

Iveco keeps on trucking

A new diagnostic system gives access to a workshop of experts, writes **GRAHAM SMITH**

WORLD-leading interactive diagnostics developed in Australia are helping Iveco trucks get back on the road quickly instead of being left stranded on the roadside.

The powerful web-based diagnostic system was developed locally by Iveco technicians in response to concerns from truck operators about the reliability of the latest models, such as the Stralis, which has an electronically controlled operating system.

"We needed some way to provide support to the people on the side of the road," says Jason Casley, the driving force behind the development.

"The telephone isn't enough, because you are asking people to look at things they may not be familiar with.

"Most people can diagnose a mechanical problem on the side of the road, it's obviously a broken component or something, but modern electronics are still black magic to some people."

When needed, an Iveco roadside service technician can enlist the help of experts back at the dealership to diagnose and solve a problem that's brought the truck to a halt.

If that's not enough, he can call on the help of technical staff at Iveco's Melbourne headquarters, or even get help from the company's technical specialists on the other side of the world, all from the side of the road.

So powerful is the system that any number of people can be logged on to help with the problem, wherever they are.

"With this system I can actually take control of the truck sitting on the roadside from my office in Dandenong and do diagnostics for the service technician on site," Casley says.

Every Iveco service technician is equipped with an Iveco-developed Easy laptop computer that can be plugged into the truck's diagnostic system and, with access to a mobile phone network, can be connected to experts at home base to help them trace the problem.

"The dealership usually has someone who is very good at a particular system so that person can take over and look at what that vehicle is doing," Casley says.

Through the system technicians have a virtual workshop at their fingertips, with access to workshop manuals, wiring diagrams and any other information they may need. And because it is an interactive system, they can communicate with other technicians at home base, or anywhere else within the Iveco network worldwide.

If needed, the system allows the roadside technician to hand control of the truck to other technicians at other locations, who are then able to carry out diagnostic checks of the stranded truck's electronic systems themselves.

The system even has a webcam and pictures can be sent to home base, allowing technicians there to see what's happening on the side of the road.

"Instead of having one person on the side of the road you have a whole workshop standing there looking at the problem," Casley says.

"If it goes beyond that, we can join in from head office and we can actually take over the situation."

Iveco recognised the need for such a system because of the remoteness of Australia and a reluctance of local trucking operators to embrace the latest electronic technology that is rapidly moving into the trucking business.

Unlike Europe, where electronics have been a part of the trucking landscape for many years and trucks are never far from help, the take-up of technology here has been slower.

Part of the reason was that trucks here tend to operate much farther from home base and expert help.

The Iveco interactive diagnosis system has been developed over the past six months and

Plug and play: when a laptop is plugged into the Iveco Stralis, experts back at base can trace the problem.



FIAT EXPANSION

■ FIAT Group has announced it will launch 20 new models and update a further 23 over the next four years.

Fiat boss Sergio Marchionne says the new models represent a continuation of Fiat's aggressive renewal rate. The company is investing \$16 billion, including \$6.5 billion for research and development.

The Fiat Ducato will be joined by a host of new models and versions that will expand Fiat's commercial vehicle range, and a new joint-venture vehicle, the MiniCargo, will take Fiat into a new market sector.

The plans include replacements for the Ducato and its sibling, the Scudo, along with a host of car and MPV-derived commercial vehicles.

KNOCKOUT FIGHTER DEALS

FIGHTER 5.0

Model FK617HSJRFH (mwb) or Model FK617KSJRFH (lwb)

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