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K&S Fuller Transport
Super Space Age

Industry
Fleet: OzHarvest
Feature: SAF-Holland FW351-E
Showcase: Electronic Work Diary
Personality: Dean Dal Santo

Innovation
Fleet: OzWideFreight
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THE PEOPLE & PRODUCTS THAT MAKE TRANSPORT MOVE

DELIVERY
MAGAZINE

AUSTRALIA'S GUIDE TO UTES, VANS, LIGHT TRUCKS & PEOPLE MOVERS

INTO THE BR

MTData recently received approval from the NHVR for its electronic work diary, an addition to the company's range of cutting edge compliance solutions for heavy vehicle operators and commercial transport fleets in Australia.

The shift to the electronic work diary (EWD) in Australian commercial road transport is a seismic event for an industry that is hungry for the safest solutions for drivers, precious cargo and other road-users. Although the transition from written work diaries is far from complete, the move to EWDs heralds, for progressive transport operators, a proactive tool that replaces what has been, for far too long, merely a reactive exercise.

Australian telematics provider, MTData, is one of a select few companies to have had its EWD approved this year for industry-wide use by the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator (NHVR). The EWD helps transport operators to reduce breaches and ensures compliance with fatigue laws by removing guesswork when it comes to hours driven and scheduled rest breaks. As the data is tracked in real-time rather than after drivers have handed in their hand-written notes, which can be days later, it mitigates against inaccurate driving hours and chain of responsibility infringements while bringing up to speed those involved in fatigue management.

Given data can be viewed and analysed in real time, it's here where the real value is derived. As MTData's EWD can be used to feed into company payroll and driver hours, up-to-date crucial information is always at the fingertips of those responsible for compliance while

the minute a driver logs into his EWD it will tell him when his breaks are due and recommends the best upcoming time to rest.

According to MTData Chief Operating Officer, Ben Ditfort, the solution will aid in reducing future mistakes involving their logbook when correctly using an EWD.

"Our EWD takes the human brain out of the equation," he says. "You don't need to calculate the hours yourself anymore or try and interpret when you think the break is due. Unintentional fatigue breaches should almost never happen."

Commercial vehicle movements are frequent, unrelenting and require, from the operator, a complex manual skillset.

This is all before the job, which can also involve decoupling or changing trailers and adjusting to environmental conditions, is complicated by having drivers calculate worked hours on what can be a grueling schedule.

"Most drivers need to just focus on what they need to do. They have to navigate congested big cities and the general public or a big vehicle on the highway," says Ben. "They don't want to have to map out when and where they need to stop and start. Now it's all handed to them and most drivers are naturally happy about it."

As one of the largest providers of safety systems to the transport industry, MTData has developed over the last ten
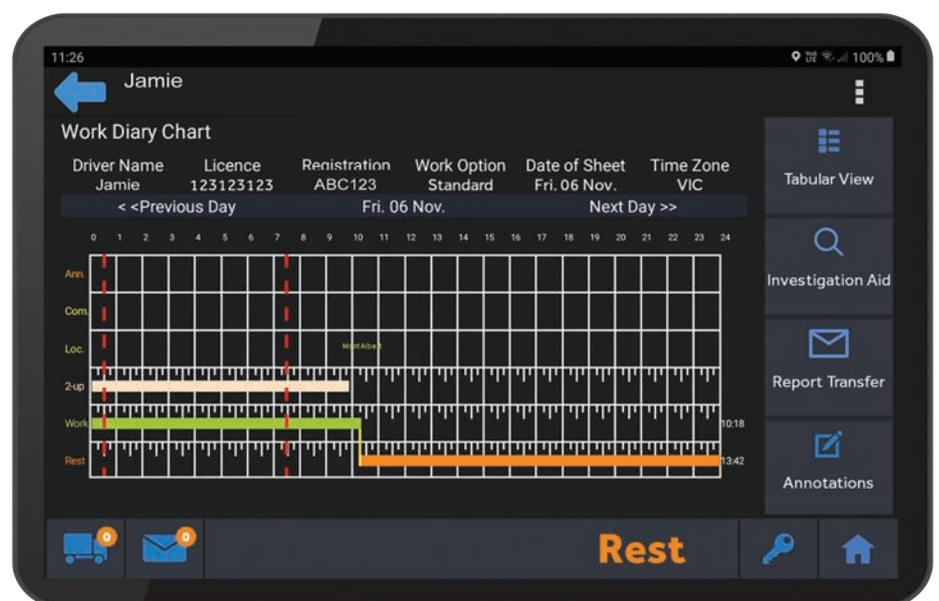
MTData driver Work Diary chart.

EACH

years, a range of certified solutions such as Intelligent Access Program, On-Board Mass, Road Infrastructure Management and Hill Decent Monitoring which it has been able to draw upon to finalise its EWD product in alignment with NHVR specifications.

"Because we already had an existing electronic fatigue management or diary management system we had to put that aside and focus on the EWD specifications put forward by the NHVR and build to that," Ben says. "It was in our minds we didn't want to force our product on them. We didn't, however, start from ground zero either."

With a large developer talent pool, MTData had a fair understanding of what the product needed to look like. After ensuring the EWD complied with the NHVR assessor requirements, the last piece of the puzzle was to ensure the product can talk to another system,

say, in the case a driver for a customer also works for another operator that uses a different telematics system. Those two EWD providers need, for the sake of all three parties, to be able to communicate between each other. The next step, according to Ben, is to combine the EWD with MTData's electronic fatigue in-cab system which features a countdown timer that speaks to the driver alerting them to their next scheduled break, meaning there's no need to avert eyes to read a screen.

"It's very proactive for drivers and helps lead them to the drinking well. We want to make our product offering extremely appealing for our customer base," he says. "We've worked very closely with our customers to tap into their experience. A truck driver might drive a truck partly because they don't want work with electronics systems. As the industry evolves that might be changing,
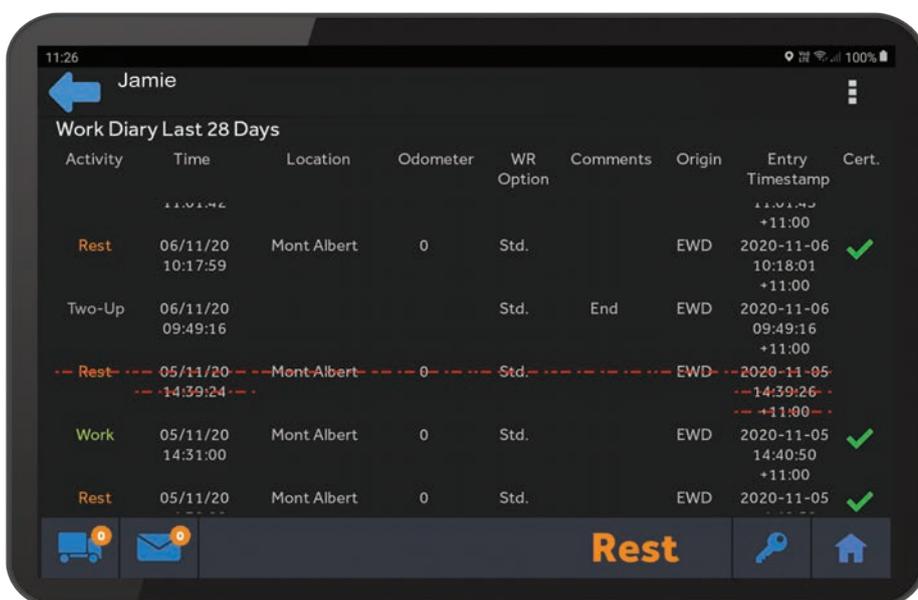
but we have to make sure the product is intuitive so that the EWD is easy to use. We want to make sure a driver can pick this up without a whole lot of training because training a driver work force for operators is also challenging."

On that front, it is vitally important that drivers can pick up an EWD and work their way through it, intuitively, without having to be taken aside and taught says Ben.

"You want there to be a familiarity with the process from what they did previously in the written work diary," Ben says. "For us, we already understand the heavy vehicle laws pretty well. We understand the driver environment pretty well. It's not as if we're an app provider. We're not just a software developer who decided to build an EWD."

When it comes to crunching numbers, detailed summary reports are available to download, and ongoing non-conformance management is uncomplicated, designed with an end-user in mind who values efficiencies, particularly saving time.

"For someone who doesn't run a telematics system or might run a very basic one, an EWD is a good chance to invest some money into something that covers a raft of safety and compliance tools that they previously didn't know existed," says Ben. "They don't need to look at it just as a financial outlay to be compliant. There are a whole lot of helpful tools which will really quickly, when implemented with the right strategy, see an ROI. The value is not just getting an EWD. You get a full suite of other solutions for your business as well." *PM*

MTDATA Work Diary 28 day schedule.