



6 December 2019
Media Release

Tasmanian first: leading the way in new technology

RACT, in conjunction with the Tasmanian Government and City of Hobart, is conducting the state's first driverless electric bus demonstration from 6-13 December.

RACT Executive General Manager Membership and Community Stacey Pennicott said the demonstration was designed to gain greater understanding around the emerging technology and the opportunities for the future of mobility in Tasmania.

"We've engaged YDrive, which are experts in this area, to deliver the demonstration with the NAVYA Autonom Shuttle," she said.

"The demonstration will run for a week, but it has been a much longer process than that for us.

"We've spent months looking at possible locations and interactions of the bus with traffic and the community.

"This is all part of working out if, how and when driverless technology could be used in Tasmania."

Ms Pennicott said driverless vehicle technology was recommended as part of RACT's 30-year Greater Hobart Mobility Vision, and also had the potential to provide benefits in other parts of the state.

"We want to show that, given adequate planning and investment, fully automated buses – particularly those running on fixed routes and dedicated lanes – can operate in a real-world environment," she said.

"They are designed for 'first and last mile' transport. That is, connecting other transport modes together, or to service central shopping or business districts.

"By doing this research now, we are able to uncover the challenges to introducing this technology in Tasmania, and how we can work with all levels of government to overcome them."

Ms Pennicott said RACT had spent a large amount of time looking at possible locations for the demonstration, with the process already forming part of the research piece for the use of technology into the future.

“We have chosen Lower Sandy Bay for the demonstration as there’s lots of trees and buildings in the area for the bus to map and navigate from,” she said.

“It’s also a lower-traffic area, as we aim to cause as little impact as possible on the public.

“We have had six days of 3D mapping and testing this route before the demonstration, and mapping will continue daily as circumstances and the environment are bound to change.”

The driverless electric bus has cameras to detect lane markings, signs and traffic lights; LIDAR technology that uses a laser light to measure distances to certain points, creating a 3D rendering of vehicles, pedestrians, curbs and buildings; radar to detect obstacles and speeds; GPS and the internet for accurate positioning and navigation; and a computer to process the information and drive the vehicle.

Its maximum speed will be 25km/h. A full traffic management plan is in place and will be executed by the City of Hobart.

Ms Pennicott said the demonstration was an exciting opportunity for Tasmania to experience a driverless, electric bus for the first time.

“The coming years will see a substantial change with the introduction of autonomous vehicle technology,” she said.

“It is important we are prepared as early as possible to ensure a smooth transition towards driverless transport.

“By exploring how these technologies could be used in the state, we get valuable insights into what is involved in introducing them. And we raise community awareness and understanding of the exciting opportunities this quiet and emission-free technology offers.”

Released by:

Nicolas Turner
Tel: 0418 538 865