

Fog warning system

by Bob Jackson

An advanced fog warning system has just been commissioned by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) on the F6 Motorway between Sydney and Wollongong.

The new system, designed by Melbourne-based Stratford Traffic Pty Ltd in association with Telecom Australia and Motorola, replaces a 20 year-old system which required excessive maintenance and lacked any inbuilt intelligence, requiring subjective reports on prevailing conditions for its operation.

Severe sea fog affects parts of the F6 Motorway for more than 250 hours each year. Because the old system was unable to log vehicle speeds, its effectiveness in advising individual vehicles of appropriate speeds was limited.

Early last year Telecom's Applied Technology Division and Stratford Traffic undertook the development of a study to define the scope of the project and to assess the suitability of available technologies.

Called the Driver Aid System the project was designed to provide drivers with accurate, timely information about traffic conditions along a critical 23km section of the motorway. Visibility, vehicle speeds and the distance between vehicles is monitored at eleven sites.



A Stratford Traffic fibre optic sign being installed on the F6 Motorway near Wollongong

This information is then used to advise individual motorists of a safe speed for that section of road.

Stratford Traffic provided the design, supply and installation of 23 light emitting fibre optic signs, the supply and installation of traffic data capture equipment, the installation of the fog detection system and the installation and commissioning of the associated control electronics. Project management and system engineering were provided

by Telecom, which also supplied and installed the emergency telephone

network. Vaisala, a Finnish firm, supplied the visibility (fog) monitoring equipment. Motorola provided the central office and roadside computing as well as radio communications between the sites.

The fibre optic componentry for the signs is the Sylvia system developed by the French firm Sécurité et Signalisation. The Sylvia system was chosen because of its clarity and suitability for high speed motorway conditions. The signs themselves were manufactured under licence in Australia by Stratford Traffic in association with Gadsden Signs. □



Stratford Traffic engineers (l-r) Terry Valentine, David Aylward (managing director) and Alex Hatzipetrou (engineering managers) with fibre optic componentry and warning sign

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