

trial to test transport



Move over, Northern Territory, because road train B-triples and their efficiency benefits are catching on down south as well.

community engaged and on side.

Big freight companies such as Toll, Linfox and Australia Post are all interested in the proposal, Deegan says, despite some disgruntled voices within the industry who oppose the idea of a user-pays infrastructure system to fund upgrades.

Last week Australian Trucking Association chief Stuart St Clair criticised the NSW government for foreshadowing that it will use a European-style tolling system to charge companies for the number of kilometres travelled by the bigger trucks.

"If the NSW government wants to charge trucking operators more, it should first seek the agreement of Australia's other governments to hand back this money," he says, referring to the more than \$1 billion in registration and fuel taxes paid by truck operators each year.

Deegan is quietly confident those "issues" can be resolved once the pilot program is up and running.

"The big boys have indicated they understand the economics of this. For them it

would be a huge benefit. They know the advantage of having groups like ourselves and the National Transport Commission, and others in a pilot means at least you've got the grown-ups within government working with industry to make sure it works".

Initially, trucks will operate with loads based on cubic size rather than weight, to ensure any potential road damage during the test is kept to a minimum. B-triples are likely

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to be carrying toilet paper, and mail, Deegan says.

It raises the question of whether the usage tolls, which ostensibly go to paying for road upgrades to carry the heavier loads, should be levied on trucks by weight, rather than by kilometre.

Deegan acknowledges road gouging will

be less of an issue for trucks carrying light loads.

"But we still want to think all that through. The previous effort at the COAG road reform program tried to answer all questions across every part of the country. Our interest is in the big freight routes, the major arteries."

Now he says the biggest issue is action, particularly after numerous submissions to organisation's May discussion paper

Michael Deegan, Infrastructure Australia

criticised the slow speed of transport reform.

Infrastructure Australia is in the midst of finalising its tender proposal to hire a project director to oversee the Hume Freeway test run. And he expects the number of B-triples using the road to ramp up fairly quickly once everything is in place, meaning maximum productivity benefits will be seen