

AUSTRALIA NOT PREPARED FOR DRIVERLESS CARS, ACCORDING TO HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS

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News

Australia risks falling behind the rest of the world in preparing for the rise of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs), according to international law firm Herbert Smith Freehills.

The firm will bring together law makers, regulators, business leaders and experts at a conference today to begin to address Australia's lack of preparedness for the coming surge in the availability and use CAVs.

The conference will follow similar events held by Herbert Smith Freehills in London, New York, Tokyo and Singapore and will seek to share lessons from those jurisdictions.

Herbert Smith Freehills Partner [Nicholas Carney](#) said the rise of CAVs – or 'driverless cars' – will have far-reaching impacts on industries across the spectrum, including infrastructure, real estate, telecommunications, banking and finance and government.

But while fully autonomous vehicles will be on the market within the next two years, Australian governments and industry are not showing the same level of urgency as other countries to prepare for this technological revolution.

"We know that more than 700 laws need to be changed to get CAVs on the road, but that doesn't take into account the changes that need to be made to planning regulations, and laws relating to privacy, insurance and product liability," Mr Carney said.

"Governments and businesses in Australia need to move faster if they are to be prepared for CAVs, and the Herbert Smith Freehills conference aims to accelerate that conversation with lessons from overseas."

Mr Carney said that CAVs would upend many areas of business and change the way people live their lives.

“This is an emerging area of technology that has seen enormous strides in other parts of the world, so there is a real urgency among many Australian businesses to address it here.”

“We have spoken to many Australian business leaders, some of whom own large pieces of infrastructure, and the message we’re hearing is that CAVs are on their radar, but they don’t know what steps to take.”

“In Australia, we need to work through the implications of driverless cars and learn lessons from other countries, and if we don’t start the conversation now, Australia will be left behind.”

Herbert Smith Freehills Senior Associate Susannah Wilkinson said CAVs will bring more than simple convenience to peoples’ lifestyles.

“CAVs will force a shift to electric cars away from fossil fuels, the redesign of urban spaces and the opportunity for innovative business models and services and more,” Ms Wilkinson said.

“This is a great opportunity for thought leadership on what needs to be done to put Australia in a position to handle and take advantage of these changes.”

Read more about connected and autonomous vehicles [here](#).