



Fleet
NEWS GROUP

ALL THINGS FLEET



Truck Feature Edition

Case Studies • Expert Advice • Reviews

TORQUE OF THE TOWN



Optimised For Urban & Regional Transport

Scania's new 500 P introduces a higher power SUPER six-cylinder Euro 6 engine with the low-entry P-cab, to make daily deliveries or intrastate B-double transport a charm not a chore. The class-leading 2650nm of torque and outstanding fuel efficiency, ramps up your productivity, reducing journey times, and boosts your efficiency across all metrics.

Rated to 70-tonnes, the 500 P leverages its optimised SUPER engine technology, to give you effortless performance, whether you're pulling one trailer or two. And with state-of-the-art Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, Scania's unique side-curtain Airbags and ability to run on B100 Biodiesel and HVO, it's no wonder the new 500 P SUPER is the torque of the town.

Contact your Scania Account Manager or scan the QR code to find out more.



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Euro 6
available



Scania Finance
available



R&M Plans
available

Finance options are exclusively available for commercial customers. All finance applications are subject to clear credit files, standard credit assessment, lending criteria, and applicable fees. Please contact your authorised Scania Finance's Business Development Managers for complete details. Finance is provided by Scania Finance Australia Pty Ltd ABN 32 609 637 596.

SCANIA



Welcome to Fleet News Group Magazine – All Things Fleet

We are thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of the Fleet News Group Magazine, a quarterly publication dedicated to all aspects of the fleet industry, including cars, trucks, utes, vans, plant, and equipment. The name ‘All Things Fleet’ reflects our aim to thoroughly cover this diverse field.

Since 2015, Fleet News Group has provided valuable fleet news through platforms like Fleet Auto News, Fleet HV News, and Fleet EV News. This new magazine consolidates our expertise, presenting best practices, profiles, and essential management insights in one place.

One of the highlights of this magazine is its physical format. In an age of digital overload, holding a printed magazine offers a refreshing break, allowing for a more engaging experience for readers.

This edition centres on heavy vehicles, addressing the complexities of managing such fleets – from compliance and safety to varying operational challenges. We understand the demands of overseeing transport, service, or last-mile delivery fleets, especially in a rapidly evolving industry.

Future issues will explore key trends like fleet electrification and advancing technologies that are expected to reshape fleet operations in 2025 and beyond.

Thank you for engaging with our magazine! We hope you enjoy this tactile reading experience, whether you’re a returning fan or new to the Fleet News Group community.

Happy reading! Marc Sibbald

Contributors



Cobey Bartels is an established journalist and TV presenter, with more than a decade of media experience and thousands of published works within Australia’s most respected magazines and newspapers. He has reviewed many of the cars, trucks and bikes found on Australian roads. He’s even taken a Rolls-Royce-powered tank through a McDonald’s drive thru! While Cobey has driven nearly every electric truck and car on offer in Australia, he’s still a petrol-head at heart. Who says he can’t like both?



Geoff Middleton is a professional journalist who has been writing for national newspapers, magazines and websites for decades. For the past ten years or so, Geoff has specialised in the commercial vehicle and heavy-duty truck area where he has gained a solid reputation as a no-nonsense journalist who tells it like it is. Geoff has travelled Australia and the world writing about trucks. He has a multi-combination heavy vehicle licence. Geoff has a broad knowledge of the automotive industry from both sides of the fence.

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Safety and Sustainability



Government Support is Crucial

A key factor that has accelerated decarbonisation in Europe is government intervention, something that is still lacking in Australia. Streit believes that without targeted policies, such as incentives for cleaner vehicles or penalties for older, higher-emission trucks, the market will be slow to transition.

“In Europe, the government really drove this. They introduced road taxes where Euro 6 trucks paid less than Euro 5, and Euro 5 paid less than Euro 4. If you were running a Euro 3 truck, the costs became too high, forcing operators to upgrade,” he said. “That piece is missing in Australia. If the government really wants to lower emissions, they need to put policies in place that encourage fleet renewal.”

Safety First: Setting the Benchmark in the Industry

When it comes to safety, Scania has been a pioneer, often setting the standard for what should be considered essential in heavy vehicles. The company was the first to introduce rollover airbags as standard in its prime mover fleet, addressing one of the most significant risks to truck drivers.

“We are still the only brand that has curtain airbags in heavy vehicles,” noted Ben Nye, Scania Australia’s Director - Truck Sales. “Rollovers are the number one cause of truck driver fatalities, and this technology is critical.”

Another major step forward has been the increase in truck width from 2.5 to 2.55 metres, allowing Scania to bring in additional safety features that were previously restricted due to size limitations.

Scania has also led the way in telematics and connected technologies, enabling fleet managers to monitor driver behaviour and vehicle performance remotely. The introduction of Scania’s driver scoring system, which provides real-time feedback

Safety and Sustainability at the Core of Scania’s DNA

Scania has long been recognised as a leader in the commercial vehicle space, but beyond delivering high-quality trucks, its mission extends to two fundamental pillars: safety and sustainability. These aren’t just buzzwords for the Swedish manufacturer—they are deeply embedded in Scania’s DNA. Managing Director of Scania Australia, Manfred Streit, recently spoke about the importance of these values and how they drive the company’s approach to vehicle design, total cost of ownership, and the transition to lower emissions transport.

Sustainability as a Long-Term Commitment

Sustainability in transport has become an unavoidable conversation, with both government and industry players exploring ways to reduce emissions. While Europe has been a frontrunner in alternative drive technologies, Streit believes there are valuable lessons that Australian fleets can learn from their European counterparts. However, he is quick to point out that it is not a simple case of replicating what has worked overseas.

“You cannot copy Europe here, definitely not because of the climate, because of the geographical conditions, and also because of the geopolitical demographics,” Streit explained. “But we have started with ethanol, with gas—natural gas, compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas. We are working a bit on hydrogen, although we think it’s a bit of a waste of energy. We are doing all sorts of things to reduce carbon emissions.”

While many in the industry equate sustainability with electrification, Streit emphasises that the transition is not a single-step process. Scania is actively developing its diesel combustion engine technology to improve fuel efficiency, recognising that diesel will remain essential for many applications in Australia due to the country’s vast distances and operational demands.

“Our Super engine improved efficiency, and efficiency means less fuel consumption, which lowers total cost of ownership. But it also means less pollution or lower CO₂ emissions,” he said. “Even if it’s only an 8 to 10% improvement, multiply that by thousands of vehicles, and the impact is significant.”



OUR SUPER ENGINE IMPROVED EFFICIENCY, AND EFFICIENCY MEANS LESS FUEL CONSUMPTION

on braking, acceleration, and fuel consumption, has helped many fleets improve both safety and efficiency.

“Our trucks provide live feedback to drivers, telling them when to ease off the accelerator before a hill or when to release the retarder earlier,” Nye explained. “Fleet managers can use this data to encourage safer driving habits and even run competitions among drivers to improve their scores.”

A Holistic Approach to Vehicle Lifecycle Management

Scania’s approach to sustainability and safety extends beyond just the truck itself. The company places a strong emphasis on total cost of ownership (TCO), ensuring that operators get the most value over a vehicle’s lifespan.

“We do everything ourselves—the drivetrain, axles, gearbox, and engine. This allows us to optimise the entire system for maximum efficiency,” Streit said. “We also prefer to maintain our own workshops because it keeps a direct connection between the engineers, manufacturers, and the people maintaining the vehicles.”

Scania’s maintenance contracts and financing options have been widely adopted, with approximately 50% of customers choosing to include a service contract with their vehicle purchase. These contracts help operators plan costs more accurately and reduce the risks associated with unexpected repairs.

“With a maintenance contract, you have a fixed monthly fee for a set period, meaning you can calculate your costs upfront,” Streit said. “It’s about taking the guesswork out of running a fleet.”



What’s Next for Scania in Australia?

Looking ahead, Scania Australia will continue to introduce new technologies that improve safety, efficiency, and sustainability. The company is actively developing new axle configurations for heavy applications, refining its connected vehicle technologies, and testing autonomous solutions.

“We have already introduced autonomous trucks in mining, and we’re working on bringing these technologies to on-road applications,” Streit said. “Everything we do, whether it’s improving our engines, adding new safety features, or enhancing vehicle connectivity, is about making transport more efficient and sustainable.”

For fleet operators in Australia, Scania’s commitment to innovation provides a clear path towards reducing emissions while maintaining profitability. However, as Streit highlights, meaningful progress will require collaboration between manufacturers, fleet operators, and government stakeholders.

“The sooner we act, the better the outcome,” he said. “It’s not about choosing between diesel and electric. It’s about taking every possible step to lower emissions and improve safety, one vehicle at a time.”

Fleet Asset Procurement: A Step-by-Step Guide for Fleet Practitioners

Procuring new fleet assets can feel like juggling a dozen balls at once. From balancing budgets to selecting the right vehicles, the process can be daunting. But, with the right approach, procuring fleet assets can be smooth sailing. Let's break down the steps and highlight key considerations to make sure your next procurement hits the mark.

1 Start with a Needs Assessment – What Do You Really Need?

Before diving into the market, take a step back. Assess your current fleet and its performance. Are some vehicles underutilised? Are maintenance costs skyrocketing? Engage with end-users—after all, they're the ones behind the wheel or operating the plant. Understand their needs, challenges, and must-haves.

Ask yourself:

- Is the current asset fit-for-purpose?
- Can the asset's role be combined with another, or is a more versatile piece of equipment required?
- Are there options to hire instead of buy, especially for assets with low utilisation?

2 Budgeting – Balancing the Books

Fleet assets are significant capital investments, and it's essential to align your procurement with your organisation's budget. Prepare a comprehensive budget that covers not only the purchase price but also the whole-of-life (WOL) costs—fuel, maintenance, insurance, and eventual disposal.

A common pitfall is focusing solely on the upfront cost. Instead, consider:

- Whole-of-life costs for a true picture of long-term expenses.
- Resale value—some brands and models hold their value better than others.
- Funding options—purchase outright, lease, or explore hire-purchase agreements.

3 Specification Development – Getting It Right

This is where the rubber meets the road—literally. Your specifications should be clear, comprehensive, and focus on performance rather than specific brands (unless standardisation is part of your strategy).

Key elements to consider:

- Operational requirements: payload capacity, engine type, safety features, and ergonomics.
- Environmental considerations: emissions standards, fuel efficiency, and hybrid or electric options.
- Compliance: ensuring the asset meets all safety and legal requirements.

Involving end-users in this step ensures the asset is truly fit-for-purpose and reduces the need for costly modifications post-purchase.

4 Sourcing – Finding the Right Supplier

There are various ways to source fleet assets:

- Open market tenders: suitable for large purchases or specialised equipment.
- Pre-qualified panels: streamlined for quicker procurement while ensuring compliance.
- Government contracts: often offer competitive pricing for public sector fleets.

When evaluating suppliers, look beyond the price. Consider:

- After-sales support and warranty terms.
- Availability of parts and service centres.
- Supplier reputation and past performance.

5 Tender Evaluation – Choosing the Best Fit

A transparent and objective evaluation process is crucial. Use a weighted criteria system that balances cost with quality and functionality.

Common criteria include:

- Whole-of-life cost (typically weighted heavily).
- Safety and environmental performance.
- Compliance with specifications.
- Maintenance and servicing support.

Engage a diverse evaluation panel, including fleet practitioners, end-users, and WHS representatives, to ensure a balanced perspective.

6 Acquisition and Delivery – Bringing It Home

Once the tender is awarded, ensure clear communication with the supplier about delivery timelines, pre-delivery inspections, and any required modifications.

Key steps include:

- Conducting pre-delivery inspections to ensure compliance with specifications.
- Arranging operator training, especially for specialised equipment.
- Updating your fleet management system with asset details (VIN, engine number, etc.).

7 Post-Procurement Review – Learning and Improving

After the dust settles and the new asset is operational, take time to review the procurement process:

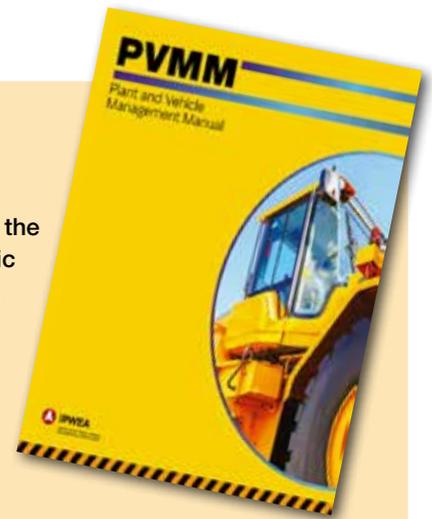
- Did the asset meet expectations?
- Were there any issues during delivery or commissioning?
- What lessons can be applied to future procurements?

Gather feedback from operators and maintenance teams to fine-tune future processes.

Final Thoughts

Fleet procurement isn't just about buying the newest model—it's about making strategic decisions that balance cost, functionality, and long-term value. By following a structured approach and engaging key stakeholders throughout the process, fleet practitioners can ensure their organisation gets the right asset for the job—on time and within budget.

For more information about fleet management best practice, refer to the IPWEA Plant and Vehicle Management Manual (PVMM) by visiting www.ipwea.org.



Press on with national truck law changes

By Mark Parry ATA Chair

The ATA is urging transport ministers to support the planned changes to the national truck laws and bring them into force.

To start our campaign, I met the Queensland Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Brent Mickelberg, in February.

It's true the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) review has not delivered the broad scale reform needed to support a world-leading road freight sector in the fast-moving decades ahead. But the amendments it does include would be substantial and worthwhile.

The amendments would restructure the law to enable changes to technical standards to be made more easily. Specific provisions would

enable Euro VI twinsteer trucks to operate on our road system. They'll be made in Australia, too.

The amendments would increase safety by requiring businesses in the audit-based National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS) to have full safety management systems.

They would increase the industry's productivity and cut red tape by increasing the mass limit for trucks operating under general access, the general access length of trucks and the maximum height of trucks.

And they would simplify work and rest hour record keeping and reduce the penalties for some minor offences. There would be more scope for formal warnings and an education option for drivers who commit minor fatigue breaches

Although we are urging ministers to press on with the changes, we are proposing two final amendments.

Our first proposal is about codes of practice. The HVNL imposes broad safety duties, with codes of practice providing guidance about how to comply.

You don't have to comply with a code, but you must achieve a level of safety equivalent to or higher than the code standard.

The amendment bill would empower the NHVR to develop codes and approve them itself.

We think that ministers should approve NHVR codes, in the same way that the

ministers responsible for work health and safety sign off on the codes developed by Safe Work Australia. This would deliver a higher level of independent scrutiny.

We are secondly urging ministers to reduce the penalties for minor work diary record keeping offences from an indexed \$2,000 to \$1,500, and to reduce the corresponding infringement notice fines from \$200 to \$150.

The HVNL review looked at the maximum penalties for 349 offences across the law. The review proposed increasing 50 penalties and decreasing 21 penalties.

The recommended penalties would be fairer, but the penalties for minor work diary mistakes should be reduced too.

Work diaries are difficult to fill in, and a maximum penalty of \$2,000 or an infringement notice fine of \$200 is very high for breaches that could include failing to draw a vertical line in the right place.

Offences like this one have no bearing on fatigue risk or the ability of enforcement officers to understand a driver's work and rest hours.

The penalties for making simple mistakes need to be lower, and we need to bring this long running review to a close so both industry and governments can focus on alternative reform options.

The Quad-father



PBS Pioneer: Les Bruzsa drives high-productivity

By Cobey Bartels

LES Bruzsa is a man that needs no introduction for transport operators in the know, known colloquially as the 'Quad-father' of modern high-productivity truck and trailer combinations.

For the uninitiated, though, Les and his team are responsible for the widespread adoption of countless innovative combinations under the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator's (NHVR) Performance Based Standards (PBS) program. If you spot a new truck and trailer combination out on the road, Les was likely involved in its conception.

Since joining the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator in 2013, Les has steered the PBS program to great heights, allowing operators, engineers and fleets to apply for bigger and better road-going truck and trailer combinations.

We spoke with Les just days after he took out the Industry Recognition gong at the Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia (HVIA) National Awards late last year, making it as fitting a time as any to talk about his achievements and where he sees the Australian transport industry heading into the future.

"We can talk about PBS and the future, but I thought you were calling to congratulate me for the big award!" Les joked, before telling us he actually had COVID-19 and couldn't attend the awards gala.

Productivity meets safety

The PBS dates back, in some form or another, to the middle of the 1990s when the first innovative combinations were developed. In 2008 the National Transport Commission officially kicked off the program, which boasted a modest number of registrations in its early years. In 2013 the NHVR took the reins, before integrating the scheme into the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL) the following year, and the rest is history.

"So, looking at the numbers, at the beginning of 2013 we had around 1,100 PBS combinations, meaning between 2008 and the end of 2012 we had a total of 1,100," Les explained.

"At the end of November (2024), we had 25,117 combinations registered, so if you look at the growth since the NHVR took over the management of the scheme, it's astronomical – especially in the last few years – particularly after COVID-19 when transport was such a key service.

"For instance, in 2021 and 2022 we approved around 2,200 combinations per year, then in 2023 it was 3,847 and for this year – with another month left – 5,158 combinations. I think it's going to be around 5,500 combinations.

"Our research indicates that roughly one third of the road freight task is carried on PBS combinations."

The real-world implications for the growth of the PBS fleet include the obvious increase in productivity and reduction in total truck movements, but it has also saved lives.

"On average, the PBS fleet has roughly 23 percent greater productivity, and roughly 55 percent increased safety," Les explained.

"We know we've saved around a billion truck kilometres this year because of the PBS scheme, so given that based on the latest data there's between eight and nine fatalities for every one billion kilometres – the PBS Scheme has saved at least 8 lives this year."

Tipplers on top

In terms of the combinations proving most popular, Les explained that, despite tipper truck and dog trailer combinations still making up the bulk of PBS applications, the tide is turning as the enormously versatile 30-metre-long PBS A-double gains traction.

"While the percentage of truck and dogs was close to 60 percent (of PBS combinations) a few years ago, now down to 42 percent, and we're seeing other combinations coming through," he said.

"If I look at the complete fleet, with more than 25,000 PBS combinations, still truck and dogs lead the pack with more than 11,000 of them – but A-doubles are the second place and they've overtaken prime movers and B-doubles in the scheme.

"The PBS A-double is the star performer now, so in the last couple of years the number of those combinations – and it's not just the 30-metre-long ones but also the shorter 26-metre and longer 33-metre ones – are the clear winner."

As it stands, Les outlined, the number of PBS A-doubles within the scheme (5,600) now exceeds that of prime-mover semis (4,200) and B-doubles (3,000). While the PBS A-doubles are nudging closer to truck and dog combinations, in terms of total registrations, Australia's construction boom is driving continued demand for high-productivity tipplers.

"I was predicting that A-doubles could overtake truck and dogs this year (2024), because last year we had 1,200 truck and dogs and more than 1,000 A-doubles," he said.

"But it didn't happen because, while we had around 1,600 A-doubles this year, the truck and dog numbers again jumped to more than 1,800. I thought the number of new PBS truck and dog combinations would plateau due to their penetration to the fleet, but we've got big construction projects and operators need new vehicles."



THE PBS FLEET HAS ROUGHLY 23% GREATER PRODUCTIVITY, AND ROUGHLY 55% INCREASED SAFETY

The continued growth of truck and dog registrations can be attributed to the new breed of multi-axle dog trailer combinations bursting onto the scene, which boast even greater levels of productivity compared to three- and four-axle options.

“My observation is that, while the number of traditional three- and four-axle dogs stays at basically the same level, we’re seeing a larger number of new truck and dog combinations coming to the fore, and they are examples like a three-axle truck with five-axle dog, three-axle truck with six-axle dog, or a four-axle truck with five-axle or six-axle dog,” Les said.

“The larger truck and dogs are even replacing the B-doubles in certain areas, or they’re going into tipper fleets where before PBS you couldn’t run those combinations. Now, the PBS Scheme provides the flexibility to transport operators and a range of new vehicle options, so you now have these new combinations entering the fleet, and their numbers are growing significantly.”

Outlining other growth areas within the scheme, Les highlighted a jump in PBS B-triple numbers, which he attributes to the significantly improved access across the last couple of years. Prime mover and semi-trailer combinations, he says, have also grown in popularity – in particular the longer three-axles and the quad semis.

States to step up

It’s clear, talking with Les, that growth is highest in jurisdictions that encourage the use of high-productivity combinations – understanding their safety benefits, and inherent emissions and trip reduction potential.

“Obviously, the industry is switching towards high productivity combinations

across the field, but I think the biggest push or opportunity is in the jurisdictions where gaining access for PBS combinations is easier,” he said.

“In Victoria and New South Wales, where they opened up significant networks for those combinations, the growth is considerable, and we can see those increases in the productivity figures.”

The jurisdictions open to the scheme are looking at the bigger picture and thanks to their cooperation, Les and his team are now armed with the data to prove that higher productivity vehicles may indeed be better for the road network.

“The freight task is going to increase so you want more productive and safer vehicles, you want to use less trucks, and that’s going to be beneficial to the road network,” he said.

“We now have the data and the evidence to prove that it’s not just a theory and that the PBS combinations are more productive and are reducing the number of trucks on the road.

“For instance, in the last six to eight years in Victoria payload productivity has increased by 16 percent, and in New South Wales it’s increased by around 6.0 percent, but in Queensland it’s only 0.5 percent mainly because of the access limitations. The take up rate of PBS combinations in New South Wales and Victoria is higher than that of Queensland.”

When asked where he sees the scheme heading in the near future, Les said he and his team are prioritising discussions with road managers to allow improved PBS access for transport operators.

“We are working with road managers to reduce and simplify the permit requirements, which means giving the industry certainty,” he said.

“Industry needs certainty that if they spend a million bucks on a high productivity combination, it’s not going to be parked up somewhere – they need to know they can utilise it. We are working with road managers in that sense.”

High-productivity future

Looking further ahead, Les thinks there is the potential to transition proven combinations out of the PBS fleet – streamlining the adoption of higher productivity combinations for operators.

“We’d like to transition the mature and proven PBS combinations with well-known performance characteristics out of the scheme, because when you have thousands and thousands of truck and dogs and thousands and thousands of A-doubles, it would be better to come up with prescriptive design envelopes and just say to the industry ‘design your vehicle like that’,” he said.

“If you meet those design requirements, you don’t have to go through the PBS assessments and so on – you don’t have to spend time and resources on a design. We’ve learnt so much about the performance of these combinations that we are convinced that we can create those blueprint designs, and we want the industry to use those – but it’s probably not something you’ll see in the very near future.”

The NHVR is currently reviewing the existing PBS standards in line with emerging new-energy vehicle technology, updated Australian Design Rules (ADRs), and other incoming safety technologies. With revised standards on the way, and the scheme’s recent growth, the future of high productivity in Australia looks promising.

Sustainable Fleet Solutions

Penske's Vision for Sustainable Fleet Solutions

In an exclusive interview with Fleet News Group, Hamish Christie-Johnston, Managing Director of Penske Australia & New Zealand, shared insights into the company's expansive operations, its commitment to sustainability, and how it is leveraging cutting-edge technology to support fleet customers in their transition to greener transport solutions.

A Unique Business Model

Penske stands apart in the heavy vehicle industry as both a distributor and a retailer, a model that differs significantly from traditional original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). While most truck brands operate within strict manufacturer networks, Penske imports and distributes major brands, including MAN, Western Star, Detroit, Dennis Eagle, mtu, Bergen Engines, and Allison Transmission. They retail approximately 50 percent of the vehicles they import through their own branches in key markets such as Sydney and Brisbane, while independent dealers handle other locations.

Beyond trucks, Penske's power systems division plays a crucial role in energy solutions. Their expertise extends from industrial and defence applications to high-tech battery storage and renewable energy infrastructure, making them a key player in Australia's evolving energy landscape.

Sustainable Solutions for Modern Fleets

With fleet operators increasingly seeking sustainable solutions, Penske is positioning itself as a leader in providing alternative fuel options.

While diesel remains the backbone of Australia's transport industry, Penske is actively exploring hybrid and hydrogen technologies, as well as renewable fuels such as Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).

"Fleet operators are looking for fuel efficiency and lower emissions, but they also need practical solutions," said Christie-Johnston. "Our job is to help customers navigate the energy transition with realistic options that work in their operating environment."

HVO presents an immediate emissions reduction opportunity, but feedstock limitations mean it is unlikely to scale to meet the full demand of industries like mining, which consumes billions of litres of diesel annually.

Technology-Driven Efficiency

Penske is leveraging its global experience to deliver technology that enhances fleet performance. With a fleet leasing and rental division in the U.S. managing 440,000 vehicles, they have access to advanced telematics and predictive maintenance solutions.

"In the U.S., Penske Truck Leasing has put telematics on steroids," said Christie-Johnston. "Predictive maintenance is now key to minimising downtime, improving safety, and reducing costs. We're bringing that expertise to Australia to help fleets get the most out of their assets."

The same principles are being applied to electric vehicle (EV) and battery infrastructure solutions. Penske Energy, a subsidiary operating in the U.S., has been developing large-scale EV charging networks for commercial fleets. The company is now looking at how these learnings can be applied to the Australian market, where infrastructure remains a key barrier to EV adoption.





OUR JOB IS TO HELP CUSTOMERS NAVIGATE THE ENERGY TRANSITION WITH REALISTIC OPTIONS

Growing Partnerships and Expanding Services

Penske's recent success in securing a major contract with Toll is a testament to their growing footprint in Australia's fleet sector. Toll, one of the largest fleet operators in the country, has chosen MAN and Western Star trucks for its fleet renewal program, reflecting the increasing demand for technology-driven, high-efficiency vehicles.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for our commercial vehicle business," said Christie-Johnston. "Toll operates one of Australia's largest and most progressive fleets, and they've recognised the benefits of our trucks' safety features, fuel efficiency, and technology."

The company is also expanding its Australian operations, with a focus on enhancing service and support infrastructure. Recent investments include

new branches in key locations, such as Tauranga in New Zealand, complementing new facilities in Auckland and Christchurch. The appointment of Kevin Smith, a seasoned industry professional, to lead Penske's New Zealand operations further underscores their commitment to growth in the region, as well as Gary Bone, a highly esteemed business leader, who is now overseeing eastern Australian operations.

The Road Ahead

As Australia's transport sector moves towards greater sustainability, Penske is positioning itself as a key player in delivering practical, technology-driven solutions. With a deep understanding of fleet operations, access to global expertise, and a commitment to ongoing innovation, the company is well-equipped to help fleet managers navigate the transition to lower-emission transport.

For fleet operators looking to reduce their carbon footprint without compromising on performance, Penske offers a compelling mix of vehicle technology, alternative fuels, and advanced fleet management solutions. The company's expansion into energy solutions, combined with its strong product portfolio, places it at the forefront of the evolving commercial transport industry in Australia and New Zealand.



Fleet focus IVECO

IVECO's Push Towards Innovation and Market Growth

IVECO is making significant strides in the Australian market, focusing on technological advancements, fleet integration, and product innovation. During a recent discussion, James Johnson, National Manager – Fleet and Retail Sales – LCV, and Andrew Winbanks, Head of Customer & Innovation Centre & Product Management at IVECO, highlighted the company's strategic plans, product launches, and efforts to address emerging fleet challenges.

Technological Integration and Fleet-Focused Solutions

IVECO is heavily investing in integrating new technologies across its product lineup. Andrew Winbanks shared that advanced telematics are now available across all IVECO trucks, offering fleet

operators enhanced data integration and vehicle management. "Most of the big fleets have been running third-party telematics, but our integrated system offers more data and better connectivity," he explained.

Safety technologies are also a top priority. IVECO's new Eurocargo and Daily models will feature a range of safety systems typically seen in passenger vehicles, including blind spot assistance, pedestrian detection, and driver drowsiness alerts. "We're focusing on vulnerable road user safety, with features like door-opening alerts to prevent incidents with cyclists," said Winbanks.

Adaptive cruise control, lane-keep assist, and traffic jam assist are now part of the package, enhancing driver comfort and safety. "These features make the vehicles feel more like driving a passenger car, but tailored for the demands of commercial fleets," Winbanks added.

New Product Launches: Expanding Options for Fleets

IVECO is gearing up for several major product launches. A refreshed Daily range is set to debut later this year, boasting enhanced safety and driver comfort features, including memory foam seats — a first in light commercial vehicles. "Whether it's last-mile delivery drivers or motorhome users, comfort is crucial," said Winbanks.

The Eurocargo will also see updates, with new safety features aligning with European standards, such as moving-off support systems that prevent accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists in blind spots.

In the heavy-duty segment, the S-Way continues to evolve. With its Euro 6 engine and enhanced fuel efficiency, it has been well-received in the market. "We've seen great feedback on the S-Way's comfort and fuel economy, especially in B-double applications," Winbanks noted.





WE'VE BUILT A NETWORK THAT SUPPORTS OUR CUSTOMERS, ESPECIALLY IN NICHE MARKETS

Whole-of-Life Cost Savings: Enhancing Fleet Value

To make their vehicles more attractive to fleet buyers, IVECO is focusing on whole-of-life cost reductions. Johnson revealed plans to introduce a prepaid service program and extend warranty coverage on the Daily range to six years or 250,000 kilometres. "This gives fleet operators more certainty over costs and helps with budgeting," he said.

IVECO also leverages its extensive dealer and repairer network, which includes 27 dealers and a wide array of authorised repairers. This ensures fleets have access to support no matter where they operate. "We've built a network that supports our customers, especially in niche markets like motorhomes, where vehicles travel across the country," Johnson explained.

The Evolving Van Market: Opportunities and Challenges

Johnson, with over two decades of experience in vans and light commercial vehicles, discussed shifts in the van market. He noted that Australian buyers remain conservative, but there's growing interest in larger, more capable vans. "We're seeing fleets push for higher GVMs to carry more tools and equipment, especially in service applications," he said.

The rise in last-mile delivery has also created opportunities, but challenges remain. "During COVID, demand for

vans skyrocketed, but now supply has stabilised, and we're seeing a return to normal market dynamics," Johnson added.

Despite cultural preferences for utes in Australia, Johnson believes vans offer

superior utility and safety. "Many trades still opt for utes, but vans provide better security, more space, and a safer working environment. It's a shift we hope to see more of over time," he said.



Looking Ahead: Innovation and Market Growth

IVECO is positioning itself as a versatile and forward-thinking brand in the commercial vehicle market. With new product launches, advanced safety features, and a focus on driver comfort, the company is well-placed to meet the evolving needs of fleet operators.

As Johnson summed it up, "We're excited about what's coming. From enhanced safety to driver-centric features, we're offering solutions that meet today's needs while preparing for the future."

Path to Electrification

Ausgrid's Path to Electrification: Powering the Future

As one of Australia's largest electricity distributors, Ausgrid has taken a leading role in fleet electrification, aiming to align its operations with its core mission of delivering sustainable energy. The company's journey towards transitioning its extensive and complex fleet to electric vehicles (EVs) has been a strategic and thoughtful process, reflecting a commitment to both environmental responsibility and operational efficiency.

Ausgrid's fleet, comprising over 2,250 vehicles, is as diverse as the services it supports. Managing this fleet, which includes everything from light commercial vehicles and passenger cars to heavy-duty trucks and plant equipment, presents a unique set of challenges. The decision to transition to EVs was driven by a desire to reduce carbon emissions and operational costs, while also demonstrating leadership in the adoption of clean energy solutions.

The journey began with cautious optimism. Early steps into electrification involved trialling two Renault ZOE's in 2018, a bold move at a time when EV technology was still evolving. These initial vehicles, though limited in range and capability, provided valuable insights into the practicalities and challenges of integrating EVs into a demanding fleet

environment. Issues such as limited range and infrastructure gaps highlighted the need for a comprehensive strategy.

Overcoming scepticism was a significant hurdle. Even within Ausgrid, there were doubts about the viability of EVs for a fleet that supports critical infrastructure maintenance. Fleet Engineering and Strategy Manager Tim Kynoch acknowledged his own initial bias, shaped by early experiences with underperforming EVs. However, as battery technology advanced and vehicle reliability improved, perceptions shifted. Hands-on trials and data-driven assessments demonstrated that modern EVs could meet the rigorous demands of Ausgrid's operations.

A key component of the transition was addressing the infrastructure challenge. Ausgrid implemented a tiered charging strategy, focusing on depot-based charging as the primary solution, supplemented by kerbside, public, and substation charging options. This comprehensive approach ensured that vehicles could be reliably charged without disrupting daily operations. Strategic investments in high-capacity chargers enabled rapid recharging for heavy vehicles, minimising downtime and maintaining service efficiency.

As the fleet evolved, Ausgrid expanded its EV lineup, integrating over 100 passenger EVs, several electric trucks,

and trial units for vans and plant equipment. Each addition was carefully evaluated for its suitability to specific roles within the fleet, ensuring that performance and reliability were not compromised.

The transition has not been without challenges. Upgrading depot infrastructure, navigating supply chain constraints, and educating staff on EV safety and capabilities required coordinated efforts across multiple departments.

Misinformation about EV safety, particularly concerns about battery fires, was addressed through collaborations with organisations like EV FireSafe, ensuring staff were informed and confident in operating the new vehicles.

Looking ahead, Ausgrid has set an ambitious target to have 900 EVs in operation by 2029. Achieving this goal will require continued investment in both vehicles and charging infrastructure, as well as ongoing engagement with staff to ensure a smooth and efficient transition.

Ausgrid's electrification journey serves as a blueprint for other fleets considering the shift to EVs. It demonstrates that with careful planning, a willingness to adapt, and a commitment to sustainability, even the most complex fleets can successfully transition to cleaner, greener alternatives.





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Hybrid fleet focus



CNW pursues hybrid fleet focus

By Cobey Bartels

Family owned and operated electrical wholesaler CNW opened its doors in 1952 and while the world has changed a lot across the last 73 years, the company has ridden the technology wave the entire way. Now, it turns its sights to emissions reduction across its fleet of 150 trucks.

CNW invited Fleet News to its Murarrie warehouse in Brisbane, as the team welcomed four new Hino 300 Hybrid trucks to its growing fleet.

"The price of hybrids has come down a lot, with hybrids versus the normal (diesel) truck price, so pretty much from our

point of view we can start getting savings straight away with these," CNW Asset Manager, Melinda Uhlmann explained.

Across its fleet of trucks and utes, with the bulk of them Toyota and Hino, a few standout models have proven perfect for the delivery work CNW undertakes in both metro and regional areas.

"They're pretty much all Hino 300 Series trucks now and mostly the 616 model, but we do go to a 921 for the rural regions where we have to go to mine sites," Ms Uhlmann said.

"Over the years we've found Hino has had the best longevity for us, they've met our needs, and we've got the relationships with the dealerships here.

"We get good resale too, especially in the market at the moment."

The fleet approach at CNW is to run vehicles until maintenance costs start to creep, taking a calculated approach to replacement.

"We run a lean fleet and our owner's motto is that if we can run the vehicle and keep it in good working order then we get the longevity benefits," Ms Uhlmann said.

"We run a bit of a traffic light system, so if it's running a low average service cost then it stays but once it gets up into the orange – that's when we look at replacing it.

”

THE PLAN IS TO REPLACE THE TRUCKS WITH HINO HYBRIDS AS THEY REACH END OF LIFE

"The plan is to replace the trucks with Hino Hybrids as they reach end of life," she said.

Despite being an electrical wholesaler, which happens to also sell electric vehicle chargers, CNW is set on hybrid vehicles at this stage based on the amount of rural kilometres they travel.

"I think the infrastructure needs to catch up a bit with the electric, because we do have a lot of remote locations and we would need to stop and charge, whereas with the hybrid you've got flexibility and then you can do long kilometres in them," Ms Uhlmann said.

Ms Uhlmann's advice for fleets considering a hybrid truck, perhaps due to range and residual value concerns associated with a dedicated battery electric vehicle (BEV), is to give it a go.

"I think it's worth having a go with hybrids, even if you only get one or two for a couple of years to see what difference they make," she said.

"From our point of view, when the cost became similar and we could also see benefits in fuel savings and CO₂ reductions, it made sense for us to go that way."

When asked where she sees the fleet heading across the next five years, Ms Uhlmann says it is likely to consist mostly of hybrid vehicles – but she didn't rule out the addition of BEVs.

"I definitely see the hybrid being our main truck purchase, because even when we need the larger truck, they've now got that larger truck, because we get around that 8.5-tonne GVM as well," she said.

"So, from our point of view we can pretty much keep rolling Hybrids out right now as a business."

The sky's the limit for CNW, as the company continues to grow in line with the rapid electrification of the modern world.





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Buying fleet utes

Fit for Purpose: Navigating the Evolving Ute Market for Fleet Buyers

As we head into 2025, the Australian ute market is undergoing a significant transformation. With evolving powertrains, new entrants, and the impending New Vehicle Efficiency Standards (NVES) starting in 2025, fleet buyers face an increasingly complex landscape. The key to navigating these changes? Asking the right “fit for purpose” questions.

Understanding Fit for Purpose

Selecting the right ute starts with a simple but critical question: what tasks will this vehicle perform? Whether it's towing heavy loads, carrying tools securely, transporting employees to remote job sites, or simply offering a versatile solution for both work and lifestyle needs, not all utes are created equal. With more options than ever, it's essential to match the vehicle to the specific requirements of your fleet.

New Entrants and Powertrain Innovations

The market is buzzing with new entrants aiming to shake up traditional ute offerings. One of the most talked-about arrivals is the BYD Shark Plug-In Hybrid—a ute that blends SUV comfort with utility. However, its SUV-like design might not meet the needs of fleets requiring rugged workhorses.

Meanwhile, Kia has entered the fray with the Tasman, a versatile ute designed with both fleet and lifestyle buyers in mind. Offering a range of body styles—from single cab to dual cab, cab chassis to tub—the Tasman aims to provide fit-for-purpose solutions for a wide array of fleet tasks.

Ford, a market leader, isn't standing still. The Ford Ranger Plug-In Hybrid is set to offer traditional diesel-like performance, including towing and payload capacities, while embracing a cleaner powertrain. For fleets requiring more grunt, the upcoming Ford Super Duty promises a significant boost

in towing and payload without forcing buyers into the small truck category.

Toyota is also adapting to the NVES by introducing a 48-volt mild-hybrid Hilux, reducing fuel consumption and emissions while retaining the ute's rugged reputation. Similarly, Mitsubishi's all-new Triton now boasts a Euro 6 diesel engine, improved safety features, and better driving dynamics—appealing to fleets mindful of both performance and emissions.

Mazda and Isuzu have responded with efficiency-focused updates, including the introduction of a 1.9-litre four-cylinder diesel for the BT-50 and D-Max, providing fleets with lower-emission alternatives without compromising capability.

Emerging Contenders

The GWM Cannon Alpha Plug-In Hybrid is positioning itself as a serious contender with claims of superior off-road ability and a substantial 110km electric-only range. With mechanical four-wheel drive and significant towing capacity, it challenges the BYD Shark's more lifestyle-focused design.

On the fringes, the Volkswagen Amarok targets lifestyle buyers, while electric options like the locally converted Ford F-150 Lightning and the LDV eTerra9 add even more diversity to the ute market.

The NVES Impact

The NVES will undoubtedly push manufacturers toward cleaner, more efficient utes. However, fleet buyers





IN 2025, FLEET BUYERS FACE AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX LANDSCAPE

The Takeaway

should be aware that popular base-model diesel utes may become harder to source or see price increases as manufacturers prioritise higher-spec, lower-emission models to meet NVES targets.

With more choice than ever, the question for fleet buyers is no longer just about brand or price—it's about purpose. By focusing on what tasks the vehicle must perform, fleet managers can ensure they're selecting the best tool for the job, all while navigating evolving standards and powertrain options.



Manheim wholesale auctions sees increase in volume

By Mike Costello, Corporate Affairs Manager, Cox Automotive Australia & New Zealand

Manheim Australia continues to see growth across its passenger vehicle and industrial equipment wholesale auctions in 2025, in a highly competitive and challenging market.

On the heavy vehicle side, our team on the ground reports an uptick in pricing and volume this year, particularly on transport assets like trucks and trailers, as well as civil equipment.

A major source of growth has come via corporate sellers who are either

wrapping up major projects or going through fleet upgrades. We have seen a sharp increase in distressed asset and fleet liquidation sales, bringing late-model equipment into the marketplace.

The stock situation has created improved buyer engagement and bidding activity, with quite positive sentiment on the buyer side, once again particularly in those transport and civil sectors.

The company has also observed greater availability of mining assets, driven in part by recent investments into Western Australia which are generating greater market share.

Council disposals are pretty steady right now, and tend to trend up in the new financial year. Longer-term though, Manheim's monthly council equipment sales have been split into transport and civil auctions to meet a higher-volume marketplace.

Major issues that will impact this year include the federal election and forecast interest rate reductions across the year, pending inflation data, as well as U.S. tariffs which could increase input costs on new equipment and thereby drive up prices in the new and used markets.

If we turn to the passenger and light commercial vehicle auction space, we have seen a modest 4 percent volume

increase year-on-year, having returned 36 percent year-on-year (YoY) growth across 2024.

While much of the growth last year came on the back of increased throughput from fleet management organisations (FMOs) and automotive OEMs, so far in 2025 the strongest volume growth has instead come from dealers, repossessions, and the corporate sector.

In pleasing news for vendors, prices on passenger cars and light commercials at our wholesale auctions have steadied since halfway through 2024, after about two years of decline post the market's mid-2022 pricing peak.

Indeed, while it's only early in 2025, there are signs that asset prices are ticking upwards again, with particularly strong buyer engagement on government, fleet and financier assets, and improved auction clearance rates due in part to overall market dynamics.

Further initiatives such as the Manheim Auction Academy, which offers an intensive training course in the art of auctioneering to existing auctioneers and staff looking to upskill, are creating a better environment for buyers, as the company looks to both further grow market share and improve returns to vendors.

The new Isuzu MU-X

Discover the New MU-X keeping businesses moving

Looking to continue its momentum as Australia's second-best-selling large SUV of 2024, the Isuzu MU-X has received a bold, feedback-driven, midlife facelift to coincide with the introduction of a new flagship variant, the Isuzu MU-X X-TERRAIN.

Geared towards reliability, durability and efficiency, the new Isuzu MU-X has been engineered for purpose—to keep your business moving. With a range of ten models, comprising of four different grades, Isuzu has an SU-V to handle every aspect of your business needs.

At the heart of every Isuzu MU-X is a tried and tested commercial diesel engine—a refined combination of power, efficiency and reliability. Revered as the benchmark of light commercial diesel engines, the venerable 140kW/450Nm 3.0-litre turbo-diesel engine sports a wide torque band for effortless load-carrying performance and confident towing of up to 3.5 tonnes. For those wanting something quieter with lower operating costs, the 110kW/350Nm 1.9-litre is a popular pick amongst commercial operators looking to keep costs down. These highly refined turbo-diesel engines offer real-world efficiency and an earned reputation for dependability and durability.

Capability and versatility make the MU-X a long-standing favourite amongst Australian motorists, with the 7-seater comfortably accommodating seven adults, with large storage spaces throughout and up to 2,138 litres of cargo capacity with the 2nd and 3rd rows folded into a completely flat floor.

Generous ground clearance of up to 235mm, a wading depth of 800mm and extensive underbody protection make it a dependable and competent choice. Selectable dual-range 4WD, Rough Terrain Mode, rear differential lock, and the all-important angles for approach, departure and ramp-over of 29.2°, 26.4° and 23.1°, respectively (X-TERRAIN), makes it highly capable from the showroom floor.

Since the debut of the second-generation MU-X launched in 2021, the MU-X set a new class standard for safety, with a comprehensive suite of advanced driver assistance and safety systems across all models. Validated by ANCAP and awarded with the maximum 5-star safety rating across the entire range in 2022, the 2025 MU-X range takes the comprehensive suite of safety systems further, with new hardware, features and refinements elevating the safety suite to ensure your crew have the safest driving experience possible.

With every MU-X supported by a network of over 160 dealer sites and backed by one of the most



BACKED BY ONE OF THE
MOST COMPREHENSIVE CARE
PROGRAMS OF THE INDUSTRY



comprehensive care programs of the industry, Service Plus, encompassing a six-year warranty, seven-years of roadside assistance and a five-year flat price servicing program, you and your business are in safe hands.

The 2025 (25MY) MU-X range is Isuzu UTE's most comprehensive SUV lineup to date, with the range starting with the LS-M 1.9L 4x2 at just \$46,990 drive-away, before topping out with the X-TERRAIN 3.0L 4x4 at \$73,990 drive-away.

No matter the task at hand, the payload on board, or the trailer in tow, Isuzu's range of MU-X SUVs are more capable than ever before. To find out more or to arrange a test drive, contact your local Isuzu UTE Dealer or visit: www.isuzuute.com.au/fleet



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Fleet maintenance

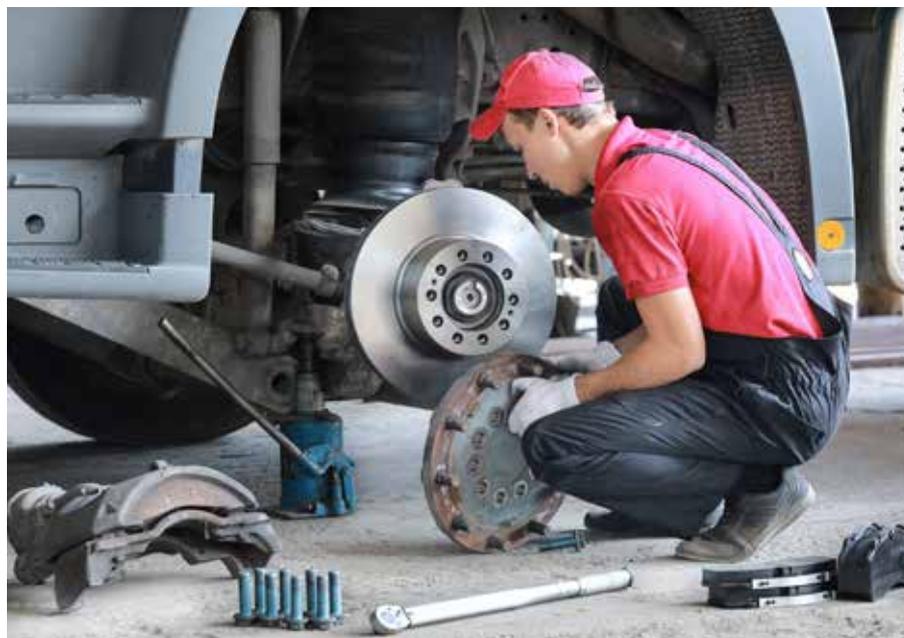
Optimising Fleet Maintenance with Data-Driven Service Schedules

For decades, fleet operators have relied on fixed maintenance schedules to keep their trucks running efficiently. These schedules, often rigid and conservative, were designed with generic service intervals rather than adapting to the unique conditions in which vehicles operate. However, thanks to advancements in real-time vehicle monitoring and predictive analytics, service schedules are evolving to become more dynamic and cost-effective.

Hayley Miles, Service Solutions Director at Volvo Group Australia, is at the forefront of this transition. She explains how the integration of telematics and real-time monitoring enables fleet operators to optimise maintenance schedules, reducing costs and vehicle downtime while improving reliability.

Moving Beyond Fixed Service Intervals

Traditional fleet maintenance schedules have been built around static kilometre-based service intervals—regardless of whether a truck is hauling freight across the Outback or operating on metro routes. This one-size-fits-all approach often leads to excessive servicing for some applications and inadequate servicing for others.



“Back in the day, servicing was every 20,000 kilometres, and it didn’t matter what the truck was doing,” said Miles. “Now, we’re tailoring service intervals based on real-world vehicle usage, fuel consumption, and the specific conditions under which each truck operates.”

This shift is made possible by telematics systems that collect vast amounts of vehicle data in real time, allowing manufacturers like Volvo to fine-tune service schedules to each truck’s operational profile. The result? Extended service intervals where possible, reduced workshop visits, and fewer unexpected breakdowns.

The Role of Real-Time Monitoring

Volvo’s real-time monitoring system continuously analyses truck performance and predicts potential component failures before they happen. This proactive approach means that instead of waiting for a breakdown, maintenance teams can intervene before critical issues arise.

“It’s not just about monitoring fault codes. The system tracks key vehicle parameters—such as exhaust temperatures, fuel efficiency, and wear indicators—using AI-driven analytics to identify patterns that may indicate a developing problem,” explained Miles. “If a potential issue is detected, the system flags it to the dealership, who can then contact the customer and schedule a repair before a failure occurs.”

Pieter Le Roux, Regional Service Solutions Manager at Volvo Group Australia, highlights the sophistication of Volvo’s real-time monitoring centre in Belgium. “We have over 87,000 assets tracked globally,” he said. Our system isn’t just about reacting to faults—it learns from historical data using AI to predict and prevent failures before they happen. This proactive approach ensures that customers avoid costly unplanned downtime.”





WE'RE TAILORING SERVICE INTERVALS BASED ON REAL-WORLD VEHICLE USAGE

Customised Service Agreements for Every Fleet

Recognising that every fleet has different needs, Volvo offers a range of service contracts—Blue, Silver, and Gold—each providing varying levels of maintenance coverage.

“The Gold contract includes real-time monitoring and offers our most comprehensive level of coverage,” said Miles. “This ensures that not only is scheduled maintenance optimised, but any potential issues are proactively addressed, helping customers manage their costs and reduce operational risk.”

Le Roux added: “We call it Volvo Optimised Service Planning for a reason—it’s not a one-size-fits-all solution. Each fleet is unique, and we work with our customers to tailor their service plans accordingly. Our goal is to keep trucks on the road, not in the workshop.”

For fleet operators accustomed to in-house servicing, switching to a manufacturer-backed service plan can seem like a big leap. However, Miles points out that many customers increasingly see the benefits.

“Customers who run their own workshops have to deal with administration, compliance, and staffing challenges,” she explained. “By opting for a structured service contract, they can reduce risk, free up internal resources, and ensure their trucks are maintained by experts who are deeply familiar with the latest vehicle technologies.”



The Future of Fleet Maintenance

The advancements in service scheduling are not just about cutting costs—they also contribute to a more sustainable and efficient transport industry. By reducing unnecessary servicing and ensuring parts are replaced only when needed, fleets can minimise waste and improve efficiency.

As electric trucks enter the market in greater numbers, predictive maintenance and telematics will play an even bigger role in managing fleet uptime. “Electric vehicles bring a whole new set of maintenance considerations, and real-time monitoring will be essential to ensuring they operate reliably and cost-effectively,” added Miles.

Le Roux echoed this sentiment: “Electric trucks require a different approach to servicing, and real-time data is crucial in understanding wear patterns, battery performance, and operational efficiency. Our monitoring systems are already evolving to meet these challenges.”

For fleet operators, the worst kind of downtime is an unexpected breakdown. With technology providing greater insight into vehicle health and performance, fleet maintenance is shifting away from rigid service schedules toward a more intelligent, data-driven approach.

“We’re now in an era where maintenance is optimised for each individual truck’s needs, ensuring that vehicles require servicing when they need it—not just because a schedule says so,” said Miles. “It’s all about getting the best uptime and reliability while keeping costs under control.”

As the industry embraces these innovations, fleet operators stand to benefit from lower costs, reduced downtime, and improved operational efficiency—all made possible by technology that was once just a vision for the future.

Van market insights

The Evolving Van Market: Insights from an industry stalwart

The Australian van market is undergoing significant changes, driven by evolving customer needs, shifting industry demands, and an increased focus on efficiency and versatility. James Johnson, National Manager – Fleet and Retail Sales – LCV at IVECO, brings over two decades of experience in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) segment and shares his insights into where the van market is headed.

Changing Demands in the Van Market

According to Johnson, Australian van buyers have traditionally been conservative, often opting for tried-and-tested models. However, this is starting to shift. “We’re seeing fleets push for higher GVMs to carry more tools and equipment, especially in service applications,” said Johnson. “Customers are looking for vans that can handle heavier loads without compromising safety or driver comfort.”

This shift is especially evident in sectors like emergency services and field service operations, where the need for additional space and payload capacity is critical. “Emergency services, for example, are pushing the boundaries of GVM to maximize equipment load while keeping vehicles under car license limits,” he said.

The Rise of Customisation and Versatility

One of the most notable trends Johnson highlights is the growing demand for customisation. “Customers today want vans that fit specific business needs. Whether it’s mobile workshops, food trucks, or specialist service vehicles, customisation is key,” he said.

IVECO’s Daily range, known for its flexibility, has become a popular choice for these diverse applications.

“Our Daily cab chassis models are particularly strong performers because they offer the versatility businesses need. From motorhomes to mobile libraries, we see a wide array of uses,” Johnson explained.

Vans as Workspaces and Mobile Billboards

Another evolution in the van market is the recognition of vans as both workspaces and brand assets. “A van isn’t just a means of transport—it’s a mobile workshop and a rolling advertisement,” Johnson pointed out. “Tradespeople are looking for vans that allow them to work on-site comfortably, whether that means having a built-in bench, tool storage, or even space to perform tasks inside the van.”

The aesthetic aspect isn’t overlooked either. “Many businesses invest in custom wraps and branding for their vans, turning them into mobile billboards that promote their services wherever they go,” he added.

Challenges and Opportunities in the Market

Despite the growth and diversification in the van segment, Johnson acknowledges there are challenges. “The Australian market still leans heavily towards utes, especially in trade industries, due to cultural preferences,” he said. “But I believe there’s a growing recognition that vans can offer superior utility, security, and comfort.”

He points out that many tradespeople still opt for dual cab utes but are beginning to see the benefits of



Looking Ahead

As for the future, Johnson is optimistic. “We’re seeing steady growth in the van market, especially in sectors like last-mile delivery and service fleets,” he says. “With more businesses recognising the value vans bring in terms of versatility and efficiency, I expect this growth to continue.”

With IVECO’s broad range of LCVs and a focus on customer-centric solutions, the company is well-positioned to meet the evolving demands of the Australian van market. As Johnson sums it up, “Vans are more than just vehicles—they’re tools that help businesses grow and operate more efficiently. And that’s what we aim to deliver.”

switching to vans. “A van offers more storage, better weather protection, and enhanced safety. Plus, the driving experience has improved significantly, making modern vans more car-like in terms of comfort and technology,” Johnson explained.



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EV roadblocks

Why the Fleet Manager's Boss is the Biggest Barrier to EV Transition

For years, the slow uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) in Australian fleets has been blamed on two key issues: the lack of suitable EV models and inadequate charging infrastructure. While these are undoubtedly challenges, they are not the primary roadblocks. The real reason EV transition is stalling in Australian fleets lies elsewhere—at the executive level, specifically with the Fleet Manager's boss.

The Fleet Manager, despite being the person responsible for vehicle procurement, maintenance, and day-to-day operations, often lacks the authority to drive strategic

change. That responsibility falls to their boss—whether that's a CFO, Procurement Manager, Operations Director, or even the CEO. The failure to transition fleets to EVs is largely due to a lack of leadership, prioritisation, and organisational commitment at this level.

By examining the five common elements of an EV fleet transition plan, it becomes clear how the Fleet Manager's boss is the missing link in making real progress.

1. Policy and Planning – A Leadership Responsibility

The foundation of any successful EV transition is a clear and structured policy. Yet, fleet managers rarely have the authority to develop such policies on their own. Their role in most organisations is operational rather than strategic, meaning they lack the influence to initiate or lead the transition.

In many cases, fleet managers are not even referred to as Fleet Managers but as Fleet Coordinators, reflecting their limited decision-making power. Without executive

leadership driving the policy, there is no strategic direction for electrification. A robust EV policy must be endorsed by senior management, outlining the organisation's commitment to reducing fleet emissions, identifying usage needs, and establishing guidelines for procurement, charging, and reporting.

Without this, the fleet operates under outdated policies that do not account for the transition to EVs.

The lack of organisational prioritisation means fleet managers are left without the mandate to explore EV options seriously. No policy, no direction—no transition.

2. Fleet Assessment – No Demand for Data from Above

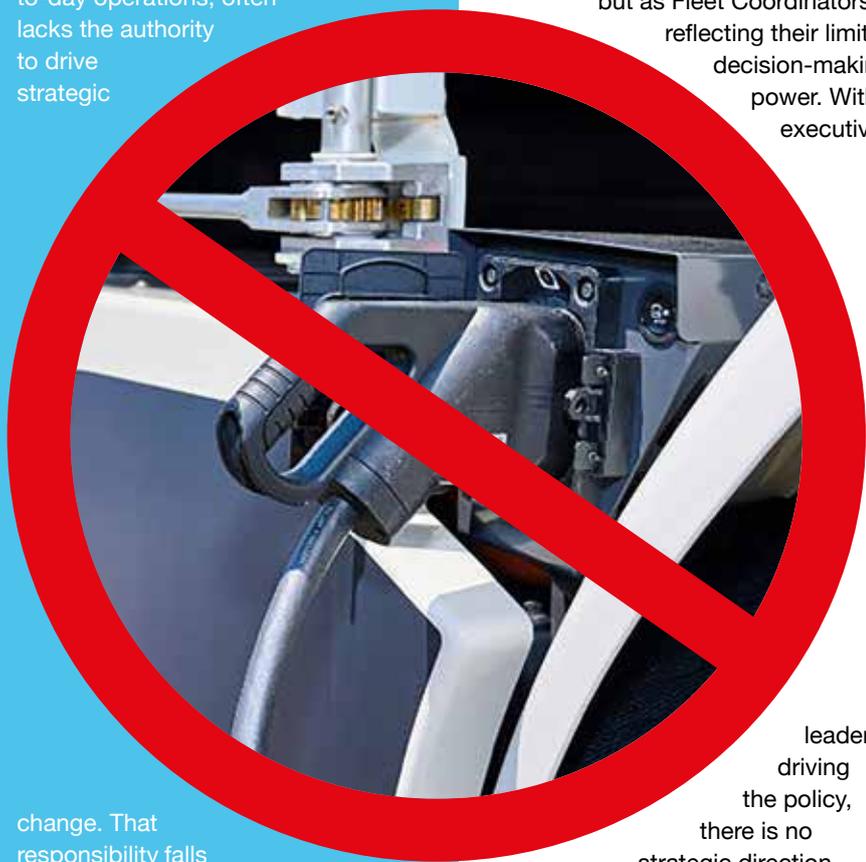
A critical step in EV transition is understanding the current fleet—its utilisation, fuel consumption, emissions, and potential for electrification. Any competent fleet manager should have access to this data and be using it to assess transition opportunities. The problem? The Fleet Manager's boss never asks for it.

Without executive demand for fleet reports, many organisations lack a structured approach to analysing their fleet's potential for EV adoption. Senior leaders don't request monthly or quarterly reviews of fleet utilisation, CO2 output, or vehicle replacement strategies. As a result, fleet managers are not pushed to develop data-driven business cases for EV adoption.

There should not be a single 10-year fleet replacement plan in Australia today that doesn't include EVs. Yet, because executives fail to ask the right questions, fleet managers are left operating in a vacuum, following legacy approaches instead of proactive EV planning.

3. Change Management – Fleet Managers are Not Project Managers

One of the most overlooked aspects of EV transition is change management. Introducing EVs into a fleet requires significant behavioural and operational shifts, from educating drivers to modifying procurement and maintenance strategies. This is a massive change project that most fleet managers are not trained to handle.





IT IS A MATTER OF ORGANISATIONS
STEPPING UP, SETTING A PLAN,
AND COMMITTING TO CHANGE

The expectation that a fleet manager can manage an EV transition alone is unrealistic. Change management is a specialist skill—one that should be supported by executives. Organisations with strong leadership should provide fleet managers with additional resources, such as learning and development teams, project managers, or external consultants, to assist in transition planning.

Instead, fleet managers are often left without guidance or support, expected to drive adoption in an organisation that has provided no roadmap for success. The result? EV transition stalls.

4. Charging Infrastructure – A Strategic Decision, Not an Operational One

Executives often assume that setting up EV charging is as simple as distributing fuel cards. This misconception is a key reason why fleets struggle with infrastructure planning.

The reality is that charging infrastructure decisions—whether for home charging, depot charging, or reliance on public networks—must be made at the senior leadership level. These decisions require budgeting, cross-departmental collaboration, and long-term planning.

A fleet manager cannot independently decide to install chargers at every depot. That requires buy-in from property teams, financial approval, and integration with broader organisational strategies. If leadership fails to provide clarity on how vehicles will be charged, fleet managers are left without direction, and transition efforts stall.

5. Asset Procurement – The One Thing Fleet Managers Do Well (But It's Not Enough)

If there is one part of the transition plan that fleet managers excel at, it is vehicle procurement. They know the market. They understand the total cost of ownership. They can compare EVs to ICE vehicles and identify cost-effective solutions.

But procurement alone cannot drive transition. If an organisation has not completed steps one through four—policy, assessment,

change management, and charging infrastructure—then the knowledge a fleet manager has about EV models is useless. The business will continue to default to buying diesel and petrol vehicles simply because there is no directive to do otherwise.

Additionally, senior leadership must understand whole-of-life costing. Many executives still compare EVs to ICE vehicles based on upfront purchase price alone, failing to account for lower maintenance and fuel costs. Without executive knowledge in this area, fleet managers struggle to get EV procurement approved, even when financially viable.

Breaking the Stalemate – The Role of the Fleet Manager's Boss

For EV transition to succeed, fleet managers need a directive from above. Their bosses must:

1. Establish clear policies that define how and when EVs will be adopted.
2. Request and review fleet data to understand emissions, utilisation, and opportunities for transition.
3. Provide change management support by leveraging internal resources or external expertise.
4. Make strategic decisions about charging infrastructure instead of leaving it to fleet managers to figure out.
5. Educate themselves on whole-of-life costing to make informed procurement decisions.

Until executive leadership takes ownership of these responsibilities, Australia's fleet EV transition will continue to stall. It is not a matter of waiting for the 'right' vehicles or 'better' charging networks—it is a matter of organisations stepping up, setting a plan, and committing to change. The fleet managers are ready but their bosses are not.

Fleet drive Fuso eCanter



find is when a dealer sells a Canter, it usually stays within a couple of kilometres radius of the dealership because that's the type of truck it is."

A bugbear for early adopters was the fact the eCanter was only offered on a lease, with Fuso retaining ownership of the vehicles. The new model, however, can now be purchased outright.

Powertrain

The new model utilises Daimler Truck e-axle technology, simplifying the driveline and improving packaging of batteries and other components, much like its larger Mercedes-Benz Trucks siblings.

The e615 model we drove produces 110kW/430Nm, with a direct-drive setup offering forward and reverse but no gears.

Two lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery packs, totalling 83kWh, allow a range of up to 200km but larger models get a third battery increasing range to around 300km. Of course, DC fast charging is possible allowing the eCanter to go from 5 percent to 90 percent in around 45 minutes.

Tech & Safety

Fuso has equipped the eCanter with its full suite of safety technology, with more features than is offered in its diesel models right now, which includes acoustic vehicle alert system, high voltage shut off crash sensors, advanced brake assist with pedestrian detection, active side guard assist, lane departure warning and stability control assist.



Fleet Drive: Fuso eCanter

By Cobey Bartels

Fuso launched its second-generation eCanter locally in May last year, offering a high-tech electric truck that set a new standard in the light-duty segment. In our opinion, it's still the best electric light-duty truck on offer.

It's a bold claim but, after driving it for a day, the Fleet HV News team was impressed by its performance, comfort and overall ability compared to equivalent diesel models.

Since launching the first-generation model in 2017 Fuso claims the eCanter has amassed around eight million kilometres, a distance equivalent to travelling the circumference of Earth 200 times, providing a well-travelled test bed for its future models.

Australia didn't receive the first eCanter until 2021 but, even then, it was the first production electric truck to reach our shores and offered a more refined, OEM-level product compared with converted models that followed – like the Hino-based SEA 300.

Since launching Down Under, the eCanter has undertaken delivery duties for major brands like Bunnings, Goldstar, Linfox, Australia Post, Team Global Express and Centurion.

The second-generation eCanter is available in 14 model variants to cover all bases, ranging from a car-licence suitable 4.5-tonne GVM right up to an 8.5-tonne GVM. We drove the 6-tonne GVM e615 model, which represents a fantastic middle-ground option.

Who's it for?

Fleets are a big focus for Fuso, but so are tradesmen and small business operators wanting a zero-emission vehicle capable of carrying serious loads.

The key, according to Daimler Truck Australia Pacific head of vehicle homologation, regulatory affairs and future mobility, Romesh Rodrigo, is finding out how customers plan to use the trucks.

"We're going after people that are going to pay money for them," Mr Rodrigo laughed.

"Look, we have to qualify it right? If someone walks in and says they want to drive from Melbourne to Darwin, maybe it's not the best idea."

The eCanter is ultimately destined for inner-city delivery work, Mr Rodrigo says, much like its diesel Canter range.

"Make no mistake, it's going to be focused on last mile," he said. "Most Canters are like this anyway. What we



Fuso eCanter Quick Specs

Motor: eAxle with integrated liquid-cooled motor and reduction gearbox

Battery system: Two lithium-ion phosphate (LFP) battery packs totalling 83kWh

Range: 200km

GVM: 6000kg

Payload: 2500kg

Wheelbase: 3400mm

Output: 110kW and 430Nm

The interior of the eCanter is improved too, with a car-like layout that feels both high-tech and intuitive. The seats are now Isri units (suspended and non-suspended depending on the model) that we found to be comfortable across a day of driving.

A 10-inch digital dash provides all the vital information, with a large range indication, remaining charge and a gauge that shows output and input for the drive system. Seeing the effect regenerative braking has on the system urged us to drive more conservatively. It also features an 8.0-inch infotainment display with smartphone connectivity.

The eCanter also offers an Approaching Vehicle Alarm System (AVAS), which emits sound when travelling below 20km/h to alert pedestrians and vulnerable road users that it is approaching.

On the Road

We travelled from the Daimler Truck Training and Technical Centre in leafy Mulgrave onto Collingwood, where we stopped for lunch and gathered our thoughts, before heading back through the CBD to our starting destination.

The 6-tonne GVM e615 we were handed the keys to, considered the middle child of the range, is a model Fuso thinks is likely to be popular based on its versatility.

Fuso staff had loaded it up to 5,160kg when we arrived, not far off its 6-tonne GVM, to give us a realistic feel for how it performs out in the wild.

Initially, it was the instant and uninterrupted power delivery that surprised us most. No lengthy gear shifts, turbo lag or sluggish diesel hesitation.

Getting up and moving at lights is effortless in the eCanter, but being

loaded near its GVM it still didn't feel like an electric car. After all, it's a commercial vehicle and not a performance EV.

The trip was around 55km from door to door, but upon our return the digital display indicated we could have travelled a further 155km before needing to plug in. That puts its real-world range around 10km ahead of the claimed 200km, which is commendable.

Range was helped by the regenerative braking system, which puts charge back into the batteries while prolonging the life of the service brakes. In fact, we spent much of the day barely touching

the brake pedal, instead opting to push the gear selector to engage various levels of regen.

A real strong point of the eCanter is its sharp steering and compliant front-end ride, which can be attributed to a combination of rack-and-pinion steering and independent front suspension. In a truck this size, the car-like front-end feel is confidence-inspiring.

The eCanter handles its heft better than it should. It's easy to operate, never feels close to its limit (despite being loaded right up), and stops and goes like a vehicle half its size.



Fleet Verdict

This is not a budget truck, aimed at buyers willing to pay a premium price for a quality electric addition to their fleet.

A benefit of this truck's car-like driving characteristics is that operators will spend less time acclimatising to it, ideal for fleet users that regularly jump between cars, utes and trucks. It's never been easier, or safer, to drive a light truck.

If zero-emission credentials are high on your list of fleet buying criteria and you want a premium solution, the second-generation Fuso eCanter is the strongest light-duty performer available in Australia.

Novated Leasing

The Benefits of Novated Leasing: A Smarter Way to Drive, Especially with EVs

Novated leasing has long been a popular and tax-effective way for Australians to finance a new car. But since the introduction of the Electric Car Discount Bill in 2022, which provides a Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) exemption for electric vehicles (EVs) and eligible plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), novated leasing has become even more attractive—especially for those considering the switch to an EV.

Why Choose Novated Leasing?

A novated lease allows employees to lease a car using their pre-tax income, effectively reducing their taxable income and offering potential savings. It's a three-way agreement between you, your employer, and a leasing company. Payments are deducted directly from your salary, making the process seamless and hassle-free.

One of the biggest advantages? Savings. Since payments are made from pre-tax income, you'll likely see more money in your pocket each month compared to buying a car outright or using traditional finance options. Plus, GST is not charged on the vehicle purchase price, adding another layer of savings.

The FBT Exemption—A Game Changer for EVs

The introduction of the FBT exemption has significantly boosted the popularity of novated leasing for electric vehicles. This exemption applies to eligible EVs and PHEVs (delivered before March 31, 2025), eliminating a major cost associated with novated leasing. Without FBT, the overall lease cost is drastically reduced, making EVs a financially sound choice.

To illustrate, consider the Peugeot 308 petrol and its electric counterpart, the e-308. While the petrol model has a lower upfront cost, the novated lease for the e-308 comes out cheaper on a fortnightly basis because of the FBT exemption. The result? An estimated saving of over \$31,000 over five years for the EV lease compared to the petrol model#.

Rising Demand for EVs through Novated Leasing

The FBT exemption has sparked immense interest in both novated leasing and electric vehicles. Industry sources confirm that over 50 percent of new cars acquired through novated leases in 2024 were electric, and the demand continues to rise. With cost savings, reduced environmental impact, and government incentives, it's easy to see why more Australians are making the switch.

EVs also offer lower running costs. A Hyundai Kona Electric, for instance, costs as little as \$4.44 to travel 100 kilometres when charged at home using grid electricity, compared to \$12.47 for its petrol variant. Factor in the tax savings from novated leasing, and the cost per kilometre (CPK) drops even further.

Bundled Costs and Hassle-Free Driving

Another standout benefit of novated leasing is the all-inclusive monthly payment. This covers not only the lease but also fuel (or charging costs), insurance, registration, servicing, tyres, and even maintenance. It simplifies budgeting—no more scrambling for funds when it's time for a major service or rego renewal.

And for those thinking about accessories, number plates, or even a public charging cable for their EV, these can also be bundled into the lease, spreading the cost over the lease term.

Ready to Make the Switch?

With the significant tax savings, the FBT exemption for EVs, and the ease of salary packaging, novated leasing is an incredibly smart and cost-effective way to drive a new car—especially if you're eyeing an electric vehicle.

Curious about how much you could save? Get a novated lease quote today and see how affordable driving a new (and possibly electric) car can be. It might just feel like a pay rise!

Article Source

2025 Novated Leasing Guide
download at
fleetautonews.com.au



Vans versus utes

Vans vs. Utes: What's Truly Fit-for-Purpose for Australian Fleets?

Choosing the right vehicle for a fleet isn't just about following trends – it's about selecting what's truly fit-for-purpose. In Australia, that decision often comes down to one key question: van or ute?

While European fleets overwhelmingly prefer vans for their practicality and efficiency, Australian businesses continue to favour utes, particularly in industries like construction, mining, and utilities. But which option really delivers the best value and functionality? And how do fleet managers determine what's fit-for-purpose?

What Does Fit-for-Purpose Really Mean?

For fleet managers, "fit-for-purpose" means selecting vehicles that not only meet operational needs but also align with broader business goals—whether that's cost efficiency, safety, environmental impact, or employee satisfaction. It's about striking the right balance between functionality and total cost of ownership while ensuring the vehicle can handle the specific demands of the job.

Vans: The Practical Workhorse

Vans bring several clear advantages when it comes to fit-for-purpose assessments, especially for urban or delivery-focused fleets:

- 1. Enclosed Cargo Space** – Vans offer a secure, weather-proof cargo area, protecting tools, equipment, or goods from theft and the elements. For fleets transporting high-value items or sensitive materials, this is a significant advantage.
- 2. Cargo Customisation** – The flat, enclosed space inside a van can be customised with shelving, partitions, or refrigeration units, making it ideal for tradespeople, couriers, and specialty businesses.

- 3. Efficiency** – Vans generally offer better aerodynamics than utes with trays, improving fuel economy, particularly important for fleets covering long distances or operating in urban environments.

- 4. Loading Practicality** – With lower floors and wide access points, vans are easier to load and unload, reducing strain on workers and improving turnaround times.

Utes: Built for Australia's Tough Conditions

Utes, however, dominate Australia's fleet landscape for good reasons—many tied to the unique conditions and industries prevalent here:

- 1. Versatility and Off-Road Capability** – Utes, especially 4x4 models, are built for rugged terrain. In industries like mining, agriculture, or construction, where vehicles need to traverse unsealed roads or rough job sites, a van simply doesn't cut it.
- 2. Payload Flexibility** – Utes with trays can carry irregular or oversized loads that wouldn't fit into a van. Tradespeople often value the open tray for transporting ladders, pipes, or machinery.
- 3. Towing Capacity** – Many utes offer superior towing capabilities, making them ideal for fleets that need to haul trailers, heavy equipment, or even mobile workstations.



VS



Choosing What's Right: A Matter of Use Case

Ultimately, selecting between a van and a ute comes down to understanding the specific use case:

- **Urban delivery or trades?** A van's enclosed cargo area, efficiency, and ease of loading often make it the better fit.
- **Remote worksites or heavy equipment transport?** A ute's durability, off-road capability, and towing strength shine.
- **Fit-for-purpose also involves thinking beyond the vehicle itself**—considering factors like safety features, emissions, driver comfort, and total cost of ownership.

The Future: A Shift Towards Practicality?

As fleets focus more on reducing emissions and improving operational efficiency, vans—especially electric models—may start gaining ground in Australia. But with the country's unique geography and heavy industries, utes will likely remain a staple for fleets where rugged versatility is essential.

In the end, the best vehicle is the one that seamlessly meets the demands of the job—whether that's a van, a ute, or something in between. For fleet managers, making the right call on fit-for-purpose is where true value lies.

Fleet drive **Volvo FH16 780**



Tech & Safety

Volvo has always been big on safety and the new 780 is no exception. Safety is part of the Volvo DNA and, as such, Volvo recently added or updated no less than nine safety features in its trucks – including the FH16.

“We’re introducing additional safety systems that can enhance the driver’s capabilities, helping to protect them and the people they share the road with,” said Volvo Trucks Traffic and Product Safety Director, Anna Wrige Berling.

“By utilising the latest technical advances, we can predict potential collisions and help prevent them from happening.”

Among the new and updated features is Front Short-Range Assist, which helps to reduce collisions by alerting the driver when a pedestrian or cyclist is detected in the risk area at the front of the truck. It’s designed to help increase safety for all road users – especially vulnerable ones.

Also new is Side Collision Avoidance Support, which aims to alleviate the risk of collisions when the truck turns or changes lanes by monitoring the areas at the sides of the vehicle, warning the driver when other road users are in their path. By offering Side Collision Avoidance Support on both sides of the truck, and also addressing lane change accidents, this feature exceeds upcoming regulatory requirements.

Fleet Drive: Volvo FH16 780

By Geoff Middleton

The Volvo FH16 780 is the new power leader in Australia’s big interstate truck market. The ‘780’ in the name refers to its horsepower rating, meaning this truck takes over from the Scania 770 V8 as the most powerful big banger available.

But there’s more to this truck than just brawn. It’s a classy, comfortable and well-appointed prime mover that is perfectly suited to heavy hauling across this vast country.

We got the opportunity to test it out towing three loaded trailers in WA recently, and we came away thoroughly impressed.

Who’s it for?

The Volvo 780 is suited to several applications, and the first that springs to mind is interstate work hauling B-doubles or AB-triples. However, it could be used for anything that requires heavy haulage capabilities.

Volvo puts it forward as a candidate for various heavy transport assignments,

including forestry and timber transportation, mining and quarry transportation, and multi-trailer line haul.

Powertrain

The FH 780 is powered by Volvo’s D17 engine, with 780hp and 3800Nm of torque, making it hard to beat.

Volvo’s D17 is available with power ratings ranging from 600hp right up to this 780hp option, and with torque ratings from 3000Nm up.

The FH16 uses Volvo’s venerable I-Shift transmission, an automated gearbox with smart features such as auto hold, optional crawler gears and terrain brakes. Volvo says its built-in smarts are designed to make driving easier, safer, more efficient and more comfortable.

The FH16, equipped with the D17, is available as a 6x4 with dual front axles as a prime mover, or as an 8x4 rigid truck with dual front axles for applications such as concrete agitators.





Volvo FH 16 780 Quick Specs

Model: FH16 780

Engine: D17 six-cylinder turbocharged diesel engine

Max power: 780hp at 1700rpm

Transmission: I-Shift 12-speed

Emissions: Euro 6

Max torque: 3800 at 1000-12000rpm

Capacity: 17.3 litres

Service intervals: Up to 100,000km or yearly

There is also a Tyre Pressure Monitoring System, Driver Alert Support and even Intelligent Speed Assist, which spots speed limit signs and LED headlights with adaptive high beam.

Obviously, the big Volvo also gets all the regular safety features that we have come to expect from European trucks, and it all combines to make the Volvo FH16 780 one of the safest trucks on the road.

On the Road

We were fortunate to get a real-world drive of the Volvo 780 where it was right at home – in Western Australia hauling a triple road train east out of Geraldton.

Our test truck was a WA-specific build with a load-sharing twin-steer front end in 8x4 configuration. We were towing an AB-Triple 'grain train' trailer set, which is a typical setup for grain work in the West.

This prime mover was rated at 150 tonnes and our weighbridge docket read 106.8 tonnes, so this was going to be a really good test of the new 780's pulling power.

The first thing I noted from the 780 was the massive torque, which comes on song from 1000rpm. It peaks between 1000rpm and 1200rpm but even at 1600rpm, where it is dropping off a bit, there is still 3400Nm on tap.

The 780, pulling the three trailers, really ate up our trip out to Mount Magnet and back – a haul of about 700 kilometres. On the hills, it would lug down to around 1000rpm then, if needed, it would seamlessly slip down to 11th gear and march over the rise. Truly impressive.

Inside, the Volvo is all class, making the FH16 a great place to work. The engineers have done a great job with insulating the cab and it was easy to have a relaxed conversation, or listen to the recently-upgraded stereo system, with only a slight rumble of the big six under the cab.

It's very easy to get comfortable and the big wrap-around dash puts everything close to hand. There is plenty of storage and the big 213cm mattress is a beauty,

too. Our trip took us about 10 hours, which included a lunch stop at the Swagman Roadhouse in Mount Magnet, and I felt quite refreshed when I stepped out of the truck.

At the end of our near-700-kilometre trip we were showing fuel usage of 87.6 litres/100kms, or 1.14km/litre. On a previous test on the same route, the driver returned 1.3km/litre, which isn't bad considering the truck was brand new and we were at 103 tonnes.



Fleet Verdict

The Volvo FH16 780 is a winner. Volvo already has runs on the board with the FH16 and with the bigger D17 engine and beefed-up I-Shift transmission, it's only become better. It's a great fit for our ever bigger and heavier loads and will suit many applications in the Australian road transport scene.

When production ramps up this year at the Volvo plant in Wacol, Queensland, I'd be willing to bet that the truck maker will struggle to keep up with demand for the 780.

Freez-r trailers

Freighter puts on the freeze

By Geoff Middleton

Freighter Group (formerly MaxiTRANS), has announced the release of its new refrigerated trailer product – the appropriately named Freez-R.

The Freez-R is a high-performing refrigerated trailer solution which has been expertly designed to deliver industry leading thermal performance, delivered through local design and a national dealer support network.

Freighter Group hosted an event in Ballarat late last year that saw an overwhelming attendance from customers, suppliers and industry representatives, where the company showcased its manufacturing facility and launched its new Freighter Freez-R trailer product at an informative and interactive showcase.

“We are thrilled to announce a significant milestone for our business with the release of Freez-R to the Australian market,” said Freighter Group Executive Chairman, Greg L’Estrange.

“Through our partnership with Schmitz Cargobull, collaboration with customers and our industry experience, we have been able to design and create a product with the exacting needs for the Australian market.”

Freez-R has been designed to deliver industry-leading thermal performance, capable of achieving -30 degrees Celsius, ideal for transporting frozen goods and other temperature-sensitive freight.

Freighter Group says the body is constructed from Ferroplast technology which, when combined with the locally manufactured Freighter chassis design and the national back-up support through Freighter Group, delivers unmatched thermal performance and reliability.

At the Freez-R product showcase event, attendees were presented with a B-double combination on display where customers could explore the product up close. There were also many interactive discussion areas for customers to talk with the company’s in-house product experts, as well as talk directly with representatives from Schmitz Cargobull.

“We are overwhelmed and delighted with the response from our customers at the Freez-R product showcase event,” said Mr L’Estrange.

“It was great to walk them through our new product and provide them with a first-hand insight into what makes the product achieve its industry leading thermal capabilities.” said Mr L’Estrange.

One of the key discussion areas was around Telematics, with TrailerConnect

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THE FREEZ-R IS FREIGHTER GROUP’S
FIRST TRAILER OFFERING TO COME
WITH TRAILERCONNECT PRO
TELEMATICS AS STANDARD

Pro Telematics provided as standard on all Freighter Freez-R products.

“The Freez-R is Freighter Group’s first trailer offering to come with TrailerConnect Pro telematics as standard,” said Mr L’Estrange.

“Adding that this further showcases the company’s move into a modern, digital service offer to customers.

“It was great to see so many of our customers interested in the technology which has the most comprehensive trailer information available from any telematics provider in Australia.

“It delivers data from the fridge plant, as well as internal temperature control and EBS systems, allowing drivers and fleet operators to access real time information that assists with freight management, predictive maintenance and servicing.

“We are thrilled with the official launch of the Freighter Freez-R and look forward with great excitement to see the product cement itself as a key part of the Australian trailer market,” he concluded.



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Australia & New Zealand

Fuel saving tyres

New Bandag B119 for 2025

By Geoff Middleton

Commercial vehicle tyre manufacturer, Bridgestone, is enhancing its commitment to the Australian and New Zealand transport industry with the launch of an all-new Bandag B119 trailer tyre.

The B119 retread pattern is the newest addition to the range of pre-cured tread manufactured locally at the Bandag factory in Wacol, Queensland, and replaces the popular BRL3.

The B119 is modelled on the design of Bridgestone's Ecopia R119 and offers the same benefits of the low-rolling resistance tyre.

Bandag says the B119 achieves a 15 percent reduction in rolling resistance compared to its predecessor, contributing to an improvement of up to 2.9 per cent in fuel consumption.

Additionally, with Bandag's strongest and most durable compound improving resistance to irregular wear and minimising premature removal, the B119 provides operators with the lowest consolidated tyre and fuel cost per kilometre within the Bridgestone truck and bus range.

Bridgestone Australia Sales Director, Claudio Sodano, is confident the B119 will be embraced by the industry because of its multiple benefits.

"The introduction of the B119 is unique because of its local end to end development and manufacture, to specifically suit the Australian and New Zealand market," Mr Sodano said.

"It's an achievement we're incredibly proud to be unmatched on. We're

confident that it will drive great uptake of our low-rolling resistance trailer retread solution, continuing the trajectory of the BRL3 it replaces. With comparable wear life, and enhanced fuel saving capabilities, as well as the same design and attributes as our Ecopia R119 trailer tyre, we know it will be well received by operators."

According to Mr Sodano, the key advantage is supporting operators in realising operational efficiencies, and harnessing B119's economic and environmental benefits to help them achieve their objectives.

"The B119 is also a significant product for our lineup because of the incredible



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AN IMPROVEMENT OF UP TO 2.9
PER CENT IN FUEL CONSUMPTION

efficiencies it provides operators, especially in linehaul and regional haul applications," he said.

"The cost per kilometre for tyre and fuel allows operators to optimise their tyre and fuel spend.

"We know that tyres and fuel are key operational expenses fleets face, so being able to offer a product that helps them in optimising their tyre and fuel spend is a real point of difference."

The cleaner choice

Bandag retreads are a more sustainable tyre solution for fleet operators, providing both economical efficiencies over new tyre costs, as well as supporting businesses in their efforts towards decarbonisation and reducing their environmental impact.

A Bandag retread uses considerably less raw materials, including rubber, oil and carbon black to produce, as well as significantly less water and energy resources than that of a new tyre.

Bandag says that due to its excellent durability, the B119 is suited to medium on/off road applications as well as linehaul and regional haul use – while remaining a cleaner choice for operators.

Performance has also been proven across 5.2 million kilometres of testing in actual end-use applications of metro to mine site on/off road routes, metro and regional freight, and east coast linehaul applications.

"We test our products extensively prior to launch so that operators can be certain they are using safe, reliable and durable products that live up to our high expectations for performance," Mr Sodano said.

NRSPP
NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY

**PARTNERSHIP
PROGRAM**

Compliance culture or safety culture? Why it matters.

By Nathan Kong
NRSPP Summer Intern 2024/25

It's 3pm, and one of your regular driving routes goes past a primary school. No sign of any children yet, but still you slow down to the speed that the school zone sign highlighted. Do you do that because that's the law and you heard that police were here this morning enforcing the reduced speeds?

Or do you do it because you know it's the right thing to do to keep both you and other road users safe – in this case, young children about to appear from nowhere and cross the road.

And if you're a manager who is responsible for a fleet and people who drive vehicles for work – whether a company vehicle or their own – why does it matter to you?

The National Road Safety Partnership Program (NRSPP) explores these questions in its March Q&A: 'Road Safety Culture vs Compliance: Safety culture, a powerful tool to keep roads safe.'

The Q&A was the result of interviews with a range of experienced leaders in safety analysing the value and impact of safety culture. The Q&A concludes that organisations with a strong safety culture are contributing to driving reductions in road trauma, both for their people and the community.

Why it matters

"When people drive, their main goal is usually to get from point A to point B. However, in a strong road safety culture, the primary objective is to safely reach the destination," the Q&A outlines.

In our scenario, if you slow to a safe speed in a school zone to increase the safety of all road users, rather than because you have to, then you'll also likely slow to a reduced speed during slippery conditions. You'll more likely pull over when you've been driving for an extended period and should take a break. And you will be less likely to speed to try to make up time lost due to unexpected congestion because you know safety is prioritised.

We know that factors like speed and fatigue are major causes in crashes, so safety culture and road trauma

are linked. For Fleet Managers, who also need to keep a keen eye on the balance sheet, preventing crashes is also good business as it minimises insurance, maintenance and other operating costs.

How to build a safety culture

Building a safety culture moves beyond implementing policies and procedures to focusing on people and their attitudes.

"Attempts to build a safety culture must start with people...procedures such as hazard reporting and risk assessment reports are important tools, but they are only as effective as the people using them," the Q&A continues.

"To build safety culture, people need to understand and communicate to others how safety regulations are keeping them safe. When people value safety resources and understand how they work, that is when safety culture will form."

And that is when the parents of that excited and distracted child who ran out of school in front of your vehicle are thankful that you, and your organisation, chose culture as well as compliance.

Read the 'Road Safety Culture vs Compliance' Q&A piece at <https://www.nrspp.org.au/resources/nrspp-qa-road-safety-culture-vs-compliance/>

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Fleet Sustainability

NYC leads fleet charge

By Cobey Bartels

The New York City government is on track to achieve its ambitious fleet sustainability goal as it attempts to halve greenhouse gas emissions across the city's 28,700 vehicles by 2025 – known as the 50x25 initiative – using biofuels and electrified vehicles.

New York has the largest municipal fleet in the United States and it is now the cleanest too, utilising

a mix of alternative fuel sources including electric, hybrid, solar, and biofuel to reduce emissions. The City also focuses on continually improving efficiencies, through methods like fleet reduction and fleet sharing.

Deputy Commissioner and Chief Fleet Officer at New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), Keith Kerman, has played a pivotal role in cleaning up the city's fleet, so far reducing the total annual fuel use by more than 20 million litres since 2013.

Speaking with Fleet Auto News, Keith says his approach has been one that utilises an array of emissions reduction technologies ranging from biofuels to hybridisation, as the City closes in on its 2025 target this year.

“Under NYC Mayor Eric Adams, DCAS pursued a three-part approach: electrify everything we could viably; implement hybrids and efficiencies including fleet reduction; and replace all fossil diesel with biofuels, specifically renewable diesel,” he said.

“Our focus was to make progress on all fronts while recognising that electrification isn't ready in all areas, especially emergency service trucks like snow-plows and fire trucks. DCAS now operates 5,200-plus electric units, 2,080 electric charging ports, 4,400 hybrids, has reduced the fleet over

1,500 and has used over 14 million gallons of renewable diesel. These are all the largest programs in NY State and among the largest in the nation.”

So far 20,000 of the city's vehicles are powered by alternative fuels but given diesel accounts for 60 per cent of total fuel use, DCAS relies heavily on renewable diesel which it says offers up to a 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

“Renewable diesel offers major, 60%+, greenhouse gas reduction; reduced tailpipe emissions; elimination of foul diesel fuel smell; and can fully replace all fossil diesel without infrastructure investment or negatively impacting operations,” Keith said.

“All NYC fleet operations, emergency and non-emergency, on and off road, now use renewable diesel. This is a sustainable, renewable fuel. Our current feedstock sources are waste products including animal fat and used cooking oil. The fuel meets the regular ASTM for ultra-low sulfur diesel. Where zero emissions is not yet ready, this solution makes sense and can be implemented in scale now.”

New York City has a long history of fleet sustainability, dating back to the mid-1990s when it first installed compressed natural gas dispensers to reduce fleet emissions at NYC Parks and the Department of Sanitation.





RENEWABLE DIESEL OFFERS MAJOR, 60%+, GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

By the late 1990s the City had introduced hybrid vehicles, followed by plug-in off-road units in the early 2000s, and then biodiesel in 2005. As of this year the City now has 5,000 plug-in electric vehicles, 2000 electric charging ports, alongside its widespread use of biofuels.

“One of our largest electric charger sites is on the East Drive of Central Park,” Keith said.

“With all the extraordinary landmarks and destinations in the park, you can find tourists and New Yorkers regularly taking pictures of and with the electric chargers and cars. The public wants us to visibly lead on sustainability, and we are doing just that.”

Mr Kerman was involved in most stages of New York City’s sustainability shift, across the past 30 years, working at the Department of Parks and Recreation before moving to DCAS as head of its fleet operation.

“I’m most proud of the sustained focus and commitment of DCAS and all our major fleet agencies including NYPD, DSNY, FDNY, Parks, DOT, DEP, and Correction,” he said.

“Fleet’s primary role is to support emergency services and upkeep of the City 24/7. It would be easy to lose focus on sustainability. We never have and still won’t.”

Based on his strong track record of sustainable fleet transitions, we asked Mr Kerman what advice he would give to fleet managers in Australia embarking on emissions reduction journeys.



“Get going,” he urged, before offering his take on the array of improvements that can offer real-world emissions reductions right now.

“Light-duty and increasingly medium-duty electric vehicles will pay for themselves over a vehicle’s life. Hybrids are long established, will reduce fuel and maintenance without infrastructure investment. Renewable diesel is completely interchangeable

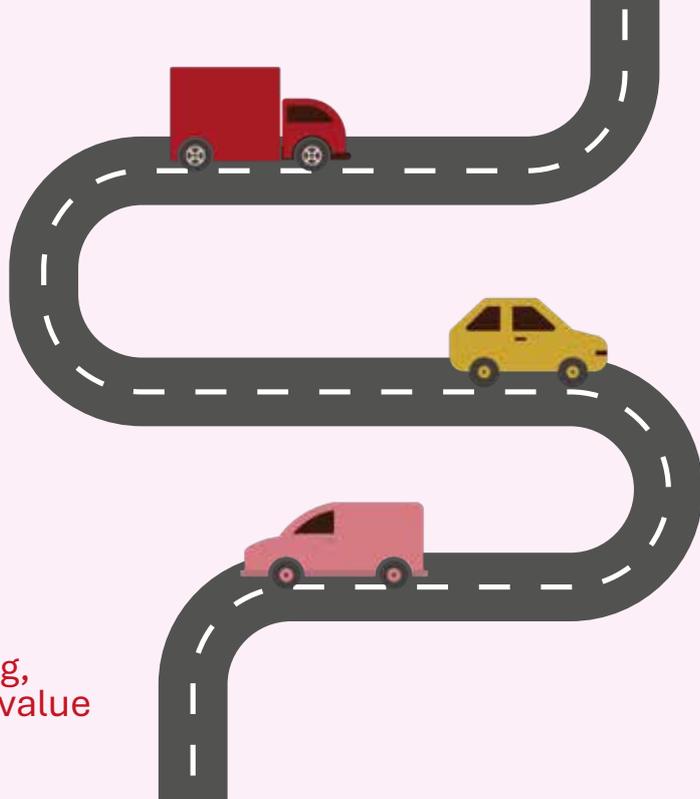
with regular diesel. Right-sizing and more efficient operations save money and reduce emissions no matter what the fuel source.”

While New York City is on track to achieve its 2025 target by year’s end it will soon embark on its next sustainability challenge: complete electrification by 2038. With Keith leading the charge, New York City is in safe hands.



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