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation NSW Branch has expressed support for reforms to mobile phone detection while driving, while stressing the importance of a well-funded education campaign to facilitate medium to long term cultural change.

“ARTIO NSW congratulates the NSW Government on introducing legislation into the NSW parliament to give effect to these reforms,” ARTIO NSW Secretary/Treasurer, Hugh McMaster, said.

“This follows a six-month trial on two arterial roads in Sydney in which over 100,000 instances of illegal mobile phone use were detected.

“The trial also showed the technology, which has not been used elsewhere in the world, was accurate, thus providing a sound basis for more effective enforcement.

“ARTIO NSW also congratulates the ALP and Greens for expressing support for the legislation while noting that opposition and minor party representatives raised concerns related to the application of the reverse onus of proof, privacy and the approach to education of drivers which have led to the parliamentary inquiry.

“ARTIO NSW says the key to substantially reducing illegal mobile phone use while driving is education, as well as enforcement.

“We all respond differently depending on the message, the experience, the incentive, when and how we are taught, whether we are caught and penalised, the impact on our loved ones, and for other reasons.

“Because of the extent and severity of this problem, and because this is a world leading reform, it is highly likely that education and enforcement need to be approached in a manner similar to the introduction of mandatory seat belt wearing and random breath testing.

“ARTIO NSW has no concerns with the application of the reverse onus of proof in this instance because it believes there are adequate safeguards in place for a driver to challenge what is detected.

“ARTIO NSW does not believe privacy issues will arise in road transport given clothing worn by drivers is suitable for a range of tasks such as loading, unloading, picking up and delivering, however, it believes an effective accountability regime is necessary to address broader community concerns.

“Endangering the lives of other road users and the broader community through illegal mobile phone use should not be tolerated.

“Because of the amount of time they spend on the road, professional drivers are much more likely to experience severe trauma due to their involvement in fatal and other serious crashes, or by being a first responder.

“Any reform to which aims to improve the safety of their road environment has ARTIO NSW’s strong support.

ENDS.

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