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Green light to speed up freight deliveries in wake of COVID-19 delays

Freight vehicles will be tracked using near real-time data in a bid to offer faster deliveries and ease traffic congestion in light of delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of a new national pilot program led by Curtin University.

From this month, a proof-of-concept project will track the near-live movements of a fleet of freight vehicles via a new digital roadmap developed over the last 18 months, in conjunction with transport agencies and industry partners across Australia.

Lead researcher Dr Charlie Hargroves, from the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, said the 'FreightSync Roadmap' had the potential to enhance the efficiency of Australia's freight network, which remained a significant driver of the nation's economy.

"Given the contribution to the nation's gross domestic product, there is a real need to find ways to increase the efficiency of freight movement while improving overall traffic congestion," Dr Hargroves said.

"Currently, freight vehicles are effectively invisible to the traffic management system with transport agencies largely relying on periodic surveys to get a glimpse of how they move around our streets.

"Through the use of a trusted 'Freight Observatory' that collects near real-time data via strict consent agreements, the FreightSync Roadmap offers a clear and progressive approach to sharing vital data between the private freight and logistics sector and transport agencies to ultimately ease traffic congestion, improve road safety and enhance the efficiency of freight movement."

Dr Hargroves said there had never been a more important time for greater efficiencies in freight movements given the nation's fast-growing cities and the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The pressure that the COVID-19 pandemic has put on global supply chains has resulted in significant delays in the movement of freight in and out of, and around, the country," Dr Hargroves said.

"Now is the time for this important data to move to a digital platform that allows near real-time data sharing in a bid to inform a range of efforts that improve the transport system for all users and speed up the timing of freight deliveries."

The research team also includes Professor Bela Stantic from Griffith University, Dr Darcy Allen from RMIT University, and John Curtin Distinguished Professor Peter Newman and Ben James from Curtin University.

This pilot project has been developed with funding and support provided by Australia's Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre (SBENrc) and its partners, including the Fremantle Ports Authority and Telstra. Core Members of SBENrc include BGC, Queensland Government, Western Australia Government, Curtin University, Griffith University and RMIT University.

The report titled, '*Introducing the 'FreightSync Roadmap' - A Pathway to Linking Freight Vehicles and Transport Systems,*' and short explanatory video can be found online [here](#).

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Notes to Editor:

About the SBENrc

The Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre (SBEnc) is the successor to the CRC for Construction Innovation. Established on 1 January 2010, the SBEnc is a key research broker between industry, government and research organisations servicing the built environment industry. SBEnc Core Members include: BGC, Government of Western Australia, Queensland Government, Curtin University, Griffith University and RMIT University.

About Curtin University

Curtin University is Western Australia's largest university, with more than 59,000 students. In addition to the University's main campus in Perth, Curtin also has a major regional campus in Kalgoorlie, and a campus in Midland, as well as four global campuses in Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai and Mauritius. Curtin staff and students come from Australia and 100 other countries around the world, with half our international students studying at Curtin's offshore campuses.

Curtin is ranked in the top one per cent of universities worldwide, with the University placed 9th in Australia according to the [Academic Ranking of World Universities \(ARWU\) 2021](#) and has achieved a QS Five Stars Plus rating, the highest available for a tertiary institution, and one of only four to do so in Australia.

The University has built a reputation around innovation and an entrepreneurial spirit, being at the forefront of many high-profile research projects in astronomy, biosciences, economics, mining and information technology. It is also recognised globally for its strong connections with industry, and for its commitment to preparing students for the jobs of the future.

For further information, visit curtin.edu.au.

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