Bringing Australia's Trains and Trams up to Speed

Sydney, AUSTRALIA, 14 May 2009 – Huawei Technologies, one of the world's leading telecom equipment manufacturers, is determined to prove it has the ability and expertise to operate state-of-the-art wireless communications systems for some of Australia's train and tram networks.

The last 12 months has seen both the Victorian and NSW state governments invite organisations from around the world to vie for the chance to improve their sluggish – and at times, dangerous – train and tram network operating systems.

Australia is looking to Europe, where the benchmark has already been set. The European Train Control System (ETCS), sometimes referred to as the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), has successfully replaced safety systems across many high-speed lines in Europe and elsewhere, including China, India, Taiwan and South Korea.

Huawei Australia's chief technology officer, Peter Rossi, believes it is a positive step from the various state governments to "move into the 21st century and aim to compare with the rest of the world in terms of modern railway telecommunications".

A select few industry suppliers, including Nortel, Nokia Siemens Networks and Huawei, have already helped railway networks commercially launch and operate GSM-R technologies, a wireless communications platform developed specifically for railway communication and applications, in a number of overseas markets.

Huawei began researching GSM-R technologies in 1996, and has subsequently become one of a few end-to-end GSM-R solution suppliers in the world. Its GSM-R solution fully complies with European Integrated Railway Radio Enhanced Network (EIRENE) specifications and requirements, and has successfully passed LIoyd's product certification.

According to research conducted by Huawei, the telecommunications solutions provider has already achieved 47% GSM-R market share in China, and Rossi says Huawei is keen to expand its GSM-R solutions to overseas markets, including Australia.

“Huawei has the international experience and expertise to launch a solution that will ensure smooth wireless coverage across many of Australia’s train and tram networks.”

“Only recently, Huawei successfully launched its GSM-R communication system for the Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan passenger transport railway, which can reach speeds of up to 250km/h and covers 189.93km throughout China,” said Rossi.

Launched in April 2009, the Shijiazhuang-Taiyuan railway is one of the fastest passenger transport railway lines in China. It includes the longest tunnel in Asia, the 28km Taihang double-tube tunnel. Huawei’s GSM-R solution solved the coverage problems previously experienced inside super long tunnels.

“The challenges we came up against in China can be applied to the Australian environment. Long tunnels, vast distances, high traffic areas…All of these problems were overcome using Huawei’s innovative GSM-R solutions,” Rossi said.

Moreover, Huawei GSM-R solution provides higher security level signaling bearing to train control systems, therefore trains can run on the rails without traffic lights and with higher density of traffic.

In March of 2008, a number of Huawei's GSM-R solutions were on show at the 6th World Congress & Trade Exhibition on High Speed Rail, organised by the UIC (International Union of Railways) in Amsterdam. It included the only end-to-end solution in the world that is verified to support high-speeds of 430km/h, as well as the industry's first distributed base station solution for GSM-R systems.

"Huawei is at the leading edge of GSM-R solutions. For more than a decade we've been innovating in this area, with great results in China. Now we are looking to apply our firmly established expertise to overseas markets, particularly Australia, as GSM-R solutions are being recognised as state-of-the-art wireless communications systems for railway networks."

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