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ALL THINGS FLEET



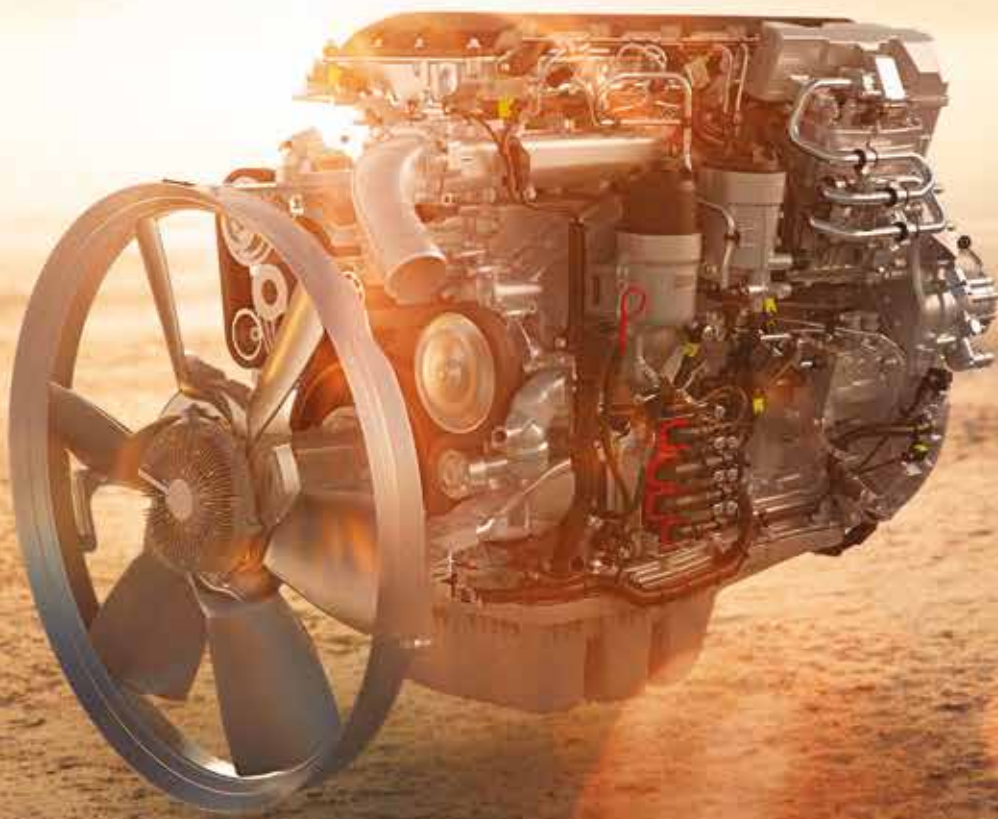
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Editor's Column: Heavy Vehicles, Heavy Responsibility

This issue of All Things Fleet has a clear focus on heavy vehicles — the trucks, prime movers, and specialised equipment that quietly keep communities running and businesses productive. Whether it's delivering goods to regional towns, collecting waste from city streets, or supporting construction and emergency services, heavy vehicles are the backbone of modern society.

But running heavy vehicles well is not just about horsepower or payload. It's about discipline, planning, and maturity in fleet management practices. That means the fundamentals matter more than ever.

Across the fleet community, we are seeing more organisations recognise that excellence in fleet management is not accidental. It comes from consistent effort — reviewing utilisation, documenting policies, investing in staff capability, and using data to make better decisions. These are the behaviours that lift the maturity of a fleet operation and demonstrate the true value fleets deliver to the organisation.

That's exactly why we launched the **Fleet News Group Awards**, program this year.

The awards are designed to recognise the teams and organisations that are doing the hard work behind the scenes — improving safety outcomes, reducing costs, managing compliance, and delivering reliable services to their customers and communities. Too often, fleet teams only get noticed when something goes wrong. The awards are an opportunity to celebrate when things go right.

I'm also particularly excited about the very first **Fleet Vehicle Awards**, which will recognise the vehicles that truly deliver value for fleet buyers. These awards will be judged using a structured procurement approach that looks beyond the brochure and focuses on whole-of-life cost, safety, productivity, and suitability for real-world operations. It's a practical way to help Fleet Managers make confident decisions in a rapidly changing market.

So as you read through this issue, take a moment to reflect on the progress your team has made. If you're proud of your work — and you should be — consider nominating your organisation for the Fleet News Group Awards. It's a chance to be recognised for fleet management excellence and to show the industry what strong, professional fleet management looks like.




Fleet NEWS GROUP AWARDS

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN

Scan to learn more about the Fleet News Group Awards

A new standard in powertrains

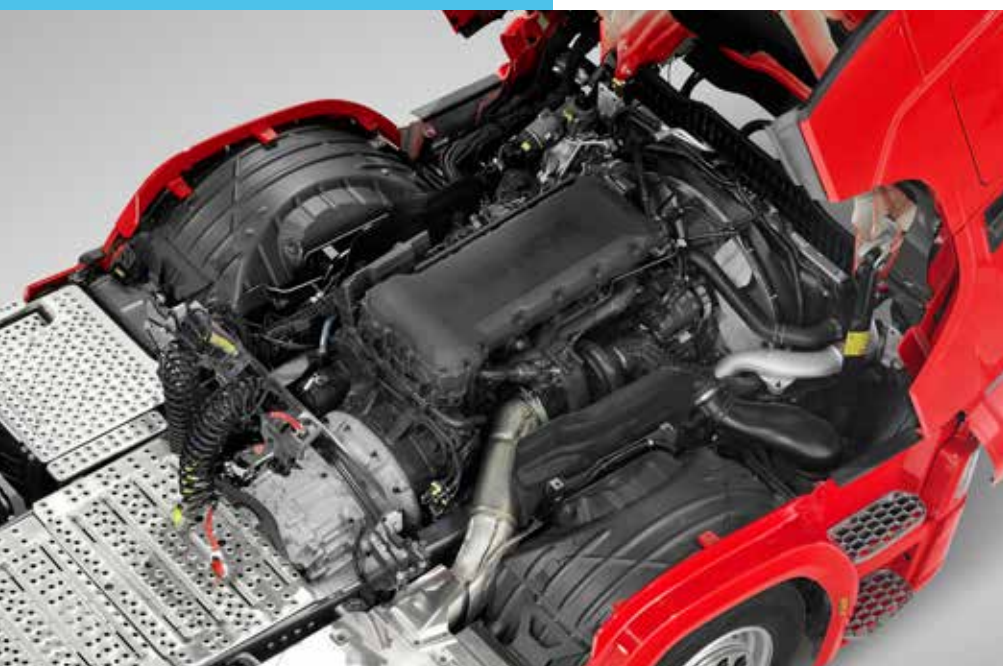


Scania turns it up to 11

Introducing a new benchmark in powertrain excellence for distribution and vocational applications.

Scania is introducing a new family of engines that are lighter and use less fuel but deliver plenty of power and torque for a wide range of vocational, municipal and fleet applications.

Equipped with state-of-the-art engine technology, the new five-cylinder Super 11 family fits into the Scania range between the five-cylinder 9-litre and the Super 13 six-cylinder, delivering 350, 390 and 430 hp options, with 1800, 2000 and 2200 Nm of torque respectively.



The lighter five-cylinder Euro 6e-compliant engine therefore delivers the technological advantages of the Super 13 in a smaller package and allows Scania to access vocational applications where payload or GCM are at a premium.

“We’re promising up to 7% lower fuel consumption compared to the previous Scania 9-litre engine, with higher torque at lower revs, and improved responsiveness, engine longevity and driver appeal,” says Benjamin Nye, Director of Truck Sales at Scania Australia.

“These engines can also run on renewable diesel, significantly reducing exhaust emissions. A further key benefit for all operators is that our scheduled maintenance intervals are now up to 30% longer, compared with our 9-litre engine. This contributes significantly to uptime and reduces overall running costs,” he says.

“The weight savings from a lighter, more frugal drivetrain with a more compact design increase payload capacity and productivity, key drivers of higher efficiency and profitability.

“The Super 11 engines not only open new opportunities for energy-efficient and cost-effective transport in sectors in which we have not previously been

dominant, but vehicles fitted with them also come fully equipped with all of Scania’s state-of-the-art ADAS active and passive safety systems. For vehicles spending a lot of time in the city, the latest generation anti-collision warning systems are a major benefit.

“The Super 11 option is a smart choice for operators who need to balance performance, payload, safety and sustainability in their daily work,” he says.

“For vocational and last-mile delivery tasks, the Super 11 engines offer more torque than rivals at similar power outputs, which when combined with a lighter overall vehicle weight, directly leads to greater productivity.”

The Scania Super 11 litre powertrain will be ideally suited to applications such as general cargo, tippers, agitators, flatbed/crane combinations, hooklift, fuel delivery, car transportation, waste collection, as well as high volume bulk transport and emergency vehicles such as fire trucks.

“We are confident drivers on distribution or vocational duties will notice the difference as quickly as the accounts department when reviewing operating costs, and with the success we have had with the Super 13 in Australia, there is no doubt that the benefits of the Super 11 family will go straight to the customers’ bottom lines,” Ben says.

“Current market conditions, and unpredictable fuel rate rises, have pushed operating costs to be absolute front-of-mind for all truck users. Everyone is seeking greater efficiency, greater uptime and greater productivity from their vehicles. This is where the Super 11 five-cylinder engine range will excel.

“For some operators a switch to a high torque Super 11 may represent a purchase cost saving, while for others the additional efficiency bonus may justify the step up from our 9-litre engine range,” he says.

“Whatever the reasoning, these engines will deliver smooth and seamless, reliable and durable performance at lower cost, which is in line with market demand.”



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Pre-production model shown

OH WHAT A FEELING

Hino 700 series review



More choice, more flexibility: the evolution of the Hino 700 Series

When the upgraded Hino 700 Series arrived in Australia in 2021, it marked a significant step forward for the brand. The introduction of Euro 6 emissions technology, a comprehensive safety package, and a broader range of configurations positioned the model as a more serious contender across heavy-duty fleet applications.

Four years later, the story continued with the introduction of an Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) in 2025 and an expanded model range designed to reach more vocational and linehaul tasks. The changes were not about reinventing the truck. They were about increasing flexibility for fleet buyers who need one platform that can adapt to multiple jobs.

That focus on fit-for-purpose capability is what has defined the 700 Series journey over the past few years.

Building a new foundation in 2021

The 2021 upgrade was more than a routine model refresh. It represented a shift in expectations for Japanese heavy trucks operating in the Australian market.

The move to Euro 6 emissions standards aligned the 700 Series with tightening environmental requirements and future regulatory direction. Importantly, it also demonstrated that advanced emissions technology could be delivered without sacrificing reliability—something fleet operators care about just as much as compliance.

The model also introduced a comprehensive suite of active safety technologies that were becoming standard expectations for heavy vehicles operating in urban and regional environments.

Together, these systems shifted the conversation from basic compliance to proactive risk management.

The truck also featured strong passive safety elements, including a reinforced cab structure and front underrun protection designed to reduce the severity of collisions.

Expanding the range to match real-world applications

One of the most important developments since the 2021 launch has been the expansion of the 700 Series model lineup.

Rather than focusing on a single configuration, Hino broadened the range to support a wider variety of vocational roles—from construction and waste collection to freight distribution and regional transport.

The expanded lineup added new four-by-two, six-by-four, and eight-by-four variants, giving fleet buyers more flexibility to match vehicle capability with operational requirements.

This approach reflects a broader trend in fleet procurement: organisations want platforms that can be tailored to specific applications rather than forcing operations to adapt to a limited set of vehicle options.

The diversity of applications is deliberate. The goal is to give fleets the ability to standardise on a single vehicle family while still meeting the demands of different operational tasks.





ALLOWS FLEET MANAGERS TO
MATCH ENGINE PERFORMANCE
WITH OPERATIONAL DEMANDS

The nine-litre engine: unlocking vocational flexibility

A key part of the expanded capability has been the nine-litre engine option.

This engine delivers sufficient power and torque for many vocational applications while offering advantages in payload capacity and manoeuvrability.

The lighter engine weight can be particularly valuable in operations where tare weight directly affects productivity.

The nine-litre configuration is roughly half a tonne lighter than the larger 13-litre alternative, opening the door to applications where payload sensitivity is critical.

This is a good example of how small engineering decisions can deliver measurable productivity gains across a fleet.

Introducing the AMT: a practical upgrade for 2025

The addition of the 12-speed AMT in 2025 was one of the most significant updates to the 700 Series.

Automated transmissions are becoming increasingly common in heavy vehicles, driven by the need to improve driver comfort, reduce fatigue, and support a more diverse workforce.

For fleet operators facing ongoing driver shortages, ease of operation is now a strategic consideration rather than just a convenience.

The new transmission builds on existing driveline technology and was designed

to complement existing automatic options rather than replace them.

Productivity through drivetrain technology

Beyond the transmission itself, the 700 Series driveline includes several features designed to improve operational performance.

One example is the integration of engine braking systems that reduce reliance on service brakes during long descents.

This capability delivers two practical benefits:

- Improved safety on steep grades
- Reduced brake wear and maintenance costs

Another example is the availability of different power ratings across the range.

- 320 horsepower for urban and distribution work
- 360 horsepower for regional operations
- 450 and 480 horsepower for heavy-duty and linehaul tasks

This tiered approach allows fleet managers to match engine performance with operational demands, avoiding the cost and fuel penalties of over-specifying vehicles.

Supporting fleets beyond the vehicle

Modern heavy vehicles are no longer just mechanical assets. They are connected platforms that generate data to support maintenance planning and operational decision-making.

The 700 Series includes Hino Connect as standard, providing:

- Remote diagnostics
- Maintenance scheduling support
- Performance monitoring
- Fleet management integration

The vehicles are also supported by a five-year warranty and roadside assistance package, reinforcing the importance of lifecycle support in fleet purchasing decisions.

Fleet buyers are increasingly evaluating vehicles not just on purchase price, but on total cost of ownership and long-term reliability.

A platform built for evolving fleet needs

The evolution of the Hino 700 Series over the past few years highlights a clear trend in heavy vehicle design.

Success is no longer defined by a single specification or headline feature. It is defined by adaptability.

The expanded Hino 700 Series range addresses these pressures by offering more choice, more flexibility, and more operational efficiency within a single vehicle platform.

That is ultimately what modern fleet management demands.

Not just a truck that can do the job—but a truck that can do many jobs, reliably and efficiently, across the life of the asset.

Heavy vehicle fleet management

Back to basics: Heavy vehicles don't need experts — they need good fleet management

There's a common myth in fleet that heavy vehicles are somehow too technical, too specialised, or too risky for the average fleet practitioner to manage confidently. You'll hear things like, "You need a truck licence to understand trucks," or "Leave that to the mechanics."

But the reality is much simpler. Heavy vehicles are different to light vehicles, yes—but the principles that keep them safe, efficient and reliable are the same fundamentals that apply across any fleet. You don't need to be an engineer or a driver. You just need to understand the basics and apply them consistently.

And that's exactly what the IPWEA Plant and Vehicle Management Manual (PVMM) sets out to do—provide practical guidance for fleet practitioners managing everything from passenger vehicles through to prime movers and specialised plant.

Start with the job, not the truck

One of the most important principles when purchasing heavy vehicles is to focus on the task first, not the specification sheet. It sounds obvious, but it's where many fleets get into trouble.

Chapter 15 – (Heavy Vehicles) in the PVMM makes it clear that the process should start by reviewing utilisation, engaging with stakeholders and identifying fitness-for-purpose requirements before going anywhere near the market.

In simple terms, ask:

- What job does the truck need to do?
- What loads will it carry?
- How far will it travel each year?
- How will it be loaded and operated?

When fleet practitioners take the time to understand the task, suppliers are far more likely to deliver the right

solution. The PVMM even encourages allowing manufacturers to propose the best vehicle configuration once the role and operating conditions are clearly explained.

This approach reduces risk, improves safety and often saves money over the life of the asset.

Procurement is about value, not just price

Heavy vehicles are significant investments, and the procurement process needs to reflect that. Chapter 4 – (Procurement) in the PVMM promotes a structured approach using tender specifications and a Best Value assessment process to ensure decisions consider performance, safety and whole-of-life cost—not just the purchase price.

That's particularly important with heavy vehicles because the cheapest truck on day one is rarely the cheapest truck over ten years. Downtime, maintenance, fuel use and resale value will usually outweigh the initial purchase cost.

It's not complicated—it's just disciplined decision-making.

Maintenance is a safety system, not a workshop task

If procurement gets the truck into the fleet, maintenance keeps it operating safely and legally. And with heavy vehicles, the stakes are higher because the consequences of failure are higher.

Chapter 6 – (Maintenance Management) in the PVMM positions maintenance as a core risk control, not just a mechanical function. Regular servicing, fault reporting and clear operating procedures are essential to ensuring vehicles remain safe and compliant.

Heavy vehicles are designed to operate within defined limits. When those limits are exceeded—whether through poor maintenance or overloading—costs and risks increase quickly. The PVMM warns that overstressing vehicles can lead to substantial failures and

higher repair costs, particularly in components such as springs, brakes and suspension systems.

From a fleet perspective, maintenance isn't about fixing things. It's about preventing problems.

Heavy vehicles are different — but the principles are the same

Yes, heavy vehicles operate at higher masses, travel longer distances and carry greater risk than light vehicles. But the fundamentals of fleet management don't change.

Safe and efficient heavy vehicle operations come down to:

- buying the right vehicle for the job
- maintaining it properly
- operating it within its limits
- managing risk through clear systems

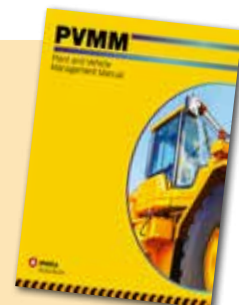
The PVMM reinforces that fleet practitioners don't need to be technical specialists to achieve this. They need to apply structured processes, engage with operators and focus on the fundamentals.

And in today's operating environment—where safety, compliance and cost pressures are all increasing—that back-to-basics approach is more relevant than ever.

Because good heavy vehicle management isn't about knowing everything. It's about understanding the basics and applying them well.



For more information refer to the IPWEA Plant and Vehicles Management Manual (PVMM).



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The Hino 700 Series is engineered for operators who demand proven reliability, advanced safety, superior technology, and operational efficiency, all in a versatile heavy-duty truck. The expanded range now offers increased power, more transmission options, and greater adaptability across a wider range of applications. Featuring the most comprehensive Hino SmartSafe package ever, and the trusted, all-encompassing support of Hino Advantage, the 700 Series is the intelligent choice for fleets that work hard and want to stay ahead. Find out more at hino.com.au

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Vacvator vacuum trucks



IVECO S-Ways fill a vacuum for Vacvator

New Euro 6 emission requirements introduced across the heavy vehicle industry have led many truck body builders – especially those manufacturing complex bodies – to evaluate their OE partners, making early to market brands such as IVECO very attractive.

One such body builder is Goulburn, NSW's Vacvator, a company specialising in the design and manufacture of premium quality vacuum trucks for the hydrovac excavation and non-destructive digging (NDD) industries.

According to Vacvator General Manager, Con Alvanos, in looking for a suitable truck platform for its new HD 8-90 NDD vacuum body, it considered a long list of contenders before settling on the latest IVECO S-Way 460 AD 8x4 model.

"We extensively evaluated other European brands, Japanese and North American brands but none could offer the complete package we were after like the IVECO S-Way could," Con explained.

"Important considerations for us were payload and weight distribution and the ability to integrate our body design to the cab chassis in an uncomplicated way; we also needed generous horsepower, and it all had to come in a cost-effective package.

"The S-Way 8x4 platform gives us an industry leading legal payload or over 10 tonnes, with compliant weight distribution both over the steer axles and rear axles, so our customers and end users can rest assured that they're not falling foul of regulations."

When it comes to marriage of the body with the cab chassis, the S-Way offers a solution that few others have, a 'sandwich' PTO.

Sitting directly between the engine flywheel and transmission, the sandwich PTO harnesses more of the truck's power and torque to run the body, compared to a traditional transmission PTO.

In the case of the S-Way 460 AD, all its 460hp and 2,150Nm of torque is available.

A further benefit of the sandwich PTO is that it removes the need for the transmission to constantly operate when the body is in use, reducing wear and tear. For Vacvator, another plus was the location of the sandwich PTO at the back of the cabin which allowed for easier body integration, according to Con.

"The sandwich PTO was a major attraction for us. Previously we would have manufactured around the transmission PTO with a split shaft drive system which is more complex and requires more work," he said.

HD 8-90 NDD body – clever, powerful and efficient

Development of the latest S-Way-based HD 8-90 NDD vacuum truck took around 18 months from conception to delivery of the first unit to Queensland's Dynamic Hydro Excavations.

Designed from the ground up – and engineered to take advantage of the S-Way's payload benefits – the body features a 9,000L spoil tank and 4,000L of on-board water, meaning maximum time on the job site for added productivity.

For efficient operation, the body is equipped with a powerful 5,000CFM Juroop Helix blower, complemented by a bespoke silencer designed by the Vacvator engineering team – this allows the truck to operate at sub 82 dB, making it perfect for use in residential areas.

Also featured in the unit is a twin high volume, high pressure (32LPM @ 3,600psi) NDD system which allows two technicians to work simultaneously, while the on-board weigh scales are designed



to shut down the blower when the truck is reaching maximum legal weight.

Operating and maintenance systems for the HD 8-90 NDD are similar to smaller versions of the body used in the company's 6x4 models, meaning simplicity and familiarity for operators. Improvements lie in the larger and easier to read control screen, which can now also be used to turn the truck on and off at the body, rather than needing to access the cab.

Con said that IVECO's assistance in developing and integrating the body to the S-Way cab chassis was invaluable.

"The service and support from IVECO from introduction to delivery of the final product was world class, I can't fault them," Con said.

"Their support through the development process was strong; they took time to understand the challenges and what we wanted to achieve in

building this truck – they had buy-in.

"They were also very forthcoming with the information and technical data we needed for the build; the process was seamless."

This is the first of a series of 8x4 vacuum trucks that Vacvator is developing on the IVECO S-Way 8x4 platform, with its HD 8-90 NDD model recently completed and the HD 8-90 NDD-DRY variant well under development.

Successfully selling your used trucks and plant Equipment

For fleet operators running gear including trucks, plant and equipment, having options when it's time to sell is an operational necessity. Manheim's auction marketplace, national site footprint, and expertise in advisory and valuations makes it a key part of this puzzle.

Manheim Industrial Australia and New Zealand achieved all-time record business results in 2025 including a 20% increase in revenue, growth across most metropolitan and regional centres, and 10% more assets consigned, and has carried that momentum into 2026.

Across 2025 the business ran hundreds of timed auctions, sold tens of thousands of items, saw a 20% jump in website listing views, and engaged with more different buyers and sellers than ever before.

Having handled and sold such large volumes in asset classes including Trucks and Trailers, Civil, Construction & Earthmoving, and Plant and Machinery, the auction cadence through to June this year has been planned accordingly. It's an intense H1 that we're living!

For example at the time of writing the company has more than 550 trucks consigned and is running separate active national auctions for heavy trucks, for light trucks and for trailers, plus separate events for corporate fleet and finance, and council and government assets.

Concurrent to this are multiple fleet liquidation auctions via the company's strategically bolstered advisory and valuations teams, the largest of which comprises nearly 200 quality trucks and trailers being sold for Gold Tiger Logistics.

In short, there's a lot of gear in the secondhand market. But at a time of such global upheaval and obvious business pressures, there is a sound argument that the market for this gear is more valuable and potentially necessary than ever. If it's the right stuff.

To expand with an anecdote, I reflect on Manheim's recent sales campaign for transport and coldstores provider Don Watson Transport, whereby it was essential to manage



the sale of its 140 trucks and 170 trailers in methodical fashion, in a tough environment.

Via a series of five online auctions drawing thousands of bids, Manheim has now sold all trucks and a majority of the trailers, showing that even in uncertain times there's still demand and an audience for quality used gear.

"About 90% of the value of the fleet has been transacted now, and we did that within five auctions with Manheim, and we

achieved what we felt were reasonable market outcomes and a lot better than we could have hoped for doing it any other way," opined Don Watson Transport chief executive Lyndon Watson.

Of course, in just the past few weeks what we have seen with diesel prices has highlighted the strategic imperative to consider all options to both reduce fuel costs but also mitigate against vulnerability in fuel availability. Even once diesel prices normalise, new behaviours will be formed and bedded-in.

For this reason it is imperative that businesses like ours stay abreast of developments in electric trucks, which are moving at a rapid rate, as industry calls for more consistent and national policy frameworks to support them.

Be they long-range electric prime movers from Volvo or emerging players like Windrose, smaller last-mile e-trucks from the likes of Fuso, Foton Mobility and Farizon, or electric vans that are proliferating at rapid pace among delivery fleets in particular, we will start to see more of these assets down the track.

Manheim Industrial has a proverbial seat at the table, having engaged with organisations including the Electric Vehicle Council on creating the most fertile ground for these vehicles to thrive, and will remain sufficiently agile to pivot to wherever the market heads.

Just as we are watching the market for used EVs mature and stabilise in terms of residual values, so too do we expect today's niche market for lower-emission trucks to grow - though we are but one branch of the tree when it comes to ensuring these assets deliver across all facets of TCO.

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

OzHarvest in pit lane



It's a routine built on consistency and coordination, repeated day after day in cities, suburbs and regional communities.

For many charities, the arrival of the OzHarvest truck is part of the daily rhythm of their operations.

The Formula 1 food rescue

Large-scale events like the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix present a unique opportunity — and a significant logistical challenge.

Food prepared for thousands of guests must be fresh, safe and ready to serve. But when the event ends, any unused meals need to be cleared quickly. Without an organised response, much of that food would simply be discarded.

OzHarvest works closely with event organisers and catering teams to ensure that doesn't happen.

The rescue operation begins as soon as the final race concludes. Trucks are staged nearby, drivers are briefed and collection points are established throughout the venue. Timing is critical, because food safety standards must be maintained and the venue must be cleared on schedule.

This year, the scale of the task exceeded expectations.

Roberts described the operation:

“This year we actually had to have two days of rescue because it was just so much food and drink. And we rescued about 7,800 kilos of food and drink.”

That volume represented thousands of meals that would otherwise have gone to waste.



From the pit lane to the pantry

How OzHarvest and Hino trucks deliver food, dignity and reliability when it matters most

There's a moment each year, just after the engines fall silent at the Australian Formula 1 Grand Prix®, when the real race begins.

The crowds begin to leave, the grandstands empty and the track grows quiet. Behind the scenes, however, the work is just getting started. Catering teams pack down kitchens, hospitality suites close their doors and large volumes of prepared food remain — perfectly good meals that can't be stored or reused.

That's when the OzHarvest trucks roll in.

Bright yellow and instantly recognisable, they move steadily through the Paddock, collecting crates of food, boxes of produce and pallets of supplies. Within hours, that surplus food is on its way to community organisations across Melbourne, where it will be shared with people who need it most.

It's a powerful example of what happens when logistics, planning and purpose come together — and it's a reminder that behind every community service is a fleet quietly making it possible.

A mission built on rescuing food

OzHarvest began with a simple idea: rescue good food before it goes to waste and deliver it to people who need it.

Since its founding in 2004, the organisation has grown into Australia's leading food rescue charity. Today, its operations span the country, supporting thousands of community groups, shelters and charities.

Every day, OzHarvest drivers collect surplus food from supermarkets, restaurants, manufacturers, food retailers and major events. That food is sorted, loaded and delivered free of charge to organisations providing meals and support to people facing food insecurity.

The numbers tell the story of a large and complex operation.

OzHarvest Melbourne's Alana Roberts explained the scale of the national network:

“Nationally, we've got over 1,500 charities around the country that we deliver food to free of charge. So fleet wise, obviously, it's a very big logistics operation to make that happen.”

Across Australia, the fleet includes around 80 vehicles dedicated to food rescue. Each vehicle follows a carefully planned route, often collecting food from multiple locations before delivering it to several charities in a single day.

“It equates to 15,665 meals that we delivered to our charity agencies.”

For the OzHarvest team, the work is both practical and emotional. Drivers see firsthand how quickly surplus food can be transformed into meaningful support for communities.

Within hours of leaving the Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit, the rescued food is distributed to charities, community kitchens and shelters across the city.

Growing demand, evolving fleet

As OzHarvest expanded its services, the organisation’s fleet had to evolve alongside it.

In the early years, vans were the primary vehicles used for food rescue. They were easy to drive and well suited to smaller collection volumes. But as demand increased, the limitations of that configuration became clear.

The organisation needed vehicles that could carry more food, maintain temperature control and operate efficiently across longer routes.

Fleet Manager Brad Esmore explained the turning point:

“We want to move as much kilos as we can on a car licence. Ninety per cent of our drivers are on car licences.”

That requirement shaped the fleet strategy.

Instead of increasing the number of vehicles, OzHarvest introduced light-duty trucks capable of carrying larger loads while remaining accessible to drivers with standard licences. The transition allowed the organisation to expand its capacity without adding complexity to driver training or recruitment.

This includes a mix of vehicles from Hino, Isuzu and Iveco, alongside the generous support of partners such as Scully RSV through donated vehicles. Together, this fleet provides the flexibility and scale required to meet growing demand.

Built for food rescue

The daily work of food rescue places unique demands on vehicles.

Routes often include multiple stops in busy urban areas, tight loading zones and time-sensitive deliveries. Drivers load and unload frequently throughout

the day, and refrigeration systems must maintain consistent temperatures to protect food quality.

Across the fleet, vehicle design plays a significant role in making that process efficient.

One of the most important features is the square cargo area, which allows food to be stacked neatly and securely. This layout maximises available space and reduces the risk of damage during transport. Insulated bodies also help maintain temperature stability, ensuring that perishable items remain safe throughout the journey.

Over time, these practical design elements have supported the organisation as collection volumes have continued to grow.

A dependable fleet on the road

Reliability is essential for a fleet that operates every day of the year.

Food rescue doesn’t pause for public holidays, extreme weather or unexpected demand. Vehicles must be ready to start each morning and complete their routes without interruption.

Across brands, the fleet has demonstrated strong durability in this environment. As one example, some vehicles have been projected to reach up to a million kilometres over their lifetime, reflecting the overall longevity and resilience of the fleet.

Another advantage is the ability to transfer refrigerated bodies onto new chassis when a vehicle reaches the end of its service life. This approach allows OzHarvest to retain valuable equipment while refreshing the underlying vehicle, keeping the fleet operating smoothly.

It’s a practical solution that reflects the organisation’s focus on sustainability and responsible resource management, supported by a network of partners contributing in different but equally important ways.

Drivers who carry the mission

While the vehicles are essential to the operation, the people behind the wheel are at the heart of the organisation.

OzHarvest drivers do more than transport food. They build relationships with food donors, coordinate deliveries with charity staff and ensure that every load is handled safely.



THE FLEET INCLUDES AROUND
80 VEHICLES DEDICATED TO
FOOD RESCUE

They are often the first point of contact between the organisation and the community.

Roberts highlighted the importance of their role:

“Our drivers are such valuable members of the team because they’re also brand ambassadors.”

For many recipients, the arrival of the yellow truck brings reassurance that support is on the way.

Drivers see the direct impact of their work every day — from community kitchens serving hot meals to families receiving fresh groceries.

It’s a connection that reinforces the purpose behind the logistics.

Turning surplus into support

The Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix food rescue captures the essence of OzHarvest’s work.

Large volumes of surplus food are collected quickly, transported safely and delivered where they are needed most. The process relies on planning, teamwork and dependable vehicles working together behind the scenes.

What begins as leftover food at a major event becomes thousands of meals for people across the community.

It’s a simple idea, executed at scale.

And each year, when the engines fall silent and the crowd goes home, the yellow trucks continue their quiet work — moving food from the Pit Lane to the pantry, one delivery at a time.

For more information including how to volunteer with OzHarvest, head to ozharvest.org.

Volvo Electric trucks

Extended range electric trucks driving productivity

Volvo Trucks has taken another step in the evolution of heavy vehicle electrification with the announcement of new electric models in Europe capable of travelling up to 700 kilometres on a single charge. The development is less about chasing headline numbers and more about demonstrating that electric trucks are moving into mainstream freight tasks where reliability, utilisation and productivity matter most.

For fleet practitioners, this announcement represents a shift in confidence. The conversation is no longer centred on whether electric trucks can perform the job, but how quickly they can be integrated into everyday operations without disrupting service delivery. That shift is consistent with what many Fleet Managers are experiencing locally — a growing focus on doing more with the assets already in the fleet while planning carefully for the next technology transition.

Matching capability to real work

The new Volvo FH Aero Electric with extended range has been designed for long-haul and intercity transport. According to Volvo Trucks, the increased range is achieved through a new driveline configuration that creates space for more batteries and improves operational efficiency.

The charging performance is just as important as the range. The truck is compatible with the new Megawatt Charging System, allowing batteries to be charged from 20 per cent to 80 per cent in around 50 minutes. That timing aligns closely with legislated rest periods for drivers and reinforces a familiar principle in fleet management — productivity always drives technology decisions.

Roger Alm, President of Volvo Trucks, explained the broader intent behind the new models.

“We’re really sharpening our offering here. We are broadening it and making

electric solutions possible for an even wider range of transport assignments, and also adding a cutting-edge electric truck with a range of up to 700 km. This means we can fully match the business needs of our customers. It has never been easier to replace diesel trucks with electric ones.”

Alongside the long-distance model, Volvo also introduced updated FH, FM and FMX Electric trucks with ranges of up to 470 kilometres. These vehicles are targeted at regional distribution, construction and municipal work, where flexibility and reliability are essential to maintaining service levels.

For many fleets, this range capability starts to remove one of the final barriers to electrification — confidence that the vehicle can complete a full shift without compromising payload or scheduling.

Local conditions still shape the timeline

Importantly, the transition to electric trucks in Australia is already underway. Volvo has approximately 150 electric trucks operating across the country today, working in applications such as distribution, waste collection, construction and industrial services.

While the European announcement demonstrates the pace of technological development, the timing of adoption in Australia will continue to depend

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CAPABLE OF TRAVELLING
UP TO 700 KILOMETRES ON
A SINGLE CHARGE

on local regulations, infrastructure readiness and operational requirements.

Tom Chapman, Vice President – Volvo Trucks at Volvo Group Australia, confirmed that global developments are closely monitored but must be assessed against local requirements.

“We will always consider and assess any developments overseas and suitability for the Australian market, however we have no plans to introduce this model at this point in time.”

He also highlighted the importance of regulatory settings in unlocking the full productivity potential of the technology.

“The current 6x2 configuration of the Long Range solution would need some local legislative change to realise its full potential, should those changes be realised we’d be pretty quick to assess it for our local market.”

These comments reflect a practical reality for Fleet Managers. Technology readiness is only one part of the equation. Legislative settings, vehicle specifications and operating conditions ultimately determine whether a new solution can deliver value in day-to-day operations.



Fuel costs make the EV decision easier



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Factor in the FBT exemption and government incentives, and many fleets were already total cost of ownership-positive on EVs vs ICE. With higher fuel prices, that advantage is wider than it's ever been. And for fleets still reliant on imported fuel, recent global supply disruptions are a reminder that your engine type mix is a risk management decision as much as a cost one.

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Find out how many of your vehicles are ready to electrify today, and how you could begin an EV trial in your fleet.



Q Origin EV fleet

The Penske Showcase



solutions through people, products and partnerships to make a difference.”

This focus on partnership was evident throughout the program. Technical specialists discussed lifecycle support strategies, including remanufacturing programs designed to extend asset life and reduce downtime. Engineers outlined how engines and systems are configured for specific applications, whether powering mining haul trucks, marine vessels or standby generators for critical infrastructure.

In the mining sector, for example, the emphasis was on uptime and operational continuity. Maintenance strategies presented during the event showed how modular engine replacement systems allow major components to be swapped quickly, minimising disruption to production schedules.

These conversations reinforced a key message: reliability in heavy transport and industrial operations depends as much on service capability as it does on vehicle design.

A multi-sector business model

One of the defining characteristics of Penske’s Australian operations is its diversification across industries. The showcase highlighted how this multi-sector model contributes to organisational stability — an important consideration for fleet operators evaluating long-term supplier relationships.

Christie-Johnston described the structure using a simple analogy.

“There’s four legs to that chair, and that’s the four key pillars that we talk about,” he said. “It tends to give us a stable, strong business... each of those segments might have its ups and downs, but the fact that we’re in all four of those segments of the economy means we’ve got very, very strong, stable business.”

Those segments — transport, defence, mining and energy — were all represented at the showcase through static displays and technical briefings. Visitors moved between trucks, large-scale generators and specialist equipment, gaining a clearer picture of how the same engineering expertise is applied across different operational contexts.

In practical terms, diversification also affects regional support capability. The

Power, partnerships and practical capability: Inside the Power of Penske Showcase

The road to the Australian Automotive Research Centre (AARC) near Anglesea winds through coastal bushland before opening into one of the country’s most comprehensive vehicle proving grounds. Spanning around 1,000 hectares, the privately operated facility offers an environment where trucks, engines and systems can be pushed beyond the limits of a typical demonstration yard.

That setting framed the Power of Penske Showcase, a multi-day event designed to bring together customers, media and industry partners to experience the breadth of Penske Australia & New Zealand’s operations across transport, defence, mining, energy and marine sectors.

Rather than a traditional trade show display, the showcase focused on hands-on engagement. Attendees drove Western Star and MAN trucks across highway, gradient and all-wheel-drive circuits, observed specialist equipment demonstrations, and spent time in direct conversation with engineers and executives responsible for supporting complex fleets in demanding environments.

For Penske, the event was intended to demonstrate capability in context —

not just product specifications, but the systems, partnerships and technical support behind them.

As Hamish Christie-Johnston, Managing Director, Penske Australia & New Zealand, explained in his opening remarks, the format was deliberately chosen to encourage deeper engagement.

“One of the things that we like about an event like this, it gives us a chance to really develop our relationship with our partners,” Christie-Johnston said.

From products to partnerships

The theme of the showcase — “Power of Penske” — reflects the company’s strategy of integrating people, products and partnerships across multiple sectors. While the brands represented by Penske are well known in the transport industry, the event highlighted the broader ecosystem that supports those vehicles once they are deployed in the field.

Christie-Johnston emphasised that the concept goes beyond equipment alone.

“So we talk about it being the coming together of our people, who we truly believe are the best in the business, with these great brands that we represent, and then those two things combining to offer a partnership with our customers,” he said. “That is literally aligned from our purpose statement. So the purpose of our business is to deliver powerful



IF YOU PARTNER WITH US, IT'S
LIKELY TO BE A LONG-TERM
RELATIONSHIP

presence of service facilities in remote mining areas or defence locations often benefits transport customers operating in the same regions.

Putting capability to the test

While the technical displays provided context, the driving sessions were a central feature of the event. Participants experienced vehicle performance firsthand on controlled circuits designed to simulate real-world conditions.

The gradient circuit tested traction and braking performance on steep inclines, while the all-wheel-drive track demonstrated stability across uneven terrain. The highway circuit allowed drivers to assess ride quality and driver comfort at sustained speeds.

These demonstrations reinforced a broader industry trend: decision-makers increasingly want to see operational performance rather than rely solely on product presentations.



Christie-Johnston noted that the proving ground environment offered an opportunity to demonstrate capabilities that are difficult to showcase in a conventional exhibition setting.

“You know, we weren’t able to put these big engines, these trucks, on an exhibition stand. You wouldn’t be able to drive them off the stand,” he said. “So this is a completely different environment in which we get to actually show you what we were talking about.”

For Fleet Managers, that distinction is significant. Operational testing provides insight into factors such as driver fatigue, braking response and vehicle control — all of which influence productivity and safety outcomes over the life of a fleet.

Navigating industry change

Beyond product capability, the showcase addressed the broader challenges facing the transport and logistics sector. Discussions ranged from electrification and alternative fuels to infrastructure requirements and energy supply.

Christie-Johnston framed the transition as both a technological and economic challenge.

“My view is that broadly, we’ve got the solutions,” he said. “It doesn’t matter whether you want to talk about battery electric, hydrogen fuel cell, hybrid — all of those technologies are available and quite mature. So the question actually becomes around generating the electricity, I think, and producing the fuels.”

He also highlighted the scale of energy demand associated with heavy vehicle electrification.

“If you want to electrify a truck, it’s a 600 kilowatt hour battery travelling 200 or 300,000 kilometres a year,”

Christie-Johnston said. “So now we’re talking about 100 times the energy of the electric car. So where’s that energy actually going to come from?”

These comments reflect a growing recognition across the fleet sector that the transition to low-emission transport will require coordinated planning between vehicle manufacturers, energy providers and government agencies.

Partnership as an operational strategy

Ultimately, the Power of Penske Showcase was less about individual products and more about relationships. The event provided an opportunity for customers and partners to interact directly with the people responsible for delivering and supporting complex fleet solutions.

For Christie-Johnston, that long-term perspective is central to the company’s approach.

“If you partner with us, it’s likely to be a long-term relationship,” he said. “So that’s what we’re all about.”

In an industry where vehicle lifecycles can extend over decades and operational reliability is critical, that emphasis on partnership resonates strongly with fleet operators.

The showcase demonstrated that capability in heavy transport is not defined solely by horsepower or payload. It is built on a combination of engineering expertise, service infrastructure and collaborative relationships — elements that become increasingly important as fleets navigate technological change and rising performance expectations.

For attendees, the experience offered a practical reminder that the future of fleet operations will depend on more than vehicles alone. It will depend on the systems and partnerships that keep those vehicles moving.

What's on show at TruckShowX 2026

TruckShowX, launched by HVIA in 2024, is the hugely successful spin-off to the legendary Brisbane Truck Show.

The Brisbane Truck Show needs no introduction – it is recognised internationally as one of the world's leading industry business events. Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia have produced the epic Brisbane show, on behalf of members and the broader industry, for over fifty years.

So what does TruckShowX offer that the Brisbane Truck Show doesn't?

Think about it like this – if Brisbane is the launch, the grand unveiling, the ribbon-cutting ceremony on all the new trucks, trailers, equipment, technology and concepts on offer, then TruckShowX is the deep dive.

The promise is simple – go into the details, get behind the wheel, meet the experts, and experience first-hand the game-changers that will set the course and shape the future.

It delivers on that promise through its winning formula – a two-day technical conference featuring over 40 speakers, with two show-stopping evening networking sessions, held alongside a technology and capability expo, and a unique 'drive day' opportunity.

The theme for 2026 is 'Driving The Future', which focusses on solutions that work, delivering results that matter, and progress that lasts across the topics of decarbonisation, efficiency, fuel security, productivity, and safety.

Interested in what's on offer at TruckShowX 2026? Read on!

Speaker program

Unpack how the industry's leaders are embracing the latest developments to reduce operating costs, boost productivity and cut emissions:

- learn how AJM Transport is saving thousands from its deployment of AI
- discover how Multiquip cut trip times, fuel and emissions by embracing battery-electric trucks
- learn how Sunswap's solar-powered trailers have slashed total cost of ownership for customers
- discover how Wettenhalls and FBT Transwest plan to detect fatigue before it happens
- understand why Divall's Earthmoving & Bulk Haulage is investigating powered trailer technology
- discover how HW Richardson's dual-fuel hydrogen diesel system has cut AdBlue by 20%



Get behind the wheel

Driving opportunities will take place on the stunning roads near the event's host venue, the Rydges Resort in the Hunter Valley, in thirty-minute blocks over the two-day conference

Experience the latest in battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell power, to hybrid diesel-electric and diesel-hydrogen units, including:

- a Volvo FH16 powered by Change Fuel Technologies' innovative dual-fuel system that injects hydrogen into a diesel engine

- Daimler Truck Australia's pioneering Fuso eCanter – Australia's first all-electric truck
- the Hino 300 Series Hybrids delivering fuel reductions with no range limitations
- KRW Hydron's Shacman Quantum H53 hydrogen fuel cell truck, which can support a gross mass of up to 53 tonnes
- The Deepway Star, a heavy-duty battery-electric with a long-haul range of 300-500 km

Technology, trade, and trailer expo

TruckShowX's technology and trade expo features over 30 unique market leaders showcasing the latest in trailer equipment, future energy, telematics, powertrain technology, vehicle charging, safety systems and more. The expo was the place to be for attendees in 2024, offering unparalleled networking opportunities.

With six companies exhibiting trailing equipment in the brand-new trailer expo area, attendees will get hands-on with the latest in trailer technology and energy-saving innovations through market-leading trailer manufacturers from all over Australia.

Queensland-based Akaal Semi-Trailers will join South Australia's VE Motion, Victorian manufacturers Barker Trailers and Freighter Group, and refrigeration experts Protran Solutions and QTRS.

See you there!

If you're in the trucking game, or work in a field related to or alongside trucking and commercial freight transport, you can't afford to miss the follow-up to 2024's ground-breaking TruckShowX.

See you in the Hunter Valley on 18-19 May for another unmissable edition!

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Trucks vs Utes debate

Trucks vs utes: choosing the right tool for fleet operations

Few decisions generate as much discussion in fleet operations as the choice between a dual-cab ute and a light-duty truck. Both are capable assets used across Australian industries, but as workloads increase and compliance expectations rise, the differences between the two become more important.

For Fleet Managers, the decision is rarely about preference. It is about productivity, safety and long-term operating cost. In many organisations, the most effective approach is not choosing one vehicle type over the other, but understanding where each one fits within the fleet.

The case for the ute: flexibility and accessibility

There is a clear reason utes dominate fleet car parks. They are versatile, familiar to drivers and easy to integrate into daily operations.

Most employees can drive a ute without additional licensing, and the vehicles are compact enough for urban environments and tight worksites. For supervisory roles, inspections or light-duty transport, a ute remains a practical and cost-effective option.

Utes also support mixed-use fleets where vehicles serve both operational

and general transport roles. Their passenger-car characteristics — comfort, manoeuvrability and convenience — make them well suited to mobile workforces.

However, limitations appear as workloads increase. Payload capacity and load volume are often the first constraints. Many fleets respond by adding trailers, which extends capacity but also introduces additional risk, complexity and time on the job.

The truck advantage: built for commercial work

Light-duty trucks are designed to carry loads. Their chassis, suspension and braking systems are engineered to operate under sustained commercial demand.

This purpose-built design provides predictable performance when vehicles are fully loaded. Trucks typically offer higher payload capacity and larger cargo space than utes, allowing fleets to transport more equipment in a single trip.

That capability can improve productivity. Fewer trips mean less time travelling and more time completing work. For organisations delivering services to customers or communities, this efficiency can make a measurable difference.

There is also a safety benefit. Carrying equipment in one vehicle reduces the risks associated with towing.

Reversing, braking and manoeuvring are generally simpler when drivers manage a single vehicle rather than a vehicle-and-trailer combination.

Looking beyond purchase price

Vehicle selection often begins with purchase price, but mature fleet organisations focus on whole-of-life cost.

This includes maintenance, fuel, downtime and resale value. In some applications, a truck with a higher initial cost can deliver better value by reducing trips, minimising wear and extending service life.

Downtime is a key consideration. A vehicle that stays on the road supports productivity, while one in the workshop disrupts operations and increases cost.

Fuel consumption should also be considered in context. Trucks may use more fuel per kilometre, but they often carry significantly more payload. When measured per job or per tonne moved, overall efficiency can be comparable — or even better.

Matching the vehicle to the task

There is no single solution for every fleet.

Utes remain an effective choice for lighter duties and flexible operations. Trucks deliver clear advantages when workloads increase or productivity depends on carrying more equipment in fewer trips.

The most effective fleet strategies focus on utilisation, safety and whole-of-life cost. In practice, the right vehicle is simply the one that matches the job.



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Emad Loka – Fire and Rescue NSW



From the workshop to the boardroom: Why fleet leadership must evolve

At the 2026 IPWEA Fleet Conference in Melbourne, the opening keynote set a clear tone for the year ahead. Leadership in fleet is changing. Expectations are higher. The risks are greater. And the opportunity to influence organisational outcomes has never been stronger.

Emad Loka, Director Fleet Management at Fire and Rescue NSW, delivered a message that resonated across the room: fleet professionals are no longer just operators of vehicles—they are stewards of critical assets that underpin service delivery, community safety, and organisational performance.

His presentation focused on leadership, strategy, and governance. But it started with a story that every Fleet Manager could picture immediately.

The 2:17am moment every fleet leader understands

Loka opened with a scenario that captured the reality of fleet operations in a single moment.

At 2:17am, during heavy rain, a critical aerial appliance—essentially a 40-metre cherry picker used in emergency response—went offline. A technician was dispatched to diagnose the issue while the crew waited and the community remained unaware that a vital response capability was temporarily unavailable.

The problem was complex. The required spare part was not in stock. It had to be sourced internationally.

But the real lesson wasn't about maintenance. It was about decisions made years earlier.

As Loka explained: "That technician, at 2:17 in the morning, did not design the vehicle. That technician did not select the platform... and he did not negotiate the procurement strategy."

Yet the technician—and the organisation—were living with the consequences of those earlier decisions.

It was a powerful reminder that most fleet problems don't originate in the workshop. They start in meeting rooms.

Fleet problems are designed, not discovered

One of the key leadership messages from the keynote was simple but confronting: many operational challenges are built into the fleet long before the first breakdown occurs.

Specification choices, supplier relationships, lifecycle planning, and procurement strategies all shape the reliability and cost of a fleet for years to come.

Loka described the uncomfortable truth many organisations face.

"Fleet pain mostly is not created in the workshop. It's created in meeting rooms, and it's created years earlier when decisions are made without full consideration of the full life cycle."

For fleet leaders, this reframes the role completely. The job is no longer just to fix problems—it is to prevent them

through better governance, better planning, and better decision-making. That shift requires a different mindset.

From fixing vehicles to governing assets

Historically, fleet teams were measured on their ability to keep vehicles running. Workshop capability was the centre of the profession.

Today, the expectations are broader. Fleet leaders are responsible for managing risk, delivering service capability, and protecting organisational value.

Loka challenged the audience to rethink the role of fleet within their organisations.

"We need to take our fleet leadership teams from a mindset of just fixing vehicles into governing. We need to manage and govern asset value."

This shift aligns closely with the growing focus on fleet management maturity across government and industry.

Organisations that treat fleet as a strategic asset—rather than a cost centre—are better positioned to improve productivity, manage risk, and deliver reliable services.

And that strategic mindset starts with understanding the full lifecycle of every asset.

The real drivers of cost, risk, and performance

One of the most practical frameworks from the keynote was the balance between cost, risk, and performance.

Too often, procurement decisions focus primarily on purchase price. But long-term outcomes depend on understanding how those three elements interact over the life of the asset.

As Loka explained, asset management is about coordinated decisions that deliver value—not just savings.



MOST FLEET PROBLEMS DON'T ORIGINATE IN THE WORKSHOP THEY START IN MEETING ROOMS

“We look at the three elements of cost, risk and performance, not only focusing on cost... When we realise these three elements, and we do it well, asset management takes a different shape.”

For fleet leaders, this reinforces the importance of whole-of-life thinking. The cost of maintenance, downtime, training, and reliability is often locked in at the design and specification stage.

By the time the vehicle arrives in the workshop, many of those costs are already determined.

Looking below the waterline

Another memorable concept from the keynote was the “iceberg” model of fleet performance. Most organisations track visible metrics such as breakdowns, downtime, and maintenance backlog.

These are important indicators. But they only represent the tip of the problem. The real drivers of performance sit below the surface—specification decisions, supplier strategies, and lifecycle assumptions.

These are harder to measure, but they have a much bigger impact on long-term outcomes.

High-performing fleets focus on the hidden part of the iceberg. They invest time in planning, standardisation, and governance before problems occur. That approach reduces reactive work and improves reliability across the entire fleet.

Sustainability means thinking about the next generation

Sustainability is often discussed in terms of emissions or budgets.

But Loka introduced a broader perspective—social sustainability within the fleet profession itself.

The decisions made today will shape the workload and risk faced by future fleet teams. That responsibility extends beyond financial and environmental outcomes.

It includes ensuring that assets are safe, reliable, and manageable for the people who inherit them.

This idea resonated strongly with the audience, particularly those managing long-life assets such as heavy vehicles, plant, and emergency equipment.

Leadership in fleet is not just about managing the present. It is about protecting the future.

Fleet needs a seat at the boardroom table

Perhaps the most direct message from the keynote was about influence. Fleet leaders must be involved in strategic

decision-making—not just operational execution.

That means speaking the language of executives and finance teams, not just technical specialists.

Loka highlighted the growing complexity of fleet management and the need for stronger representation at senior levels.

“Our fleet leaders today need to be as comfortable talking about risk and investment as they are talking about engines and technical matters.”

This shift is already underway in many organisations. Fleet Managers are increasingly involved in asset planning, capital budgeting, and risk management discussions.

But the journey is not complete.

To secure a permanent seat at the boardroom table, fleet leaders must demonstrate the value their teams deliver to the organisation and the community.

Leadership is about stewardship

The keynote concluded with a powerful reminder about the role of leadership in fleet. Managing vehicles is important. But stewardship is what defines a modern fleet organisation.

Strategic stewardship means making decisions that deliver reliable service, protect safety, and create long-term value.

It also means recognising that every specification, procurement, and lifecycle decision has consequences—sometimes years into the future.

And occasionally, those consequences show up at 2:17 in the morning. The goal is not to eliminate those moments entirely. That would be unrealistic.

The goal is to design a fleet system where fewer of them occur—and where the organisation is better prepared when they do.

Connected vehicle technology

Connected vehicles move from tracking to productivity

Connected vehicle technology has been part of the heavy vehicle industry for more than a decade, but the role it plays in fleet operations is changing quickly. What started as simple vehicle tracking is now becoming a core tool for improving productivity, managing risk, and supporting better decision-making across the business.

A recent conversation with Brent Stafford, Executive Director, and Mark Whitmore, Senior Vice President Global Sales at Directed Technologies, highlighted a clear shift in the market. The focus is no longer on installing hardware — it is on using connected data to help fleets do more with the assets they already have.

That shift reflects the broader challenge facing fleets in 2026. Rising fuel costs, labour shortages, and pressure to improve service delivery mean organisations need better visibility and stronger control over their operations. Connected technology is becoming a practical response to those pressures rather than a future ambition.

Opening up OEM data — carefully

One of the most important developments in connected vehicle technology is the changing relationship between telematics providers and truck manufacturers. As more trucks leave the factory with built-in connectivity, manufacturers are placing greater emphasis on protecting vehicle data while still enabling fleets to benefit from it.

Stafford explained that the role of technology providers has evolved from collecting data to managing secure access to information that supports better operational decisions.

“We’ve really focused on being able to expose that rich OEM data under the control of the OEM to allow third parties to access that data,” Stafford said.

This approach allows fleets to integrate vehicle information into systems that manage maintenance, compliance, and financial performance. It also reinforces the importance of governance and trust when working with connected technology.

Data is becoming part of the organisation’s core infrastructure, and managing that data responsibly is now a leadership responsibility rather than a technical task.

Global growth reflects common fleet challenges

Another key theme from the discussion was the global expansion of connected vehicle technology. Solutions developed for Australian fleets are now being deployed by Directed in markets such as Mexico, South Africa, India, and Japan.

While the operating conditions vary between regions, the business drivers are consistent. Fleets everywhere are looking for ways to improve utilisation, reduce operating costs, and maintain reliable service delivery.

Stafford noted that the pressure to improve efficiency is being felt across the entire transport sector.

“At the end of the day, the big one that

we’re empowering is operational fleet efficiency, with the rising fuel prices that’s impacting everyone, not only in Australia and New Zealand, but globally,” he said.

The rise of factory-fitted connectivity

A structural change that will shape fleet operations over the next few years is the rapid growth of factory-fitted connectivity in heavy vehicles. Increasingly, trucks are being delivered with telematics hardware already installed and connected to manufacturer systems.

Whitmore explained that this shift is changing the way fleets think about data and technology. The challenge is no longer installing equipment, but understanding how to use the rich information generated by connected vehicles.

“OEMs and their distributors are built to sell trucks, not data, but that is rapidly changing. They increasingly recognise that OEM data has value across the entire customer organisation, from fleet and operations through to finance, HR, and enterprise systems. The real shift is in how that data is accessed and activated, through integration into business systems and digital platforms.



These use cases quickly become embedded and extend far beyond traditional measures like uptime or fuel tax credits,” Whitmore said.

This observation highlights an important opportunity for fleet organisations. Access to connected data creates new possibilities for improving utilisation, managing maintenance, and reducing downtime. However, those benefits depend on the organisation’s ability to interpret and act on the information available.

In practical terms, this means executives need to build capability within their fleet teams and the broader business to ensure that processes are in place to turn data into decisions. That business systems are connected in real time to other business systems, without a human in the loop, without having to interpret data across spreadsheets or as is still all too common, for example fleets who manually processing fuel receipts or odometer reading as they relied on older technology.

Digitising the entire transport task

The final theme from the discussion was the expansion of connectivity beyond the vehicle itself. Modern fleet operations increasingly require visibility across all mobile assets, including trailers, equipment, and tools.

Whitmore described this progression as a natural step in organisational data maturity. Once fleets begin tracking vehicles, they quickly recognise the value of connecting other assets that support daily operations.

“There’s absolutely an acceptance of the inevitability of digitisation and the transformational benefit that has,” Whitmore said.

He added that the long-term direction of the industry is clear.

“Essentially, everything that we use to make decisions that has a field element to it will be connected.,” Whitmore said.

For organisations, this trend reinforces a familiar principle from mature fleet management practices: visibility drives control, and control drives productivity. Connected vehicle technology is simply the next step in that journey.



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The city of New York's fleet model



The New York model: What happens when fleet becomes critical infrastructure

Keith Kerman, Chief Fleet Officer, City of New York, delivered this keynote at the 2026 IPWEA Fleet Conference in Melbourne, offering Australian fleet practitioners a rare look inside one of the world's largest and most complex municipal fleet operations. His message was clear: when communities rely on services 24/7, fleet is no longer a support function — it is critical infrastructure.

Fleet is the system that keeps the city moving

In most organisations, fleet is still seen as an operational service — vehicles to be maintained, replaced, and budgeted. But in New York City, fleet has evolved into something far more significant. It is the system that keeps the city functioning, especially when everything else is under pressure.

With nearly 29,000 vehicles supporting 57 agencies, the New York City fleet is the largest municipal fleet in the world.

Yet the scale itself was not the focus of Keith Kerman's keynote. Instead, he emphasised the operational reality that applies to every fleet, regardless of size.

"Even a large fleet operates one vehicle, one crew at a time," said Kerman.

That simple statement reframes the role of fleet management. It is not about the number of assets — it is about the reliability of services delivered to the community.

Fire trucks, waste vehicles, road maintenance equipment, and emergency response units all share one requirement: they must be available when needed. In this context, fleet becomes infrastructure in the same way roads, power, and water systems are infrastructure. If fleet fails, services fail.

The turning point: From siloed fleets to one system

One of the most significant changes in New York's fleet history had nothing to do with technology or sustainability. It was organisational.

Before reform, each agency managed its own vehicles independently. Maintenance practices differed, procurement decisions were inconsistent, and operational standards varied across departments. The system functioned, but not efficiently.

Kerman was tasked with changing that.

He described the challenge bluntly:

"Every agency that controlled fleet, operated fleet, did whatever they wanted."

The solution was consolidation. Agencies were brought into a single citywide fleet structure, shared services were introduced, and redundant facilities were closed. The result was not just cost savings — it was a more resilient operating model.

Today, the New York fleet operates as one coordinated system rather than dozens of independent ones. That

structural shift created the foundation for everything that followed, from sustainability programs to safety initiatives.

For Australian fleet leaders, the lesson is familiar. Governance, not technology, is usually the first step toward maturity.

Reliability is the core performance measure

When fleet becomes critical infrastructure, reliability becomes the primary metric.

New York measures and publishes fleet readiness every day — a level of transparency rarely seen in public sector operations.

"You can go online right now and see how we're doing," Kerman explained.

This approach changes behaviour across the organisation. Performance is visible, accountability is clear, and decisions are based on data rather than assumptions.

But the keynote also highlighted a hard truth: reliability can decline quickly when external pressures increase.

Supply chain disruptions, inflation, and budget constraints have pushed New York's fleet into a more challenging position in recent years. Despite strong management systems, asset age has increased and readiness has been affected.

That experience mirrors what many fleets across Australia and New Zealand have faced since 2020.

The lesson is not that systems fail — it is that resilience depends on continuous investment and disciplined asset management.

Sustainability starts with operations

Much of the public conversation around fleet sustainability focuses on targets and announcements. In New York, the approach is operational.



WE ELECTRIFY EVERYTHING
WE CAN AS SOON AS WE CAN

The city achieved a 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across its fleet by combining three practical strategies:

- Electrifying vehicles where feasible
- Replacing fossil diesel with renewable fuels
- Improving operational efficiency

These actions were not driven by ideology. They were driven by performance.

“We electrify everything we can as soon as we can,” Kerman said.

That pragmatic mindset is particularly relevant for heavy vehicle fleets and emergency services, where full electrification is not yet practical. New York continues to invest in hybrid technology and renewable fuels while preparing for future transitions.

For fleet practitioners, the message is straightforward: sustainability is not a single technology decision. It is an operational strategy.

Safety is a fleet responsibility

If reliability defines performance, safety defines responsibility.

Kerman’s keynote included a stark reminder of the human impact of fleet operations. Recent fatal incidents in New York involving trucks and pedestrians reinforced the need for continuous safety improvement.

Vehicle design, driver behaviour, and operational controls all play a role. New York has implemented several



initiatives to reduce risk, including:

- Direct vision truck standards
- Surround camera systems
- Speed management technology
- Data-driven driver monitoring

These measures have produced measurable results. Preventable crashes have declined significantly, demonstrating the value of combining engineering, technology, and policy.

Safety, in this context, is not a compliance exercise. It is a core operational objective.

Data is the foundation of modern fleet management

One of the strongest themes throughout the keynote was the role of data.

New York uses telematics and asset management systems to monitor vehicle utilisation, maintenance performance, and driver behaviour in real time. This information supports decision-making across the organisation.

It has also enabled significant reductions in fleet size.

By analysing utilisation data, the city removed approximately 2,000 vehicles from service without reducing operational capability. The result was lower costs, reduced emissions, and improved efficiency.

This aligns closely with the principles outlined in the IPWEA Plant and Vehicle Management Manual, particularly the emphasis on utilisation

as the foundation of effective fleet management.

Data does not replace leadership or experience. But it provides the evidence needed to make confident decisions.

Emergency preparedness defines fleet capability

Perhaps the most powerful insight from the keynote came from Kerman's reflections on crisis response.

Major events such as Hurricane Sandy, severe winter storms, and the COVID-19 pandemic placed extraordinary demands on New York's fleet. Fleet staff helped deliver food, transport medical supplies and air conditioners, and support emergency services under extreme conditions. A number of fleet staff lost their lives while working the COVID response.

In many cases, fleet teams worked around the clock to keep essential services operating.

These experiences reinforced a simple reality: the true value of fleet management becomes visible during emergencies.

Routine operations test efficiency. Crises test resilience.

For organisations responsible for public services, this distinction is critical. Emergency readiness must be built into fleet planning, maintenance, and procurement decisions.

The role of fleet leaders is changing

As fleet becomes critical infrastructure, the role of fleet leaders is evolving.

Technical expertise remains essential, but leadership skills are increasingly important. Fleet Managers must coordinate across departments, influence decision-makers, and manage competing priorities.

Kerman described this challenge with a touch of humour: "90 percent of my job is not fleet management — it's foreign policy."

That observation resonates with many senior fleet professionals. Success depends on collaboration as much as technical knowledge.



THE CITY REMOVED
APPROXIMATELY 2,000
VEHICLES FROM SERVICE
WITHOUT REDUCING
OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY.

What the New York model means for fleet practitioners

The New York experience offers several practical lessons for fleets of any size:

- Governance drives performance
- Reliability defines success
- Safety requires continuous improvement
- Data supports better decisions
- Resilience depends on preparation

Most importantly, it reinforces the idea that fleet management is not just about vehicles. It is about services, communities, and outcomes.

When fleet becomes critical infrastructure, every decision carries broader consequences.

The takeaway

The keynote delivered by Keith Kerman at the 2026 IPWEA Fleet Conference provided a clear and grounded perspective on the future of fleet management.

Technology will continue to evolve. Sustainability targets will become more ambitious. Safety expectations will increase.

But the fundamentals will remain the same. Reliable vehicles. Skilled people. Strong systems. Clear leadership.

Those elements are what transform fleet from a support function into critical infrastructure — and what ensure communities receive the services they depend on every day.





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Komatsu safety focus



A shift toward smarter, safer fleet operations

The 20–25 tonne excavator remains one of the most heavily utilised assets in civil construction, infrastructure and local government fleets. It is the size class that delivers consistent production across subdivision works, road maintenance and drainage projects, while still being flexible enough to operate in tight urban environments.

What is changing is not the role of the machine, but the expectations placed on it.

Soft launched into the Australian market in 2025 and displayed publicly at the 2026 National Diesel Dirt and Turf Expo, the Komatsu PC220LCi-12 reflects this shift toward smarter, more capable fleet assets.

Technology that supports consistent output

For many organisations, the challenge is not achieving peak performance on a single project. It is maintaining consistent performance across different crews, locations and operating conditions.

The PC220LCi-12 incorporates intelligent machine control technology designed to automate routine excavation tasks and support accurate work to

design. These systems allow operators to work within defined parameters and maintain grade control with reduced risk of overcutting or rework.

From a fleet perspective, factory-integrated technology supports standardisation across the organisation. It reduces variability between operators, improves productivity consistency and helps maintain output even as workforce experience levels change.

This is particularly relevant for organisations managing multiple projects simultaneously, where consistent performance across machines can have a direct impact on project delivery and cost control.

Safety built into the machine

Safety remains a central focus for fleet operations, particularly for equipment working near traffic, pedestrians and underground services.

Modern excavators are increasingly designed to prevent incidents rather than rely solely on procedures and supervision. The PC220LCi-12 includes integrated safety systems such as full 360-degree camera visibility and automated detection of people and objects around the machine.

Boundary control functionality allows operators to define working limits, helping prevent the boom or bucket

from entering restricted areas. This capability supports safer operations on road construction, urban infrastructure and maintenance projects where space is limited and risks are higher.

Supporting lifecycle efficiency

Managing equipment across its full lifecycle is a key responsibility for Fleet Managers. Reliability, maintenance planning and machine availability often have a greater impact on operating costs than the initial purchase price.

The PC220LCi-12 includes design features that support predictable maintenance and long-term performance. Improved access to service points, extended maintenance intervals and automated system functions help reduce downtime and simplify routine servicing.

From a fleet management perspective, these features contribute to:

- Improved machine availability
- Reduced unplanned maintenance
- More predictable operating costs
- Better utilisation of fleet assets

In high-utilisation environments such as civil construction and local government operations, these factors directly influence productivity and service delivery outcomes.

A practical step toward higher fleet maturity

The introduction of machines like the PC220LCi-12 reflects a broader trend in fleet management — the move toward higher levels of operational maturity.

Organisations are increasingly focused on standardising equipment, integrating technology and managing risk through better systems and processes. Equipment that combines productivity, safety and reliability in a single platform supports that transition.

For fleets responsible for delivering infrastructure and community services, the mid-size excavator remains a critical asset. What is evolving is how that asset contributes to organisational performance.

Rather than simply moving material, machines in this category are becoming tools for improving efficiency, managing risk and delivering consistent results across the life of the fleet.



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Suttons - behind the scenes



What happens after the order is placed

For many Fleet Managers, the vehicle delivery process appears simple. A purchase order is approved, and some weeks later a fully prepared vehicle arrives ready for work. But behind that moment is a coordinated effort involving leasing companies, dealerships, aftermarket suppliers, and engineers — all working together to ensure the vehicle is fit for purpose.

A recent tour of the Suttons Motor Group fleet facility in Sydney revealed just how many moving parts sit behind the scenes, and why collaboration across the industry is becoming essential as fleets demand faster delivery, safer vehicles, and better productivity.

From purchase order to production line

Once an order arrives from a leasing company or customer, the work begins immediately. At Suttons, a centralised



fleet team coordinates everything from supply and compliance to modifications and delivery.

The scale of activity can be significant. Some months, the facility processes hundreds of vehicles across multiple brands and customer types.

Pat Borg, Group Fleet Manager at Suttons Motor Group, explained that the centralised model was created to improve efficiency and consistency across the business.

“We’ll process this month somewhere in the vicinity of about 300 cars through this department,” said Borg. “There’s still some manual processes, but the systems we have now make it much easier than the old days.”

The facility also supports national delivery, ensuring vehicles reach customers wherever they operate.

“We deliver cars personally all over Sydney, and then we truck them anywhere across Australia,” Borg said.

This logistics capability allows fleets to maintain operations without disruption, particularly when vehicles are deployed across multiple locations.

Partnerships that turn vehicles into tools

Very few light commercial vehicles remain in standard factory condition. Most require modifications to match the operational demands of the organisation using them.

That is where partnerships across the industry become critical.

Leasing companies coordinate funding and procurement. Dealerships manage supply and delivery. Aftermarket suppliers provide specialised equipment such as suspension upgrades, storage systems, lighting, and communications technology. Engineers certify the final configuration to ensure compliance.

Borg said the key to success is working directly with customers to understand how vehicles will be used.

“We like to get heavily involved with the client,” he said. “Talking directly with them and showing them what we can do really opens it up.”

This early engagement helps prevent costly mistakes and ensures vehicles are configured correctly before delivery.

Solving problems before they reach the road

One of the most valuable roles of the dealership and its supplier network is identifying issues before vehicles enter service.

Fleet specifications are often based on previous orders, even when operational requirements have changed. Without careful review, vehicles can be delivered with equipment that is no longer suitable.





WE DELIVER CARS PERSONALLY ALL OVER SYDNEY, AND TRUCK THEM ANYWHERE ACROSS AUSTRALIA

Borg said asking questions is one of the most important steps in the process.

“When someone sends an order with a modification, we ask why,” he said. “What are you using it for? What does the end result look like?”

That conversation can reveal opportunities to improve safety, reduce costs, or increase productivity.

In some cases, it leads to entirely new vehicle designs or modifications that better match the job.

Managing time, risk, and delivery

Delivery timing remains one of the biggest challenges in fleet operations. Multiple suppliers, build schedules, and transport arrangements can create delays if not carefully managed.

Centralised preparation facilities help reduce this risk by coordinating activities in one location and maintaining control over the process.

Borg said reducing dependency on external scheduling improves reliability for customers.

“We’re less reliant on things beyond our control,” he said. “When we work closely with the client, we can give them a much better idea of when they’ll get their vehicle.”

For Fleet Managers, that predictability supports planning, budgeting, and service delivery.

The hidden value of collaboration

The journey from purchase order to vehicle delivery is no longer a simple transaction. It is a coordinated system

that relies on partnerships across the fleet industry.

Dealerships, leasing companies, and suppliers each bring specialised skills and knowledge to the process. When those partners work together

effectively, vehicles are delivered faster, safer, and ready to perform.

And in a fleet environment where organisations are expected to do more with less, that collaboration is what keeps operations moving.



Keeping Sydney moving for over 80 years

Suttons has been supporting Sydney’s transport needs since 1943, when founder Sir Frederick Sutton established a workshop to service vehicles for the Australian Navy during World War II. The business quickly expanded into vehicle sales and servicing as the city grew.

By the late 1940s, Suttons began selling Bedford trucks, and by 1956 had three dealership locations across Sydney. In the 1980s, the company became one of the largest Holden dealer groups in Australia.

Today, Suttons remains a family-owned business offering servicing, parts, and fleet solutions, continuing a tradition of reliability and customer service built over more than 80 years.

A van that **thinks it's a truck**



The van that thinks it's a truck

IVECO gathered media and industry guests recently to showcase the latest update to its Daily light commercial vehicle range. The event included product briefings and drive sessions designed to demonstrate new safety technology, digital cockpit upgrades and expanded capability across the line-up.

While these updates were central to the launch, the broader story behind the Daily is less about a single product update and more about the way the vehicle challenges traditional definitions in the commercial vehicle market.

For many years, fleet buyers have viewed vans and trucks as clearly separate categories. Vans typically operate in the 3.5-tonne gross vehicle mass (GVM) segment, while trucks take over once payload requirements exceed that threshold. The IVECO Daily has long blurred that boundary.

With variants capable of operating at gross vehicle masses of up to seven tonnes, the Daily effectively sits between the traditional van and light truck categories.

Fleets are carrying more than ever

Across many industries, the amount of equipment carried in service vehicles has steadily increased over the past decade.

At the same time, regulatory requirements have added weight to vehicles through additional safety equipment and operational tools.

The result is that vehicles which once comfortably operated within the limits of traditional vans are now pushing those boundaries.

In many fleets, vans that begin their service life with sufficient payload capacity gradually approach their limits as equipment accumulates over time. This can create compliance risks if vehicles exceed their allowable GVM.

Bridging the gap between vans and trucks

This is where the Daily's unusual positioning becomes relevant.

While many vans rely on monocoque construction, the Daily uses a ladder-frame chassis design more commonly associated with trucks. This architecture allows the vehicle to support heavier loads while maintaining structural durability.

The design enables a broad range of configurations, from traditional cargo vans through to cab-chassis and crew cab variants that can support a wide variety of specialised bodies.

The Daily 70C variant, for example, offers payload capability approaching

four tonnes while maintaining the enclosed cargo space and manoeuvrability of a van.

For some fleets, this capability can eliminate the need to step up into a larger truck platform.

Applications beyond parcel delivery

Although vans are often associated with courier and parcel delivery work, the Daily's higher payload capability opens the door to a wider range of applications.

Vehicles in this category are often used as mobile workshops for mechanical service providers, field service units for utilities and telecommunications companies, or specialised vehicles for emergency response organisations.

In these roles, payload capacity becomes critical. Tools, spare parts and specialised equipment can quickly add significant weight to a vehicle.

A van that can safely carry heavier loads while maintaining an enclosed cargo area offers operational advantages over both lighter vans and open-tray trucks.

Body builders also play an important role in these applications. The Daily's ladder-frame chassis allows specialist bodies to be fitted for a wide range of uses, from service bodies and tool storage systems through to command centres and emergency response vehicles.

Safety technology enters the van segment

While payload capability remains a defining characteristic of the Daily, the recent update also highlighted how expectations around safety are evolving in the light commercial vehicle sector.

Increasingly, fleet procurement policies require advanced driver assistance systems similar to those found in passenger vehicles.

Urban delivery and service fleets operate in environments where



THE DAILY 70C VARIANT OFFERS PAYLOAD CAPABILITY APPROACHING FOUR TONNES

interaction with vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists is common. Safety technology designed to detect potential hazards and assist drivers in avoiding collisions is therefore becoming an important factor in vehicle selection.

The updated Daily introduces several new driver assistance features designed to address these risks.

These include Blind Spot Monitoring and Warning, Rear Cross Traffic Monitoring with braking, Turn Assist and Advanced Emergency Braking System (AEBS).

Such systems are designed to improve driver awareness in congested urban environments and reduce the likelihood of low-speed collisions or incidents involving cyclists and pedestrians.

In addition to these electronic systems, the updated Daily also includes structural improvements designed to improve crash protection, including chassis reinforcements and a frontal crash box intended to absorb impact forces.

These developments reflect a broader trend in the commercial vehicle market, where safety expectations are increasingly shaped by technologies first introduced in passenger vehicles.

The commercial vehicle cabin becomes a workplace

For many fleet operators, vehicles are effectively mobile workplaces. Drivers may spend long shifts behind the wheel, relying on navigation systems, communications tools and digital job management platforms to complete their work.

The updated Daily introduces a new digital cockpit intended to support this environment.

A fully digital 10-inch instrument cluster replaces traditional analogue gauges, allowing drivers to customise the display and access vehicle information more easily.

A new multimedia system with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity allows drivers to integrate their smartphones with the vehicle's infotainment system.

These upgrades reflect the increasing role of digital technology in commercial vehicle operations. Navigation, communication and job management tools are now central to the daily work of many drivers.

Comfort has also been maintained through the continuation of the memory-foam seat construction first introduced in the MY22 update combined with suspension seating designed to improve support over long driving periods.

Changing expectations for fleet vehicles

Taken together, the updates to the Daily reflect a broader shift in how commercial vehicles are designed and evaluated.

Historically, fleet purchasing decisions were dominated by factors such as payload capacity, reliability and acquisition cost.

While those factors remain important, other considerations have become increasingly influential.

Safety technology, driver comfort and digital connectivity now play

a significant role in procurement decisions, particularly for larger fleets operating under strict safety and operational policies.

At the same time, operational demands continue to evolve. Service vehicles are carrying more equipment and performing increasingly specialised roles.

Vehicles that can combine high payload capability with flexible body configurations and modern safety technology are therefore becoming more attractive to fleet buyers.

A niche that continues to grow

The IVECO Daily has occupied a unique niche in the commercial vehicle market for many years.

By combining van practicality with truck-style engineering, the platform offers capabilities that sit outside the boundaries of traditional van categories. The latest update reinforces that positioning.

For fleets facing increasing payload requirements, evolving safety expectations and changing driver needs, vehicles that bridge the gap between vans and trucks may become increasingly relevant.

In that sense, the Daily's most interesting characteristic may not be its new technology or updated interior, but the way it challenges conventional thinking about what a commercial van can be.

IPWEA conference

The 2026 IPWEA Fleet Conference marked a milestone year, with Melbourne hosting the event for the first time. These images capture the conversations, learning, and connections that define the fleet community—bringing together practitioners, suppliers, and leaders committed to improving safety, sustainability, and performance across Australia and New Zealand fleet operations.





The quiet rise of the van

Peak ute: The quiet rise of the van in Australia's decarbonisation race

Why the smartest fleet operators are rethinking the default vehicle choice

There was a time when the ute was the undisputed hero of the Australian workplace. It carried tools, towed trailers, and doubled as the family car on weekends. It was practical, tough, and unmistakably Australian.

We invented it, after all.

But good fleet management has never been about nostalgia. It's about outcomes. And in 2026, the outcome fleets are being asked to deliver is clear: reduce emissions, improve safety, and control whole-of-life costs.

That's where the humble van is quietly stealing the spotlight. Not with fanfare. Not with marketing slogans. Just with better numbers.

The day the default ute decision stopped making sense

The modern dual-cab ute has evolved into something very different from the single-cab workhorses once produced by Ford Motor Company and Holden.

Those earlier models had a single purpose: carry a load. They were tools in the purest sense of the word.

Today's dual-cab is often a compromise vehicle—capable of

many things, but not optimised for any one task. It carries people, tools, and expectations. It looks the part. It feels familiar. And for many operators, it has become the default choice.

That default is now being challenged.

Sean Hanley (formerly Vice President of Sales, Marketing and Franchise Operations at Toyota) has previously suggested the market may have reached "peak ute". It wasn't a declaration of defeat for the segment. It was an observation that the growth curve has flattened and the next phase of fleet evolution will be driven by different priorities.

Those priorities have names: emissions, utilisation, and governance.

Decarbonisation is changing the conversation

The shift toward electric and hybrid vehicles has exposed a simple truth: some vehicle types are easier to electrify than others.

Vans sit at the front of the queue. They operate on predictable routes. They return to base each night. They carry equipment rather than passengers.

In other words, they behave exactly the way electric vehicles like to be used.

That's why models such as the Farizon SV, Ford E-Transit, and the forthcoming Hyundai Staria Load Electric are

gaining traction across service fleets, local government, and last-mile delivery operations.

Not because they are fashionable. Because they are practical. And practicality has always been the currency of fleet management.

The hidden cost of the wrong vehicle

One of the quiet truths in fleet operations is that the wrong vehicle rarely fails dramatically. It simply performs slightly below expectations every day.

A dual-cab ute carrying a small tool kit and two people is not overloaded. It's just under-utilised.

Over a five-year lifecycle, that inefficiency shows up in multiple ways:

- Higher fuel or energy consumption
- Increased emissions
- Reduced payload efficiency
- Greater maintenance costs
- Poorer safety outcomes

None of these issues make headlines. But collectively, they shape the performance of a fleet.

A van, by contrast, is purpose-built for transporting equipment. The load space is enclosed, secure, and easier to organise. The centre of gravity is lower. The aerodynamics are better. The workflow is more efficient.

These are not glamorous advantages. They are operational advantages. And operational advantages compound over time.

Off-road capability still has a role—but it's a smaller one than we think

There is no doubt that some fleets require genuine off-road capability. Utilities, infrastructure teams, and emergency services depend on vehicles that can operate in demanding environments.

The question is not whether four-wheel drive is necessary. The question is whether every vehicle needs it.

Fleet utilisation data often reveals a surprising pattern: many vehicles specified as off-road capable spend the overwhelming majority of their time on sealed roads. The capability exists, but it is rarely used.





THE ERA OF THE AUTOMATIC DUAL-CAB PURCHASE IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE

From an asset management perspective, that's a classic example of over-specification. And over-specification has a cost.

It increases purchase price, fuel consumption, and emissions—without delivering proportional value.

Good fleet management is not about denying capability. It's about matching capability to actual demand.

The cultural shift: from preference to performance

One of the most challenging aspects of fleet transformation is cultural rather than technical.

Drivers develop preferences. Supervisors develop habits. Organisations develop traditions. None of these are inherently wrong. But they can slow change.

Modern fleet management requires decisions to be guided by evidence—utilisation data, emissions reporting, and whole-of-life cost analysis.

That shift from preference to performance is already underway. And it is reshaping vehicle selection.

Vans are solving problems that utes create

The shift toward vans is not only about emissions. It's also about safety, compliance, and productivity.

Consider a typical workday for a technician or tradesperson. Tools need to be accessible. Equipment needs to be secure. Loads need to be contained.

An open tray ute requires additional storage solutions—canopies, toolboxes, tie-downs—to achieve the same functionality that a van provides as standard.

From a safety perspective, enclosed cargo space reduces the risk of items becoming projectiles during sudden braking. It also protects equipment from weather and theft.

From a productivity perspective, organised storage reduces time spent searching for tools and increases time spent completing tasks.

These improvements may seem incremental, but they accumulate quickly across a large fleet. And in the language of fleet management, accumulation equals savings.

Why the transition has taken longer than expected

Several years ago, many industry observers predicted that commercial vehicles would lead the electrification transition. The logic was sound: high utilisation and predictable routes create strong financial returns for electric vehicles.

That prediction is still valid. What slowed the transition was not technology. It was readiness.

Charging infrastructure planning took time. Fleet policies needed updating. Organisations had to build internal confidence in new technology.

At the same time, the passenger vehicle market accelerated—particularly with the arrival of competitively priced models from emerging manufacturers. That shift captured public attention while commercial fleet transitions progressed more cautiously.

In short, the industry paused to get organised. Now it is starting to move again.

The strategic advantage of starting with vans

For organisations pursuing decarbonisation, the fastest path to progress is often the simplest one. Start with the vehicles that are easiest to electrify. Urban service fleets. Maintenance teams. Delivery operations.

These roles typically involve predictable routes, moderate payloads, and regular depot access—ideal conditions for electric vans.

By focusing on these segments first, fleets can achieve measurable emissions reductions without disrupting operations.

It's a pragmatic strategy. And pragmatism is the hallmark of mature fleet management.

Calling time on the automatic ute

The ute is not disappearing from Australian fleets. Nor should it. There will always be applications where its capability is essential. But the era of the automatic dual-cab purchase is drawing to a close.

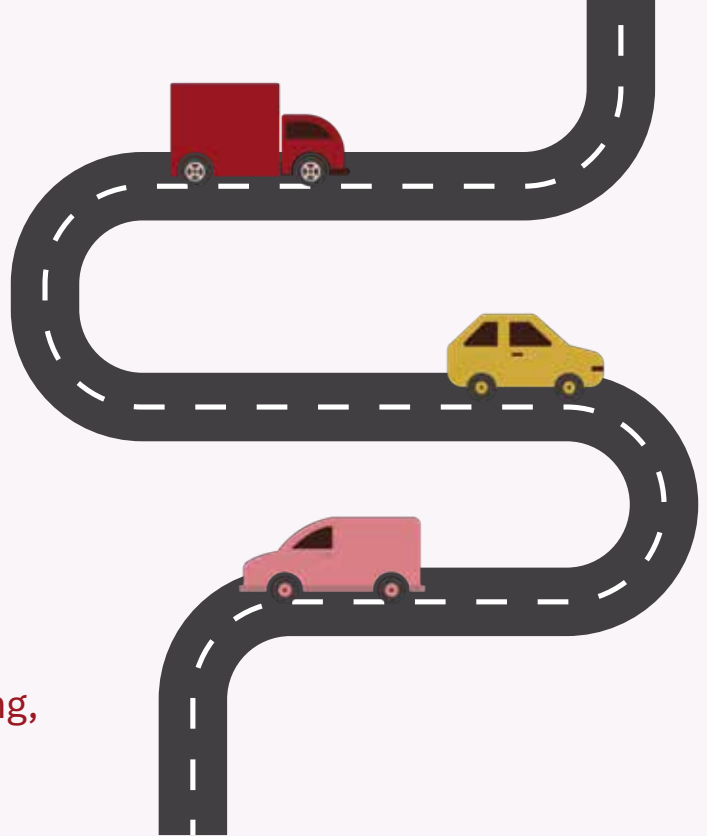
Fleet Managers are being asked to deliver outcomes—lower emissions, improved safety, and better financial performance. Meeting those expectations requires disciplined vehicle selection and a willingness to challenge long-standing assumptions.

In many cases, the right answer will still be a ute. Increasingly, however, the right answer will be a van. Not because vans are new. Not because utes are outdated. But because good fleet management is ultimately about choosing the right tool for the job.

And in the race toward decarbonisation, the van is proving to be a very effective tool indeed.

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