

Deny benefits to cheats: Philip Halton.



“We certainly believe the benefits outweigh that downside”

Queensland Transport principal adviser on national road transport reform, Philip Halton.

same way as under the current three-strikes-and-you're-out system.

“This system could do the same thing but do it electronically with much less paperwork, and with much more consistency.”

It was critical operators understood that government would not manage the flow of information.

“We are not looking for a future in which we have access to your firm's data and, in fact, if we had it, we wouldn't have a place to keep it, nor the staff to analyse it.

“We simply want to know what we need to know. If someone is doing something illegal, we need a system that advises us,” Halton said.

Barriers to the implementation of such a system included: the lack of technology capable of covering most if not all of the road network; and, the lack of inter-operability standards under which private fleet data analyses can be provided to government in a universal format.

The IPA also intended to ensure that

the system would not require operators to install another 'box' in their truck cabs.

Halton said that in July this year the IPA would be issuing a request for expressions of interest from high technology firms to demonstrate how those barriers could be overcome.

“We're looking to actually put a few vehicles on the road in Australia in about February of next year and start running them around to see what the system does,” Halton said. ■

Don't lose sleep over lost clients

Initiating a company fatigue management programme will probably lead to the loss of some customers according to Darren Nolan of Nolan's Interstate Transport.

He told the Trucking Convention's session on fatigue, however, that over the longer term the loss of such clients was worth the initial financial pain.

Establishing a programme required the support of everyone involved from drivers through to management and clients.

“You need to keep it clear and simple, identify the staff who will take ownership of the programme and allow plenty of time for the benefits to be realised,” Nolan said.

“It won't happen overnight and it is



sometimes a much slower process than you would like.

“Management must push things in the right direction but, be aware that management really should not rule the system,” he said.

“This or any other programme will inevitably fail if management take over. It is vital that drivers are free to make constructive comments and decisions to which management will listen and react very quickly.”

Nolan's found that although some of its drivers were initially opposed to changing their work patterns to fit in with the programme, a one-on-one consultation approach succeeded in overcoming that difficulty.

“We found that the younger drivers would more quickly accept what we were doing while the older guys would sit back and wait to see what happened,” Nolan said.

There were significant costs involved in establishing a fatigue management system although their extent would differ markedly depending on the size of the operation involved.

“We didn't realise the amount of resources that it would drain and we now employ three staff whose primary role is administrative back-up and support with things like; quality assurance programmes, TruckSafe, workplace health and safety claims, fatigue management reviews, training, education, publications and web-site management.

“But, although there is a cost involved, we certainly believe the benefits outweigh that downside,” Nolan said.

Benefits included: a happier and more skilled driver work force; reduced fatigue incident rates; improved inter-company communications; higher levels of productivity; decreased incidents of conflict between office staff, drivers and operators; increased staff flexibility; reduced injury rates; and, lower workers' compensation premiums. ■

Consultation works: Darren Nolan.