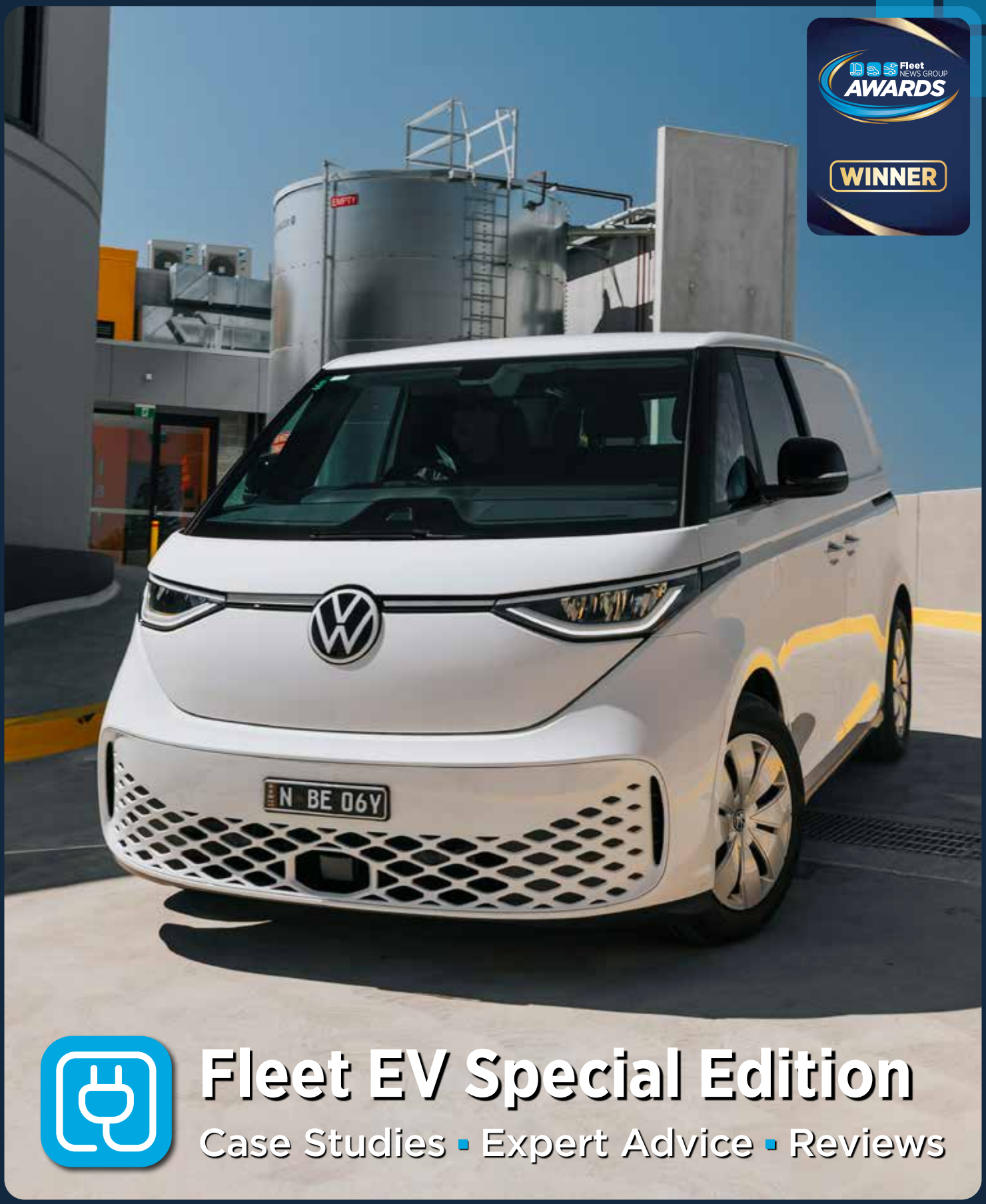
Fleet NEWS GROUP

ALL THINGS FLEET



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Explore Hyundai Fleet

HYUNDAI

A celebration of fleet excellence



There is plenty to celebrate in this edition of All Things Fleet. These pages recognise the winners of the Fleet News Group Awards, from the Fleet Excellence Awards to our Car of the Year and Truck of the Year categories.

Every winner deserves recognition. Behind each award is a team, a vehicle or an approach that has earned the confidence of people who understand the demands of fleet management.

That is what makes these awards meaningful. The decisions were made by members of the fleet community, including Fleet Managers and the people responsible for buying and operating cars and trucks.

Recognition from your peers carries weight. They know the competing priorities, the budget pressures and the work involved in keeping vehicles safe, available and fit for purpose. They also understand that a good fleet decision needs to deliver value long after the purchase order is signed.

For our Fleet Excellence Award winners, this is recognition of the people and practices making a difference within their organisations. For the vehicle winners, it is an endorsement from buyers who assess cars and trucks through the lens of real operational requirements.

Congratulations to every winner, and thank you to everyone who contributed to the voting and judging. Your involvement gives these awards their relevance.

I would encourage you to keep this issue. Consider it a collector's edition: a reminder of what good fleet management looks like, and a source of ideas to revisit when planning improvements in your own organisation.

There is also plenty here to help you look ahead. Alongside the awards coverage, you will find electric vehicle reviews, new products, and international coverage exploring how the market is developing in Europe.

As electric vehicles move towards a tipping point in the automotive industry, staying informed is becoming an increasingly important part of the Fleet Manager's role. The choices are expanding, and so are the questions about applications, charging, driver acceptance and operating costs.

You do not need to have every answer today. You do need to understand what is changing and what those changes could mean for your fleet.

That is the purpose of this magazine: to share the achievements, experiences and information that help our community make better decisions.

Enjoy the issue, celebrate the winners and take a moment to recognise the people behind the fleets. Their work deserves a place in the spotlight.

Stay up to date with everything Fleet

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Fleet NEWS GROUP

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One work van – three powertrains



Choosing a different powertrain usually means accepting a different vehicle. The cabin changes, the cargo space changes and drivers have another set of controls to learn. Hyundai's STARIA Load offers fleets a useful alternative: diesel, hybrid and electric versions of the same working van, allowing the application and emissions targets to guide the purchase.

To find out what that means beyond a specification sheet, we took three vans, three drivers and one day around Sydney. Each van carried 600 kg, giving every powertrain a working load while we compared consumption, comfort and everyday usability.

Our route stretched from Hornsby in the north to Rouse Hill in the north west, then Liverpool in the south. Across 113 kilometres, we encountered peak-hour traffic, suburban roads and freeway running. The drivers swapped vans four times to even out the impact of driving styles on different powertrains.



The aim was to replicate the variety a delivery driver encounters during a daily run. It also gave us an opportunity to consider a question facing many fleet managers: how do you introduce lower-emission vehicles without making the operation harder to manage?

Familiar from the driver's seat

The strongest impression was how similar the vans felt. There were differences in acceleration, engine noise and equipment, but the driving position, visibility and workspace were familiar each time we swapped keys.

That matters when vehicles are shared. Drivers moving between vans benefit from knowing where to put their gear, how to adjust the seat and where to find the controls. Familiarity reduces the effort involved in changing vehicles during a busy working day.

Seat comfort remained good through our driving segments, with steering-wheel adjustment helping drivers settle in. The mirrors and outward visibility were useful in traffic, while the cabin offered storage for the collection of personal items that inevitably accompanies a delivery run.

The open centre storage area attracted attention for its capacity to swallow a lunch bag or backpack. Overhead storage provided another useful place for everyday gear. We would have welcomed a left armrest, or a suitable console lid, during longer stretches behind the wheel.

Equipment was not identical. The hybrid and electric vans had automatic climate control, compared with manual air conditioning in the diesel model. Fleet buyers should compare the complete specification when considering purchase premiums, because some of the additional spend also buys cabin features.

Different underneath similar on the road

Despite differences in suspension configuration and powertrain weight, the loaded vans delivered remarkably similar road manners. All felt settled, comfortable and capable of keeping pace with Sydney traffic.

The electric van's immediate response was noticeable, particularly when accelerating away. The diesel brought some familiar engine noise, while the hybrid provided another variation in how power arrived. Those differences did not turn them into fundamentally different vehicles to drive.

With 600 kg aboard, none felt reluctant. Acceleration to suburban speed limits was sufficiently brisk that the load was easy to forget. The suspension also avoided the bouncing and unsettled movement that can make a van tiring over a full shift.

On the freeway, the electric van's quietness stood out. Its adaptive cruise control also drew favourable comments from our drivers. In the hybrid, there were moments when the petrol engine stopped running, illustrating how its operating behaviour changes with demand.

A fleet introducing electric vans will still need driver familiarisation, particularly around charging and regenerative



THE LOAD TEST

DIESEL 9.9 L/100 KM

PETROL HYBRID 7.2 L/100 KM

ELECTRIC 18.2 KWH/100 KM

braking. However, retaining a familiar cabin and broadly consistent handling removes another layer of change.

Keeping the carrying capability

Payload is often where an electrification discussion becomes difficult. A lower-emission vehicle still needs to carry the tools, stock or equipment required to complete the job.

The STARIA Load's figures are reassuringly close: 997 kg for diesel, 1,039 kg for hybrid and 1,005 kg for electric. Just 42 kg separates the highest and lowest ratings, so choosing a powertrain does not create a substantial payload penalty.

Cargo volume remains 4,935 litres across all three. That consistency supports planning around the same basic working space, although fleets must still assess their actual fit-out and load.

Towing produces a clearer distinction. The diesel has a 2,500 kg braked towing capacity and the electric 2,000 kg, while the hybrid is not rated to tow.

A hybrid might suit a delivery task perfectly yet be unsuitable for another team using a trailer. Selecting vehicles by department or driver preference alone could miss that distinction. The starting point remains a clear description of the work.

What the loaded test revealed

At the end of our Sydney run, the diesel returned 9.9 L/100 km and the petrol hybrid 7.2 L/100 km. The electric recorded 18.2 kWh/100 km.

The hybrid used about 27 per cent fewer litres than the diesel, although different fuel prices also matter when calculating costs. The electric used less energy than its published 20.7 kWh/100 km figure, despite carrying our test load.

Both combustion-powered vans consumed more than their published combined figures. That makes the electric result particularly interesting, while reinforcing why fleets should evaluate vehicles on representative routes.

Our exercise was a comparison over one day, rather than a guarantee of annual consumption. Weather, route, load and driving behaviour will affect outcomes. Nevertheless, three drivers rotating through equally loaded vans provided useful evidence for a purchasing discussion.

The whole-of-life cost figures also changed when the measured consumption figures were applied. Annual costs became $17,913 for diesel, $16,465 for hybrid and $16,790 for electric.

Those estimates depend on the model's assumptions, but they demonstrate why purchase price alone provides an incomplete comparison. In this calculation, electric came within $325 a year of hybrid and below diesel.

Charging changes the conversation

The electric version combines an 84 kWh battery with a 160 kW motor and a published WLTP range of up to 450 kilometres (433km on our test drive). For fleets, the more useful question is how that capability fits the daily schedule.

Hyundai quotes charging from 10 to 80 per cent in 20 minutes using 350 kW DC charging infrastructure. That creates a useful option for work requiring a daytime top-up, subject to charger availability and conditions.

As higher-powered public chargers become available, charging stops have greater potential to fit around normal breaks. Depot charging and route planning still deserve attention, but faster charging widens the applications fleets can assess.

A transition over several replacement cycles

The real flexibility is being able to make different decisions within one model range. A fleet can allocate electric vans to suitable routes, use hybrids where charging is difficult and retain diesel where its capabilities best suit the task.

Over several replacement cycles, that balance can change as charging access improves and operational experience grows. Drivers retain a familiar workspace while the fleet builds confidence with electric operation.

It also creates an opportunity to plan that transition with one supplier, rather than treating each powertrain as a separate procurement project.

Our day around Sydney showed how little the working experience needs to change. The fleet decision becomes choosing the right energy source for the job, supported by familiar ergonomics, similar carrying capacity and evidence from the routes the business actually drives.

QFleet keeps Queensland moving



Behind the frontline: QFleet keeps Queensland moving

A community nurse visiting a remote town, a housing officer meeting tenants and a QBuild tradesperson heading to a repair job have something in common: they need a vehicle that helps them get the work done.

For QFleet, that connection between vehicles and service delivery has shaped 35 years of fleet management. Managing more than 11,000 vehicles for Queensland Government agencies, its role extends well beyond organising leases.

The challenge is familiar to Fleet Managers everywhere: provide safe, suitable vehicles, control costs and help the organisation meet its objectives while operational demands keep changing.

Scale with a purpose

Established in 1991, QFleet brings vehicle procurement, maintenance coordination, insurance management and fleet advice into a centralised operation.

That structure gives government a single source of fleet information and the purchasing power to negotiate supply arrangements for vehicles, fuel, tyres and other requirements.

The scale is considerable. Over its history, QFleet has purchased more than 112,000 vehicles and authorised and administered more than two million services and repairs through local businesses.

Yet the value of centralisation comes back to individual jobs. Vehicles include modified and special builds supporting agencies with requirements that cannot always be met by a standard showroom model.

For General Manager Vince White, these are practical examples of how fleet supports government services.

“In addition to leasing a range of fit-for-purpose vehicles, we custom-build vehicles to support education and health services, we undertake vehicle modifications for wheelchair access and much more.”

Better information, better decisions

Since joining QFleet in 2020, White has overseen changes to the systems supporting that work.

“Since joining QFleet, the business has undergone significant infrastructure change replacing the 25-year-old fleet management system with a new contemporary fleet management system,” Vince said.

An online vehicle ordering portal and the MyQFleet analytics and reporting application give agencies greater access to information about their fleets.

“The MyQFleet customer portal was developed in response to customer feedback and their growing business requirements along with QFleet’s aspiration to create an interactive customer application that would give customers improved reporting capability.”

For fleet practitioners, the lesson is straightforward. Better reporting helps turn vehicle information into decisions about procurement, utilisation and operational needs. It also provides a stronger foundation for explaining fleet requirements to managers and executives.

Reducing emissions around the task

QFleet’s experience with alternative powertrains stretches back to its first battery electric vehicle, a Mitsubishi i-MiEV purchased in 2010. Its first plug-in hybrid followed in 2016.

In 2026, approximately 40 per cent of the fleet comprises battery electric, hybrid or plug-in hybrid vehicles.

The QFleet Emissions Reduction Strategy 2025–2030 takes a broader approach than the previous mandated battery electric transition, bringing all QFleet vehicles, including light commercials, into its reporting scope.

Preferred maximum emissions standards for each vehicle segment guide selection while retaining enough models and configurations to meet agencies’ operational requirements.

Despite anticipated fleet growth ahead of the 2032 Olympics, QFleet is targeting a 10 per cent emissions reduction by June 2030 through improved utilisation, effective fleet management and responsible procurement.

Making fleet’s contribution visible

Public servants travelled more than 156 million kilometres in QFleet vehicles in a year. Behind that distance are services delivered, communities supported and employees equipped to do their jobs.

That is the broader fleet management message: vehicle numbers and lease costs only tell part of the story.

A mature fleet function connects procurement, information and policy to the work an organisation needs to deliver. QFleet’s experience shows why that connection deserves attention at executive level, alongside the everyday decisions that keep vehicles available, suitable and working safely across Queensland’s diverse operating environments.



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Ampol **simplifies fleet payments**



One card for a fleet in transition

Managing a fleet with petrol, diesel and electric vehicles brings a new set of questions to an already busy job. Where will drivers charge? How will they pay? And how can the Fleet Manager keep track of energy costs across different vehicle types?

Ampol's expansion of AmpolCard to include electric vehicle charging through its AmpCharge network aims to make some of those questions easier to answer.

Businesses can use a single card and account to manage fuel, on-the-go convenience purchases and public EV charging. All AmpCharge public charging sites across Australia are accessible through AmpolCard, with drivers using a physical RFID-enabled card to start a charging session.

For organisations introducing their first EVs, the ability to use an existing fleet payment platform could remove one of the administrative hurdles that comes with operating a mixed fleet.

Managing more than one energy source

The transition to electric vehicles is unlikely to happen overnight for most fleets. Cars, utes, vans and trucks have different operating requirements, replacement cycles and access to suitable alternatives.

That means Fleet Managers may need to manage several energy sources for years to come. While an EV might be suitable for a vehicle returning to a depot each day, a diesel vehicle may remain the practical choice for a different application.

Ampol Executive General Manager, Commercial Fuels and Energy Brent Merrick says the expanded card is designed to support businesses at different stages of that journey.

"As the adoption of electric vehicles continues to grow across commercial fleets, the expansion of AmpolCard to include EV charging is designed to support Australian businesses – whether they have already embraced EVs as a practical fleet solution or are contemplating transitioning," Merrick said.

"By offering a simple, low-complexity integration with the current AmpolCard platform, our customers can continue to manage their energy needs, particularly with commercial fleets increasingly operating a mix of petrol, diesel and electric vehicles."

A clearer picture of costs

The expanded AmpolCard offering includes unified billing, reporting and account management. For a Fleet Manager, that provides an opportunity to bring information about fuel and public charging into the same account.

It can also support conversations with finance teams and executives about how the fleet is changing. As more EVs enter service, organisations need to understand where energy is being purchased and how those costs fit into the broader cost of operating vehicles.

Public charging is only one part of that picture. Depending on the fleet, vehicles may also charge at a workplace or a driver's home. Fleet Managers will still need to consider how those costs are captured and reported alongside public charging and fuel purchases.

Clear policies are just as important as the payment method. Drivers need to know when public charging is appropriate, how to use the card and what to do if a charger is unavailable. A consistent process can make the experience easier for drivers and give the fleet team more confidence in the information it receives.

Planning for a growing network

Ampol has also announced a proposed acquisition of Evie Networks. Subject to ACCC clearance, the acquisition is expected to add more than 1,000 EV charging bays to Ampol's network.

For businesses considering EVs, access to charging remains an important part of vehicle selection. Fleet Managers need to match vehicles to their operating patterns and understand where drivers will be able to charge when away from their usual base.

As fleets become more diverse, the everyday systems that support drivers become increasingly important. Simplifying payment and reporting is one way to help fleet teams spend less time managing separate processes and more time focusing on how vehicles deliver services for the organisation.



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Making **electric work in government**

Greater Dandenong's electric fleet is growing through practical decisions about vehicles, charging and the work crews need to do. For the fleet team, better outcomes start with questioning what the fleet needs and learning from each replacement.

A charging cable that cannot comfortably reach a truck is a small problem with a big lesson. Vehicle selection, infrastructure and everyday operations need to work together.

At Greater Dandenong, the first depot chargers had fixed cables. Once the electric trucks were parked, reaching the connection on the right-hand side proved awkward. The fleet team worked with its supplier to change the arrangement.

For Mark Hall, Team Leader Fleet and Operations Centre Services, experiences like this are part of developing a fleet that supports the council's environmental commitments while keeping crews working.

"I think if we don't do things, we'll just get caught left behind."

That willingness to act sits alongside a practical assessment of vehicle suitability, supplier support and operating requirements. Around the depot, electric trucks and passenger vehicles are becoming part of ordinary service delivery.

Putting ambition into practice

Council reports that 76% of its passenger cars have been replaced with hybrid or electric vehicles, with a commitment to replace all cars with low-emission alternatives by 2030. Its transition also includes five electric trucks and four electric vans.

The direction is clear. Delivering it requires individual decisions about assets with different loads, operating hours and replacement needs.

A pool car, sign-maintenance truck and mower may share a depot, but they present different opportunities for electrification. Understanding those differences helps turn an organisational commitment into a workable replacement program.

Hall's approach also connects the transition with familiar fleet responsibilities: reviewing utilisation, supporting drivers, managing maintenance and selecting vehicles that can deliver the required service.

Matching the truck to the task

The council's electric sign truck provides a straightforward example.

A electric truck replaced a diesel powered one, carrying the people and equipment needed to repair road and street signs. Its enclosed body provides storage and working access, while the council's operating area keeps daily distances manageable.

Hall estimates the truck travels more than 50 kilometres a day, with roughly 200 kilometres available from a full charge, depending on load and conditions. In that application, he says, charging may only be needed two or three times a week.

The body improvements could also have been made on a replacement diesel. The electric chassis had to meet the operating requirement on its own merits.

Hall recognises that the same truck may be unsuitable for a regional council travelling much longer distances. Daily travel, towing, load and depot access all shape the decision.

Support matters too

"The big thing for me is support."

For Fleet Managers, that extends the assessment beyond the vehicle specification to parts availability, service capability and the help available when an asset is off the road.

Asking whether a ute is necessary

Some opportunities begin before a powertrain is selected.

Hall has been questioning whether employees replacing diesel utes actually need another ute. Planning staff provide one example: a Ranger may have been the established allocation, without its capabilities being essential to the role.

"It is a major cultural change."

Those discussions have opened the door to hybrid passenger vehicles where a full EV does not suit current arrangements.

They also bring comfort and access into the assessment. Hall describes a shorter driver who welcomed moving from a diesel ute into a hybrid passenger car that was easier to enter.

This is a useful example of fleet maturity in practice. The replacement brief becomes a documented operational requirement that can be explained to the driver, Manager and Procurement team.





> I THINK IF WE DON'T DO THINGS, WE'LL JUST GET CAUGHT LEFT BEHIND

Questions about equipment, towing, travel and passenger needs help establish what the organisation should buy. They also give Fleet Managers a stronger basis for explaining how vehicle choices support productivity and control expenses.

Making charging fit the fleet

Following the experience with short fixed cables, Greater Dandenong installed four new 22kW chargers across eight parking spaces. Each charger can serve either of two bays.

Hall sees scope to use infrastructure more efficiently as the fleet grows.

"I don't think you need the charger per spot or a charger per car."

The appropriate arrangement depends on when vehicles return, how much energy they need and how long they can remain connected. A low-distance vehicle may have a different charging requirement from one approaching its available range each day.

Parking layout and cable reach belong in that assessment.

Load management is also planned, along with consideration of vehicle-specific RFID cards. These could identify charging sessions and provide information about connection times and energy supplied.

That would help fill a gap in the available telematics data and give the fleet team better evidence for future infrastructure decisions.

Taking electric tools into the field

The council's electric tippers show how replacement can improve the whole working setup.

Separate auxiliary battery systems are being used to charge battery-powered tools. Rooftop solar supports these systems, with a connection to the trucks' 24-volt batteries also forming part of the arrangement. The solar panels support auxiliary equipment rather than charging the traction batteries.

Hall says the requirement is modest, generally involving two or three tool batteries a day. The team has developed the installations in-house with assistance from a skilled contractor.

Experience has also influenced the body specification. A subsequent truck received a larger toolbox, trading some tray space for more lockable, weatherproof storage.

That choice reflects the work: carrying tools and equipment makes storage a priority.

Hall describes the auxiliary charging setup as experimental. Its suitability will be judged through use, with changes made where necessary.

Helping people use the technology

Introducing different EV brands gives the council experience with a broader range of vehicles. It also creates a familiarisation task for pool-car users.

Controls vary. Starting, switching off and charging an unfamiliar vehicle can require explanation, particularly for an occasional driver.

The council has used video clips, one-page instructions and its staff newsletter to help employees become comfortable with the vehicles.

These resources turn knowledge held by a few people into guidance available across the organisation. Keeping them current as models change is part of making the fleet easier to use.

Hall also speaks directly with the dedicated drivers of the council's two plug-in hybrids and monitors fuel use. Those conversations help him understand how the vehicles are operating while more detailed reporting develops.

Building a stronger fleet story

Electrification sits within the wider challenge of keeping services moving with limited resources.

Greater Dandenong has investigated electric sweepers and tested electric mowers, but operating cycles and purchase costs have restricted some applications. Diesel remains necessary for parts of the fleet.

Hall is also working through ageing assets, maintenance demands and replacement lead times. Waiting for a future model can leave an existing machine consuming workshop time and maintenance funds.

These trade-offs are the story Fleet Managers need to explain upwards: what an asset enables, what downtime disrupts and why a particular replacement supports service delivery.

Greater Dandenong's experience shows how better questions, clearer guidance and stronger operating information can support that conversation. Each replacement becomes an opportunity to improve how the fleet works—and demonstrate its value to the community.

BHP puts electric HiLux to work

BHP is demonstrating how battery-electric vehicles can become part of everyday mining operations, with two Toyota HiLux BEVs now working at the BHP Mitsubishi Alliance (BMA) Goonyella Riverside Mine in Queensland.

The vehicles are part of a broader approach to reducing emissions from its fleet, which includes trials of battery-electric haul trucks and locomotives in Western Australia.

For Fleet Managers, the significance isn't just the introduction of electric vehicles. It's the practical experience being gained from operating different types of fleet assets in some of Australia's most demanding environments.

Electric HiLux enters the mine

The two battery-electric Toyota HiLux vehicles are operating in real mining conditions at Goonyella Riverside, building on an earlier HiLux BEV trial conducted by BHP in 2024.

The deployment follows approximately 12 months of preparation and is supported by more than 200kW of DC fast-charging capacity installed at the site.

Early operational feedback has been encouraging, with electricity costs reportedly between 10% and 20% of the equivalent combustion-engine vehicle's fuel costs.

Drivers have also provided positive feedback about comfort and driving performance, while the charging infrastructure allows vehicles to recharge during normal work breaks.





These early results suggest there may be opportunities to reduce operating costs without compromising the availability and productivity of the fleet.

Electrification beyond light vehicles

While the HiLux BEVs demonstrate what is possible with light commercial vehicles, BHP is also testing electric technology in much larger assets.

At its Jimblebar operation in Western Australia, BHP is trialling two Caterpillar 793 XE Early Learner battery-electric haul trucks in collaboration with Caterpillar and Rio Tinto.

The trials are examining battery performance, charging requirements, maintenance, safety and how electric equipment can be integrated into existing mining operations.

A significant milestone has been the successful high-powered charging of one of the trucks using a Megawatt Charging System connector.

The battery capacity is approximately 15 to 20 times larger than a typical passenger EV battery, highlighting the different infrastructure requirements for heavy mining equipment.

BHP is also evaluating battery-electric locomotives, with two Wabtec units involved in a proof-of-concept trial at Port Hedland and further testing planned with Progress Rail equipment.

Building the infrastructure for change

BHP's approach recognises that replacing diesel vehicles with electric alternatives requires more than purchasing new equipment.

Charging infrastructure, electricity supply, maintenance systems, workforce training and safety procedures all need to support the transition.

At BMA, forecast electricity demand is now matched through renewable power purchase agreements, providing another element of the organisation's operational emissions reduction strategy.

Lessons for Fleet Managers

The experience at BHP reinforces the importance of testing new technology against operational requirements before committing to large-scale fleet replacement.

By introducing electric vehicles across different asset classes, collecting performance data and investing in supporting infrastructure, BHP is developing the knowledge needed to make informed future procurement decisions.

For Fleet Managers considering electrification, the message is clear: successful fleet transitions depend on understanding how vehicles, people and infrastructure work together to deliver the services the organisation requires.



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OH WHAT A FEELING

Building **better police vehicles**

A police car is more than a vehicle

A police car might begin life on the same production line as a family wagon, but getting it ready for frontline duties involves much more than adding lights, sirens and a radio.

It needs to be a workplace, carry specialist equipment and support officers through demanding operational situations. The vehicle, its fit-out and the people responsible for maintaining both need to work together.

NZ Police's approach to the next generation of Škoda Superb and Kodiaq vehicles offers useful lessons for any Fleet Manager buying assets that need modification before going to work.

The central lesson is straightforward: bring the right people into the process early, understand the job and consider what happens throughout the vehicle's working life.

Start with the operational requirement

For NZ Police, the expiry of its vehicle contract coincided with a generational change to its principal frontline Škoda models.

Rather than treating replacement as a straightforward ordering exercise, the organisation undertook around 12 months of evaluation covering vehicle performance, operational suitability and fit-out compatibility.

Leighton Hamlin, Principal Strategic Advisor at NZ Police, says understanding the business requirement is fundamental.

"You need to understand what your requirements are from your business, from your front line teams," he says.

That thinking extends beyond acceleration, luggage space or purchase price. It includes how equipment will be installed, how officers will use it and whether the completed vehicle can be supported efficiently.

NZ Police also established a specialist police category within the government motor vehicle catalogue. Vehicles must meet baseline requirements before progressing to further evaluation, providing a way to consider alternatives as operational needs and available technology change.

Bring the fit-out partner in early

Wade Group was involved during vehicle evaluation, giving NZ Police access to the expertise of the people responsible for converting production vehicles into operational assets.



It is an important distinction. A vehicle can perform well during a test drive and still present challenges when specialist equipment is installed.

For Neil Robinson, Operations Manager at Wade Group, even a model change within the same manufacturer requires substantial preparation.

"It is quite a costly exercise for us, even changing models," Robinson says.

The work starts before the vehicle arrives, with investigations into its electrical systems and the information available from the manufacturer.

When factory CAD data could not be obtained for the new vehicles, Wade Group used 3D scanning to support the design process. Scans of vehicles in different stages of disassembly helped the team develop mounting components and plan specialist installations.

More than 15 brackets, plates and other components were involved in locating controllers, lighting, radios and associated equipment.

These are details that rarely appear on a vehicle comparison spreadsheet, yet they influence the time and effort required to deliver a working asset.

Technology changes beneath the surface

A familiar badge does not guarantee familiar technology.

Wade Group's integration work draws on vehicle signals including transmission position, ambient light levels and whether doors are open, closed, locked or unlocked.

Those signals support functions within the police fit-out, including its anti-theft ignition system.

The new Kodiaq introduced a different vehicle communications protocol, requiring hardware changes as well as software development. Other work included revised wiring harnesses and new firmware for Wade Group's modules.



> IT'S ONE THING TO BUILD IT, IT'S ANOTHER THING TO MAINTAIN IT

Communications equipment adds another layer of coordination. Some vehicles require six antennas, with locations planned alongside the police ICT team.

For Fleet Managers, the implication is clear: replacement planning needs to account for the completed asset. Changes beneath the bodywork can affect equipment compatibility, engineering requirements and delivery schedules.

Remember the person in the driver's seat

Not every improvement involves complex electronics.

The new vehicle layout moved transmission selection to a stalk, freeing space in the centre console. Wade Group used the opportunity to revise the arrangement of police controls and improve everyday storage.

That included making room for a drink.

It might sound minor alongside pursuit testing and communications systems, but officers spend considerable time working from their vehicles. Accessible controls and usable storage are part of making that workplace function properly.

The same thinking applies to a service technician's van or a council maintenance ute. Equipment needs to fit around the work people actually do.

NZ Police's evaluation also included simulated pursuits, braking, acceleration and steering, with physical checks used to confirm characteristics such as turning circle rather than relying entirely on published specifications.

Design for the working life

Hamlin sums up the lifecycle challenge neatly.

"It's one thing to build it; it's another thing to maintain it."

That perspective encourages decisions which simplify the process beyond initial delivery.

One example is the full-size spare wheel required by NZ Police. Previously, replacement wheels were shipped separately and fitted in New Zealand in place of the original space savers. That work is now being done at the factory.

International benchmarking also helped Police and Wade Group review storage arrangements and specialist builds, identifying opportunities while checking their own practices against overseas examples.

The final safeguard is operational testing before committing to the mainstream production specification.

For other fleets, the value lies in applying the same discipline at an appropriate scale: define the requirement, involve suppliers early, test the complete vehicle and use operational feedback to improve it.

The result is an asset better prepared to support the people and services that depend on it.



Fleet EV transition management

EV transition is fleet management, not a separate strategy

For the past few years, many organisations have treated the transition to electric vehicles as a separate project, developing EV transition plans and strategies alongside their existing fleet management processes.

But should the EV transition really be treated differently?

The fundamentals of good fleet management don't change because a vehicle has a different powertrain. Whether it's powered by diesel, petrol, electricity or hydrogen, the principles of lifecycle asset management remain the same.

It starts with understanding the organisation's needs. Do we actually need the vehicle? Is it fit for purpose? How will it be used? What will it cost over its lifecycle? What risks need to be managed?

These are questions fleet practitioners should already be asking when developing and implementing their Fleet Asset Management Plan.

Energy has always been part of fleet planning

One of the biggest conversations around EV transition is charging infrastructure. Where will vehicles charge? Will they need depot charging, home charging or access to public networks?

But these aren't new questions.

Regional councils and organisations operating yellow plant have been making similar decisions about fuel infrastructure for decades. Should they install above-ground diesel tanks at multiple depots, rely on local service stations or arrange mobile refuelling for equipment operating remotely?

The same principles apply to electric vehicles. Understanding where assets operate, where they're parked overnight and how energy will be supplied is simply part of selecting and managing the right asset.

The technology might be different, but the fleet management process shouldn't be.

Maturity makes the difference

Organisational emissions reduction targets are important, and fleet has a significant role to play in achieving them. But these objectives should be incorporated into the Fleet Asset Management Plan rather than creating a separate strategy that operates independently of established fleet processes.

This is where fleet management maturity becomes important.

Organisations with mature fleet management practices understand their operational requirements, assess whole-of-life costs, manage risks and align fleet decisions with broader organisational objectives.

They also recognise that the right solution won't always be the same across every asset category or location.

The goal isn't to replace every diesel vehicle with an electric equivalent. It's to provide the most appropriate assets to support service delivery while meeting the organisation's financial, operational and environmental objectives.

As fleet practitioners, we should be powertrain agnostic.

The EV transition isn't a reason to reinvent fleet management. It's an opportunity to demonstrate the value of best practice fleet asset management and continuous improvement.

The powertrain may change. The fundamentals don't.

IPWEA FLEET



For more information about Fleet Management best practice, refer to the IPWEA Plant and Vehicles Management Manual (PVMM).

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IAA decarbonisation developments



Adam Ritzinger, Chief Technical Officer, Heavy Vehicle Industry Australia (HVIA)

Decarbonisation developments from IAA Transportation

I was lucky enough to be able to attend the landmark industry event 'IAA Transportation' in Germany in October – for those playing at home, IAA is the leading European international trade event and expo for commercial vehicles, logistics, and the transportation sector, and takes place in Hannover every two years.

The scale and spectacle of the show itself is hard to comprehend. It simply must be seen to be believed, but you can't afford to get blinded by the lights.

The best insights come from diving deep into technical matters with the industry experts at the hundreds of stands, which is how I filled my time across three of the show's days.

So what were my key takeaways in terms of decarbonisation developments from IAA 2026? Read on!

Boldly going where no EV has gone before

Major European truck OEMs featured a new generation of extended range battery-electric trucks. Volvo, Scania, MAN and Renault each displayed brand-new battery-electric models with ranges extending as far as 700 kilometres, for Gross Combination Masses (GCMs) above 40 tonnes.

For European 'long-haul' intercity operations, the 700-kilometre range is the sweet spot for a full day of operations undertaken by the workhorse of choice, the triaxle semi-trailer.

In most cases the extended range represents double that offered by previous models and is enabled by the fitment of additional battery packs. For example, the new Volvo FH Electric features space for up to eight battery packs on its chassis, achieving a total battery capacity of 780 kilowatt-hours.

The new models appear to have effectively solved the fundamental 'range vs. payload' equation for battery electric trucks. But how? More batteries equals more weight, and surely the trucks were already at their gross mass limits?

The answer lies in two separate areas – the first is paper-based, and the other at the point where the rubber hits the road.

Higher productivity enabled by regulations

Since 2019, European Union regulations have granted a 2-tonne gross mass concession for zero emission heavy vehicles, to directly offset the additional weight of decarbonisation hardware.

This means that the previous GCM limit of 40 tonnes for semi-trailer combinations hauled by diesel trucks increases to 42 tonnes where a battery electric truck is used. Those limits may be increased even further in the future.





> AROUND 16 PERCENT OF EUROPE'S CHARGING POINTS FOR HEAVY-DUTY TRUCKS ARE OPERATED BY MILENCE

If such measures were implemented in Australia, it would be equivalent to increasing the current 'General Mass Limits' (GML) maximum of 43.5 tonnes for semi-trailer combinations to 45.5 tonnes, and the 'Higher Mass Limits (HML) maximum of 45.5 tonnes to 47.5 tonnes.

Either of which would be game-changing for our local decarbonisation transition, and is indicative of a forward-thinking transport sector that does not turn the other way when a policy lever needs to be pulled. It's not all smooth sailing across the board though, as explained later in relation to charging, and also, the trailer fleet.

Tagging along

Nonetheless, the real magic lies in the driveline hardware. The additional battery packs have necessitated a new and separate innovation – a lightweight, steerable tag axle nestled behind the truck's existing drive axle.

Models from MAN, Scania, and Renault all featured similar equipment and capabilities. The new tag axles typically ride on smaller 245/70 R17.5 wheels, and effectively transform a vehicle with a physical footprint of a standard 4×2 prime mover into a higher-capacity 6×2 chassis, while offering the same manoeuvrability due to the tag axle also being steerable.

Charging challenges

Given the prevalence of the topic in Australia, I discussed truck charging with Milence, Europe's leading battery-electric charge point operator. Around 16 percent of Europe's 1,100 public charging points dedicated to electric heavy-duty trucks are operated by Milence.

Crucially, the group estimates that the European public charging network will require a tenfold expansion by 2030 in order to meet the demand of the electric truck fleet.

It's a similar story to that faced here locally, where infrastructure lags technology and market demand. Interestingly, Milence's calls to government echo our own – prioritisation of strategic road freight corridors, strengthening finance tools to reduce market risk, financial incentives to reduce TCO, among others.

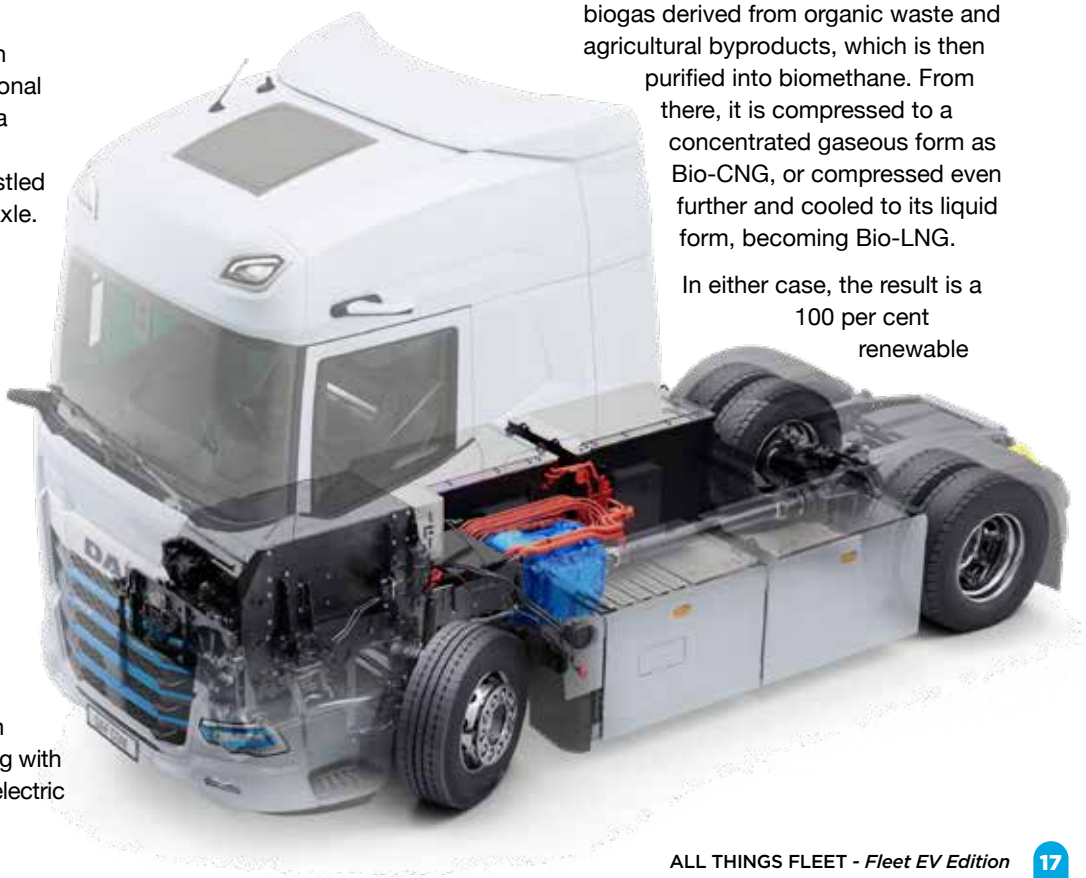
Future fuels could be a close race

Despite battery electric power featuring heavily across trucks and some trailers, the race for freight fuels of the future is shaping up to be a hotly contested event, with manufacturers and energy suppliers from all over the globe showcasing a diverse range of powertrains.

Battery electric was joined by both liquid and gaseous forms of hydrogen, hydrogen for combustion, HVO and several fuels that are less well-known in Australia – Bio-CNG and Bio-LNG.

Bio-CNG and Bio-LNG were on offer from several European energy providers. Both fuels start as raw biogas derived from organic waste and agricultural byproducts, which is then purified into biomethane. From there, it is compressed to a concentrated gaseous form as Bio-CNG, or compressed even further and cooled to its liquid form, becoming Bio-LNG.

In either case, the result is a 100 per cent renewable



combustible fuel that offers reduced carbon emissions, the possibility of lower cost when compared to conventional diesel, and most crucially, long-term price stability when produced locally using locally-derived wastes and byproducts. If supported by the right policy settings, a local industry could be hugely impactful for Australia's decarbonisation and fuel security concerns.

Liquid hydrogen – no longer just a lot of 'hot air'

Mercedes-Benz debuted its 'NextGenH2' truck, which featured a sector-first on-board liquid hydrogen storage system, feeding into its proven hydrogen fuel cells from European manufacturer Cellcentric.

The system carries 85 kg of hydrogen across two storage tanks mounted in the conventional location either side of the vehicle's chassis rails. It offers a refuelling time of just 15 minutes, and a range of up to 1,000 kilometres.

It also addresses gaseous hydrogen storage volume concerns. When in its gaseous form hydrogen occupies a relatively large volume, which means its storage tanks can also be quite large.

The manufacturer plans to begin with a limited series of 100 trucks operated in the field by European customers in 2026, with series production in sight by 2030.

Trailer decarbonisation debate heats up

In the trailer space, many decarbonisation conversations led to the stringent emissions targets that are





set to be imposed on European trailer manufacturers.

In 2024, European Union (EU) regulations imposed CO_2 emissions requirements onto heavy trailers. An emissions cut of 10 per cent by 2030 for new semi-trailer models, and 7.5 per cent for new trailers other than semi-trailers was enacted.

In the trailer design space, the opportunities to reduce emissions are somewhat constrained, but include improved aerodynamics, reduced rolling resistance, lighter weight, and the use of regenerative and powered axles.

Nonetheless, if the targets are not met, stringent fines are imposed – up to €4,250 per gram of CO_2 for every tonne-kilometre will be payable from 2030, potentially exposing manufacturers to annual penalties in the order of millions of Euros.

While no such emissions regulations have been floated locally, Australia has a history of adopting other international emissions reduction targets for passenger and commercial vehicles, mostly recently regulating the Euro VI vehicle combustion engine emissions rules under Australian Design Rule 80/04.

Crucially, in July earlier this year, the CEOs of 30 leading European trailer manufacturers converged in Belgium to sign a joint declaration and petition, calling on the European Commission to review and adjust the emissions regulation imposed on European trailers.

The group jointly cited that the regulations may have a significant adverse impact to that intended, and could lead to a rise in transport emissions, the loss of jobs, and erosion of local manufacturing and industrial capabilities.

Overall, European trailer manufacturers support the EU's climate targets but warn that the rules could increase CO_2 emissions rather than cut them, an outcome that stands in stark contrast to the increased gross mass limits for battery-electric truck combinations discussed earlier.

Summing up

Overall, my impressions from IAA 2026 were that our industry absolutely has the technology and solutions to transform the entire sector, and that's equally true for Australia as it is for Europe and the rest of the world.

But it needs the right mix of the other ingredients to make it a commercially viable reality. It cannot happen in isolation, at least not quickly. Policy can help, but it may also hinder if not done right. We still have to get the correct mix of regulation, infrastructure, policy, and incentives, both in Europe, and back home.

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Keeping cranes lifting efficiently



Why fleet management is critical to keeping the cranes moving

With approximately 350 cranes under management, more than 200 trucks and 1,100 employees, Borger Cranes has built a business where fleet management plays a critical role in delivering reliable service to customers. General Manager Shawn Borger explains why standardisation, maintenance and investment in equipment have been central to the company's growth.

The trucks behind the cranes

When people think about Borger Cranes, they naturally think about the impressive lifting equipment operating on construction sites, infrastructure projects, wind farms and mines.

However, behind almost every large crane is a truck carrying the counterweights and equipment needed to complete the lift.

According to General Manager Shawn Borger, the relationship between cranes and trucks is fundamental to the business.

"Pretty much when we order a crane, we order a truck at the same time. That's pretty much what we do, one for one."

The company operates approximately 330 cranes of its own, manages around 350 cranes in total and has more than 200 trucks. Hino and Volvo are the predominant truck brands, with Hino also supplying smaller vehicles used for crane escorts.

Investing in reliability

A significant change in fleet management philosophy occurred around 2014 when Borger Cranes began purchasing new trucks rather than relying on older equipment.

"We always had an expensive crane with a cheap truck, but the problem was when the cheap truck doesn't perform, then it costs a lot of money for the crane to be sitting on site, but all the auxiliary gear on the side of the road."

The decision reflected a greater understanding of the operational cost of breakdowns.

"We actually heavily invest into all our plant and equipment, our trucks, the trailers. We have the best gear for a reason to make sure that we can deliver a good product."

The business has continued investing in Hino trucks, including 700 Series prime movers, reaching the milestone of 100 Hino truck deliveries.

Standardisation makes fleet management easier

With hundreds of assets operating across different industries, standardisation is an important part of the fleet strategy.

"We need to keep the same truck for the same application. So our employees are jumping. Doesn't matter if they jump in this truck or that truck, it still performs the same, and they have the same blinkers, the same gearboxes, the same engines. That's why we run fleets."

Standardisation also simplifies maintenance, parts management and driver familiarisation.

Despite their size, many trucks



Four generations of the Borger family and the City Hino team. L-R - Daniel Glynn (City Hino), Christian Geadah (City Hino), Barbara Borger (Borger Cranes), Nathan Borger (Borger Cranes), Ryan Sutton (City Hino/Sutton Group), Shawn Borger (Borger Cranes), Leigh Borger (Borger Cranes), Kaiya Borger (Borger Cranes), Sam Borger (Borger Cranes) and Mark Batchelor (City Hino)

accumulate relatively low kilometres because they spend much of their working day parked beside cranes.

Shawn says a truck could be four or five years old with only 80,000 kilometres travelled, allowing longer replacement cycles.

Controlling maintenance in-house

Borger Cranes employs approximately 30 mechanics along Australia's east coast, supported by in-house fabrication, tyre services and painting capabilities.

Maintenance operates around the clock, with day, afternoon and night shifts.

"The control outweighs the cost."

This approach allows the business to respond quickly to breakdowns and minimise equipment downtime without depending entirely on external service providers.

Preparing for the next generation

Alternative powertrains are also attracting attention, particularly hybrid cranes capable of operating on battery power while lifting.

Shawn believes electric trucks will eventually become part of the industry, although charging infrastructure remains a challenge.

For now, the priorities remain reliability, safety, equipment quality and developing employees.

"We can't do it without good people. It's that simple."

With approximately 80 third-generation employees working in the business, Borger Cranes demonstrates how long-term investment in people and equipment can support sustainable business growth.

What today's big changes in used car prices mean for fleet managers



Mike Costello, Corporate Affairs Manager, Cox Automotive Australia

If the used market today reminds one of anything, it's the degree to which it is impacted positively and negatively by what is happening in the new vehicle landscape.

Things have changed significantly in the past four years since used vehicle selling prices peaked, amidst the well-publicised COVID-led shortages that defined the market at that time.

At a retail and a wholesale level we are consistently seeing average sale prices of used vehicles -- notably those aged under five years like most defleeted cars -- return towards 2019 levels, not factoring in inflation which remains stubbornly elevated.

From a Manheim perspective, our overall wholesale price index today sits at 116.5 points against a January 2020 baseline, meaning average selling prices of like-for-like cars are 16.5% greater than baseline.

This is down 4.2% year-on-year, but down around 27% since the index peaked in May 2022. This trend is particularly evident when you carve the data up into age brackets, namely 2-4 year and 5-7 years, meaning younger used assets have been on more of a rollercoaster.

Our numbers are not outliers.

Major used car retailer Carma's analysis of aggregated listings found an average selling price decrease of 6.5% YoY as of September, while the Australian Automotive Dealer Association-sponsored AIR report claimed a 3.7% average used car discount across H1 on a YoY basis.

RedBook's index meanwhile is close to returning to baseline as the post-COVID correction continues, with its shape looking almost the same as Manheim's wholesale index.

This is the sort of information crucial to informing fleet managers when they are modelling cost-of-ownership and opting to remarket their assets.

But there's a positive side to this equation. While you cannot expect the same returns for most assets today -- the exception being EVs which are becoming more common and therefore more accepted by used buyers, and which are in robust demand -- you can procure new cars for less.

The biggest driving force impacting the Australian used car market as I see it today is what we are seeing on the new car landscape. The avalanche of vehicles from 25 Chinese brand names (and counting) is forcing transaction prices downwards, with discounting evident for all to see.

Even brands like Toyota and Ford are offering purchase incentives, because that's where the new market sits right now. Invoice analysis from Drivible reports an average new car contract-level discount of nearly 10%, while Manheim's vehicle replacement services is yielding a circa 11% new car discount for our partners.

Deloitte Motor Industry Services reports average days' supply in dealers is rising, contributing to the average franchise dealer losing money in Q3 for the first time since the GFC.

What's the key take-away? Expect to dispose of fleet assets for less today than a few years ago, but pull the trigger because you'll also be in a position to secure a keener deal on whatever new vehicle you buy to replace them.

Hino's little truck finds its rhythm

The best way to appreciate Hino's Euro 6 300 Series is to find a hill. Preferably one with a few corners, some changing gradients and enough traffic beforehand to remind you what a working truck normally does.

The launch drive mixed freeways, urban traffic and winding mountain roads, giving several models (which were loaded) a chance to demonstrate their character. The surprise was how enjoyable they were. The familiar cab might suggest a modest update, but the engine and automatic transmission tell a more interesting story.

More than an emissions badge

The four-litre N04C diesel in the single-cab models produces 150 horsepower, with torque increasing from 420Nm to 440Nm. Maximum torque now starts at 1,300rpm rather than 1,400rpm, while maximum power arrives at 2,700rpm instead of 2,500rpm.

Those numbers help explain the flexibility, although a specification sheet undersells the difference. On the road, the engine feels willing and the power delivery makes it easy to maintain momentum as conditions change.

Hino has changed the turbocharger, injectors, pistons and cylinder liners, alongside cooling improvements. The emissions package adds selective catalytic reduction and AdBlue to the diesel particulate reduction system.

However, the strongest impression comes from how the engine works with the next-generation six-speed torque-converter automatic. It is a change existing drivers should notice quickly.





A gearbox that gets on with it

Some automatic trucks make you very aware of their decision-making. Approaching a climb, you can find yourself waiting for a downshift or wondering whether the transmission will settle on a gear.

The Hino felt reassuringly sorted. Across the changing terrain, it wasn't hunting between ratios or delivering shifts that felt awkwardly early or late. Engine and transmission worked together naturally, making the truck feel spirited without demanding much effort from the driver.

Part of the technical change is that the transmission now operates on 12 volts, matching the engine, rather than the previous 24-volt arrangement. Hino links the improved communication to quicker shifts and faster torque-converter lock-up.

A sequential selector also allows manual selection through all six gears. You can anticipate a hill and request a lower ratio, although leaving it in Drive proved an easy option for most of our route.

For Fleet Managers, that easygoing behaviour deserves attention. A truck that responds predictably gives drivers less to manage while navigating traffic, finding delivery points or moving between jobs.

Familiar shape, useful changes

Externally, this remains recognisably a 300 Series. The cab shape is familiar and the cosmetic changes are subtle; the Euro 6 badge is an easier identifier than any dramatic body redesign.

Lighting brings a more practical update. LED headlamps provide an enlarged illuminated area, LED fog lamps are standard across the range, and diesel models receive LED daytime running lamps.

Underneath, accommodating the AdBlue tank and revised exhaust equipment has required chassis repackaging. Fuel tank sizes and component locations vary by model, making body suitability an important discussion when specifying a replacement.

Small details, better days

The narrow-cab trucks, with independent front suspension, were particularly enjoyable. Their compact dimensions and low height suit urban work, while car-licence versions offer an accessible step into truck operation.

The wide cabs bring a different appeal, with suspension seating adding comfort. Wireless Apple CarPlay also makes a surprisingly big difference to the cabin experience, supported by a 10.1-inch multimedia screen and clear instrumentation.

For fleets asking vehicles and people to do more, the appeal is straightforward: useful capability delivered with less driving effort. The Euro 6 badge explains the emissions update. A winding road reveals how much more Hino has achieved.

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HINO

Ausgrid

Ausgrid wins Fleet of the Year

Ausgrid has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet of the Year Award, recognising an approach that connects everyday vehicle operations with the wider needs of an essential service provider.

After being selected as a finalist alongside Blacktown City Council and Parkes Shire Council, Ausgrid was chosen as the winner through an industry vote. The result represents recognition from peers who understand the demands of keeping a complex fleet safe, productive and ready for work.

For Ausgrid, those demands extend well beyond the passenger vehicle car park. Its fleet supports electricity distribution to more than four million customers, with approximately 1,600 vehicles and 700 items of plant and equipment.

Elevated work platforms, pole borers, prime movers, cable-handling equipment, boats and specialist off-road assets all have a role. Managing that variety requires a clear understanding of the work each asset enables.

A strategy with executive support

Ausgrid earned its finalist place through the combination of governance, operational discipline and innovation outlined in its submission. A CEO-endorsed fleet strategy gives the operation four clear priorities: safe to work, fit for purpose, value for money and electrification.

That executive endorsement matters. It positions fleet decisions within the organisation's broader responsibilities and gives the Fleet Team a framework for explaining investment, managing competing priorities and supporting operational requirements.

It also provides a useful example for Fleet Managers trying to increase organisational maturity. A documented strategy helps turn discussions about individual vehicles into decisions about risk, service delivery and long-term cost.

Visibility across the asset life

Ausgrid uses SAP, digital maintenance systems, telematics and Power BI dashboards to maintain visibility across procurement, servicing, compliance, incidents, fuel use and disposal.

The value comes from bringing those activities together. Whole-of-life information helps a fleet understand its assets beyond the purchase price and provides a stronger basis for assessing performance throughout ownership.

Driver behaviour is also actively monitored. Targeted reporting, coaching and risk-based training support the organisation's safety culture, connecting information from vehicles with action by people.

For the fleet community, this is an important part of the story. Technology supports better management when the information feeds into practical decisions and conversations with those doing the work.

Electrification around the job

Ausgrid's submission also demonstrated an electrification program that considers the operating environment. It had electrified most of its passenger fleet, introduced electric vans and trucks, and was developing charging solutions across depots, substations and employees' homes.

Its stated target was to increase electrification from 11 per cent to around 80 per cent by FY2029, while protecting service reliability during storms and emergency response.

That requirement keeps the transition grounded in the purpose of the fleet. Vehicles and charging arrangements must support crews when customers need them most.

Ausgrid's award recognises the strength of that overall approach. Clear direction, useful information and operational accountability helped secure its finalist position. The industry vote then added the endorsement of peers, acknowledging the work involved in preparing a diverse utility fleet for the future.



Parkes Shire Council

Parkes Shire Council earns Judges Award for Fleet Excellence

Parkes Shire Council has received the 2026 Fleet News Group Judges' Award for Fleet Excellence, recognising a level of fleet management maturity the judging panel believed deserved its own acknowledgement.

The award was added to the program and selected by the judges, separately from the industry vote used to determine the five category winners. Parkes did not receive the most industry votes, but its management practices and ability to demonstrate performance made a strong impression during judging.

Having also earned a finalist place in Fleet of the Year, Council presented a clear example of fleet being managed as a strategic function supporting safe, reliable and cost-effective community services.

Its recognition gives Fleet Managers a useful opportunity to look beyond individual assets and consider how the whole management framework works.

A place in organisational planning

Parkes manages passenger vehicles, light and heavy vehicles, plant, earthmoving equipment and Rural Fire Service assets. Its nomination submission described documented policies, lifecycle planning and long-term asset replacement strategies supporting that diverse operation.

Fleet planning is integrated with Council's broader financial planning processes. That connection provides a basis for considering asset requirements over time and making decisions supported by evidence.

This is a key feature of maturity. The conversation extends beyond the next purchase or repair to how the fleet will continue supporting services within the organisation's financial capacity.



For practitioners working to strengthen fleet's voice internally, documented processes and long-term planning help explain why decisions are needed and what they mean for service delivery.

Information ready to use

Council uses integrated technology platforms, including TechOne and Geotab, to analyse and report fleet performance. Live dashboards provide visibility of utilisation, maintenance, compliance, idle time, asset availability and driver behaviour.

The interview with judges highlighted the depth of information Parkes could readily demonstrate. That ability to show performance, rather than simply describe an intention, was central to the creation of a new award.

For a Fleet Manager, accessible information supports more useful conversations with operational leaders and executives. It helps make fleet requirements visible and creates a shared basis for reviewing costs, risks and asset needs.

Parkes' example shows technology supporting an established management approach, with data available to inform action and continuous improvement.

Keeping the fundamentals strong

Preventative maintenance is another part of Council's framework, supported by asset histories, condition monitoring and performance reporting. These practices support safety, reliability and regulatory compliance across the fleet.

Council also monitors key metrics to inform replacement decisions, improve efficiency, reduce emissions and minimise whole-of-life costs. The strength lies in connecting these activities with governance and organisational planning.

The Judges' Award acknowledges that complete picture. Parkes demonstrated how documented policies, useful systems and consistent performance monitoring can support a fleet operation that serves the community and contributes to long-term organisational performance.

Its separate recognition also makes the selection process clear. The five industry-voted awards reflect the endorsement of peers. Parkes' award reflects the judges' assessment that its demonstrated maturity warranted recognition in its own right.

For other organisations, it offers a practical benchmark for the management capability behind a dependable fleet.

Fleet Sustainability Award Winner

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Blacktown City Council wins Fleet Sustainability Award

Blacktown City Council has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet Sustainability Award, recognising a practical approach to reducing environmental impact while keeping community services moving.

Selected as a finalist alongside Allianz and City of Parramatta, Blacktown went on to win through an industry vote. The result reflects recognition from peers who understand that fleet sustainability must work within the everyday demands of budgets, people and service delivery.

Council's City Fleet operation earned its finalist place through an approach that combines lower-emission vehicles with better utilisation, operational planning and whole-of-life thinking. The emphasis is on how the fleet performs as a system.

That is an increasingly relevant discussion for Fleet Managers being asked to improve productivity and efficiency while also reducing emissions.

Getting more from fewer assets

Blacktown's outlined the use of telematics, utilisation reviews and right-sizing to minimise unnecessary vehicle use and lower fuel consumption.

A mower transport project provides a useful example of that thinking. Telematics showed that multiple diesel trucks assigned to mower crews travelled limited distances and spent much of the day idling while the equipment they carried completed the work.

Council redesigned the operating model around one electric truck with a custom, in-house designed beavertail body capable of carrying two machines. The solution replaced the ageing diesel trucks with one more highly utilised asset.



The environmental benefit was linked directly to operational efficiency. Removing unnecessary idling and reducing the number of trucks also reduced fuel use, maintenance requirements, registration and whole-of-life costs.

For the fleet community, the project demonstrates the value of reviewing the task before specifying the replacement vehicle. Better information can change the number and configuration of assets required.

Making the equipment work

The engineering details supported the operating model. Hydraulic ramps on the electric truck are powered by an auxiliary battery supported by solar panels, avoiding a draw from the traction battery. A portable DC charger provides flexibility across council sites.

Safety was considered alongside sustainability. Removing trailers reduced complexity, while the project incorporated finite element analysis, ergonomic assessment and OEM-led driver training.

These details show why the procurement decision is only part of the transition. Body design, charging arrangements and operator preparation all influence whether a lower-emission asset can deliver the required service.

Embedding the approach

Blacktown's sustainability submission also highlighted policy integration, stakeholder collaboration and staff engagement. Low- and zero-emission vehicle adoption is supported by infrastructure and operational planning, with clear targets, reporting and continuous improvement.

That broader framework helps make sustainability a repeatable management practice. It gives the Fleet Team a basis for reviewing utilisation, explaining investment and considering environmental performance alongside the cost and reliability of service delivery.

Blacktown's award recognises that combination of planning and practical execution. Its finalist case showed how fleet decisions can reduce emissions while making better use of assets and resources.

The industry vote added the endorsement of peers, acknowledging an approach with lessons for fleets of many sizes: understand the work, use the available data and build the solution around the service that needs to be delivered.

City of Townsville

Townsville City Council wins Safe Fleet Award

Townsville City Council has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Safe Fleet Award, with an approach that uses vehicle data, practical technology and driver engagement to address risk before an incident occurs.

Council was selected as a finalist alongside CV Services and Elite Group. The winner was then determined by an industry vote, giving Townsville recognition from peers who appreciate the daily responsibility of protecting drivers, work crews and the community.

Its nomination submission described safety as a responsibility embedded across fleet operations. The focus extended from behaviour behind the wheel to the particular hazards associated with delivering council services.

For Fleet Managers, the example is relevant across asset types. Understanding where the risk sits, then making the response useful to the people doing the job, is central to a more mature safety program.

Acting before an incident

Townsville uses Geotab telematics and targeted reporting to identify risks such as speeding and harsh driving. That visibility creates an opportunity for early intervention, rather than waiting for a collision or infringement to trigger a conversation.

Drivers and supervisors receive regular, practical insights to support improvement. Council's submission emphasised education and behavioural change, with monitoring supported by clear communication and accountability at all levels.

This matters because a report alone does not change how a vehicle is driven. The information needs to reach someone who can interpret it, discuss the circumstances and help the driver make a safer decision next time.

Townsville's approach connects those steps, making safety information part of ongoing fleet management.

Technology matched to the task

One example highlighted in the interview with judges was the implementation of AI pedestrian detection systems in waste trucks. The systems enhance operator awareness and help prevent incidents during bin lift operations.



It is a practical application of technology to a specific operating risk. Waste collection brings heavy vehicles, workers and members of the public into the same environment, so supporting awareness during the collection task is particularly relevant.

Council also works closely with operational teams to ensure its safety solutions are practical, sustainable and suited to real-world conditions. That collaboration helps connect the intended benefit of a system with the way a vehicle is actually used.

Reliable information supports trust

Data quality was another feature of Townsville's nomination. Council prioritises accurate information and system enhancements, including improved mapping and zone management, to support reliable reporting.

For a Fleet Manager, confidence in the underlying information is essential. It supports fair conversations with drivers and gives supervisors a sound basis for identifying where attention is needed.

Townsville reported improvements in driver behaviour, compliance and incident prevention, supported by governance and accurate record-keeping. Its nomination demonstrated how those management practices work together, rather than treating safety technology as an isolated purchase.

The award acknowledges that integrated approach. Townsville earned its finalist place by showing how it identifies risk, supports people and applies technology to operational hazards. The industry vote then recognised the value of that work through the judgement of its peers.

The lesson for other fleets is straightforward: safer operations depend on useful information being followed by consistent action.

connect ABILITY AUSTRALIA

ConnectAbility Australia wins Fleet Technology Award

ConnectAbility Australia has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet Technology Award, recognising the use of digital tools to improve transport safety, reduce administration and support service delivery in the disability support sector.

The organisation was selected as a finalist alongside Blacktown City Council and City of Port Phillip. An industry vote then determined the winner, providing recognition from peers who saw value in connecting fleet technology with better everyday outcomes.

ConnectAbility's submission centred on its implementation of the Geotab fleet management platform. The submission described changes to billing, vehicle inspections, incident reporting and driver safety, showing how information from fleet operations can support the wider organisation.

With participants regularly travelling as passengers, those improvements have a direct connection to the people the service exists to support.

Reducing the administrative load

A major achievement was the digitisation of billing processes. ConnectAbility eliminated manual data entry and improved the accuracy of participant transport claims and invoicing.

The benefits described in the interview with judges included reduced administration time and fewer errors, allowing staff to focus more attention on participant support.

It is a useful example for organisations trying to do more with existing resources. Fleet technology can create value beyond the workshop or vehicle budget when it improves a process that previously required staff to collect, transfer or check information manually.

For Fleet Managers seeking executive support, that connection also strengthens the investment discussion. The value of a system can be explained through the work it enables across operational and administrative teams.

Making vehicle issues visible

ConnectAbility also digitised vehicle safety inspections and incident reporting. Its submission linked these changes to better compliance, clearer accountability and faster identification and resolution of issues.

For any organisation transporting people, a consistent inspection process helps make vehicle condition part of daily operations. Digital reporting can also make it easier for an issue identified by a driver to reach those responsible for responding.

The important management outcome is the connection between identifying a concern and taking action. ConnectAbility's case showed technology supporting that process, alongside the records needed to demonstrate that responsibilities are being managed.

Supporting safer journeys

Driver behaviour monitoring formed another part of the project. Using Geotab telematics, ConnectAbility monitors speeding, harsh braking, acceleration and other high-risk events.

The information supports driver coaching and a proactive approach to reducing risk. In an operation where participants are regularly passengers, safer driving is closely linked to the quality of the transport service.

The technology therefore supports both operational control and participant wellbeing. It gives the organisation information it can use to address behaviour and improve the transport environment for staff and passengers.

ConnectAbility earned its finalist place by demonstrating these connections across the business. Its case was about applying technology to identifiable problems and making the resulting information useful.

The industry vote recognised that practical approach. For the wider fleet community, the award offers a reminder that successful technology adoption is measured through changes in the work: less administration, clearer reporting and better support for the people relying on the fleet.



TOYOTA FLEET MANAGEMENT



Toyota Fleet Management wins Fleet Supplier of the Year

Toyota Fleet Management has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet Supplier of the Year Award, with customer recognition highlighting the value of knowledgeable people, consistent support and practical advice.

Supplier finalists were nominated by their customers, giving this category a direct connection to the experience of organisations using the services. An industry vote then selected the winner, adding recognition from peers across the fleet community.

Toyota Fleet Management's nomination focused on the relationship behind the products. It described a team that understands fleet operations, remains available after the agreement is signed and helps customers make decisions suited to their businesses.

For fleet buyers, those qualities matter well beyond the procurement process. The usefulness of a supplier relationship becomes clear when operational questions arise and someone needs to respond.

Support after the agreement

The customer nomination made a clear case for Toyota Fleet Management's inclusion: "The people know their stuff, they pick up the phone, and they don't disappear after the deal is signed."

It is a simple description of a service expectation that carries considerable weight in fleet operations. Access to people who understand the account and can help resolve a problem supports continuity in the customer's own work.

The nomination also emphasised trust and consistency over the life of the relationship. That makes the award relevant to the broader discussion about fleet management maturity, where suppliers contribute to an organisation's ability to plan and deliver services reliably.

Fleet Managers need relationships they can depend on when explaining options internally, coordinating change or working through the practical consequences of a decision.

Connecting different fleet needs

Another feature of the nomination was the breadth of Toyota Fleet Management's offering, covering finance, fleet management, salary packaging, electric vehicles and hybrids.

For customers, having those services available through one relationship reduces the need to piece together several suppliers to address a requirement.

The benefit described was practical coordination, backed by people who understand how fleets operate day to day. That combination helped explain why the customer put Toyota Fleet Management forward for recognition.

As fleet responsibilities expand, the ability to discuss different requirements with a knowledgeable supplier can support more informed decisions. The relationship needs to connect the available products with the customer's actual operating needs.

Advice grounded in the operation

Electrification was a particular example in the nomination. The customer valued an approach that did not pressure the business to adopt technology unsuited to its operations.

"They help you make the right call for your business, not their quota."

That endorsement speaks to a familiar challenge for fleet buyers. A transition decision needs to account for the work, the people and the organisation's capacity to implement change. Advice is most useful when it starts with those requirements.

Toyota Fleet Management's award recognises the customer experience described in its nomination, followed by the support of the industry vote. It acknowledges the daily work of maintaining a reliable supplier relationship and helping customers find suitable solutions.

For the fleet community, the message is straightforward: service quality continues long after a contract is signed.

Fleet EV of the Year Award Winner

Volkswagen ID Buzz Cargo wins Fleet EV of the Year

The Volkswagen ID. Buzz Cargo has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet EV of the Year award, achieving a final Best Value Analysis score of 7.74 out of 10. The result puts a working van at the centre of the discussion about electric vehicles in operational fleets.

Its distinctive appearance attracts attention, but the award recognises a wider ownership proposition. For Fleet Managers matching electric vehicles to daily tasks, the ID. Buzz Cargo demonstrates how a van can combine practical fleet relevance with an appealing design.



An electric vehicle with a job to do

Many van applications involve metropolitan travel, relatively short daily distances and a return to base. These operating patterns provide a useful starting point for assessing whether an electric vehicle can meet the task, with charging planned around the working day.

The ID. Buzz Cargo also brings Volkswagen's established dealer network and aftersales structure into that assessment. Access to support matters when the vehicle is needed to keep staff moving, carry equipment or complete customer work.

The other finalists were the Toyota HiLux SR Double Cab Pickup BEV and Kia EV5 Air Long Range. Together, they reflected the variety of jobs electric vehicles may perform across a fleet, from carrying goods to transporting people.

Matching the vehicle to the operation

The ID. Buzz Cargo's result gives Fleet Managers a useful prompt to look beyond the passenger vehicle segment when planning electrification. A vehicle's daily work can reveal opportunities that are less obvious when the discussion starts with the most familiar models.

Documentation helps managers explain both the operational opportunity and the investment required to make it work.

That still requires a clear operational brief. Loads, routes, parking arrangements and charging access need to be understood before an organisation commits to replacing vehicles.

The award provides a starting point for that conversation. It recognises the ID. Buzz Cargo's performance within a structured assessment, while the next step for each buyer is to apply the same discipline to their own operation. That is where a well documented fleet procurement process can turn an emissions ambition into a workable vehicle replacement decision.



Category	BVA Score
Whole-of-life cost	3.20
Workspace ergonomics	1.02
Car park / driveway appeal	1.08
Sustainability & safety	1.62
Manufacturer commitment	0.82
Total	**7.74**



Fleet NEWS GROUP AWARDS

WINNER

The Volkswagen ID. Buzz Cargo, 2026 Fleet EV of the year

Invest in your future with the all-electric, all business, and now all-round winner: **Volkswagen ID. Buzz Cargo.**

Fleet Car of the Year Winner

Toyota Camry wins Fleet Car of the Year

The Toyota Camry Ascent Sport has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet Car of the Year award with a final Best Value Analysis score of 8.18 out of 10. Its result demonstrates the continuing value of a practical hybrid sedan in a fleet market increasingly filled with SUVs.

The Camry brings together the attributes that matter when a vehicle needs to earn its place in the fleet: passenger space, a useful boot, low fuel consumption and established manufacturer support. For organisations reviewing replacement policies, it provides a reason to keep vehicle choice tied to the job being done.



A familiar fleet proposition

Fleet covers more than company cars. Rental operators, car share businesses and taxi fleets also need vehicles that can carry people comfortably while keeping operating costs under control. The Camry's versatility makes it relevant across these different applications.

Its hybrid powertrain supports the task of reducing fuel use and emissions while retaining a familiar operating model for drivers. The five-star ANCAP rating and Toyota's established dealer network add to the proposition, alongside the manufacturer's resources and commitment to fleet customers.

A useful procurement lesson

The other finalists, the MG ZS Vibe CVT and Subaru Forester Hybrid AWD, represented different ways of meeting fleet needs. Their inclusion gave the assessment a broader perspective than a comparison based only on body style.

The Camry's winning result reinforces the importance of documenting what a fleet actually needs before choosing its replacement vehicles. Purchase price is one input, while usability, safety, support and operating costs all influence the outcome.

That matters when budgets are tight and replacement requests need a clear business case. A consistent assessment helps Fleet Managers show how the selected vehicle supports daily work, manages ownership costs and meets the expectations of drivers and the organisation throughout the planned ownership period.

For Fleet Managers being asked to improve productivity and efficiency, that documented approach also helps explain decisions to senior management. The Camry offers a practical example of why an established vehicle can remain relevant when the procurement process looks at the complete ownership proposition.



Category	BVA Score
Whole-of-life cost	3.20
Workspace ergonomics	1.05
Car park / driveway appeal	1.24
Sustainability & safety	1.70
Manufacturer commitment	1.00
Total	**8.18**

Fleet LCV of the Year Winner

Kia PV5 Cargo wins Fleet Light Commercial Vehicle of the Year

The Kia PV5 Cargo has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Fleet Light Commercial Vehicle of the Year award with a final Best Value Analysis score of 7.81 out of 10. Its success gives Fleet Managers another reason to examine how an electric van could fit into their working fleet.

The category brought together three distinct options: the PV5 Cargo, Isuzu D-MAX SX 2WD Single Cab and Hyundai STARIA Load Hybrid. Each offered a different approach to carrying goods and equipment, making operational suitability an important part of the discussion.



A fresh option for working fleets

The PV5 Cargo adds an electric choice for organisations seeking to reduce emissions from light commercial vehicles. Its van format invites buyers to reconsider what they carry, how they load it and whether their current vehicles remain the best match for the work.

The shortlist also highlighted the breadth of fleet procurement. A single cab ute offers a familiar platform for working applications, while a hybrid van provides another route to reducing fuel consumption. The PV5's winning result shows why emerging options deserve a place in a structured comparison.

Kia's commitment to fleet support formed part of the assessment, recognising that a commercial vehicle's ownership proposition extends beyond the vehicle itself.

A reason to review the brief

For organisations trying to do more with less, a replacement cycle is an opportunity to review the task before repeating the previous purchase. A vehicle that suits yesterday's operation may not be the best option for tomorrow's workload.

The same questions can improve decisions across every commercial fleet.

With an electric van, that review should include daily travel, load requirements and access to charging. It also needs input from the people who use the vehicle, because practical details can determine whether a procurement decision works on the job.

The PV5 Cargo's award gives buyers a reason to include it in that conversation. The broader lesson is the value of a documented process that connects costs and vehicle capability with service delivery. It gives Fleet Managers a clearer basis for recommending change and explaining the investment to senior management.



Category	BVA Score
Whole-of-life cost	3.20
Workspace ergonomics	0.98
Car park / driveway appeal	1.09
Sustainability & safety	1.54
Manufacturer commitment	1.00
Total	**7.81**

Novated Lease Car of the Year Winner

Tesla Model Y wins Novated Lease Car of the Year

The Tesla Model Y has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Novated Lease Car of the Year award, with the result determined using actual novated lease delivery data from members of the National Automotive Leasing and Salary Packaging Association, NALSPA.

That approach gives the award a different perspective within the vehicle awards program. It recognises the outcome of real vehicle choices made through novated leasing, providing fleet buyers and employers with an insight into the vehicles employees are taking delivery of.



Recognising actual vehicle choices

A novated lease vehicle serves a different purpose from an operational pool car or a van allocated to a service team. Employee preferences and household needs form part of the decision, alongside the financial and practical considerations associated with the arrangement.

Using delivery data grounds the award in completed vehicle transactions. It provides a measure of actual take-up through participating NALSPA members, rather than relying on expressions of interest or a judging panel's preferences.

The Model Y's win should be understood in that context. It won because people bought it for a novated lease.

Understanding the result

For Fleet Managers involved in employee vehicle programs, the distinction matters. An operational vehicle assessment asks how well an asset meets an organisation's requirements. Novated lease delivery data shows the outcome of employee choices when using their own money.

Both perspectives can contribute to better conversations about vehicles. Employers can use the award as a prompt to review the information employees receive and the questions they ask when considering a novated lease.

It also encourages clearer reporting. When discussing award results with employees or executives, Fleet Managers can explain what the evidence measures, how the winner was selected and why the method differs from an operational procurement assessment. That context helps readers interpret the recognition and its relevance accurately.

The Model Y's recognition adds that employee perspective to an awards program focused on the many ways Australians acquire and use vehicles.

The winner was determined based on 2026 novated lease volumes among NALSPA members.



Light Duty Truck of the Year Winner

IVECO Daily delivers light-duty fleet value

The IVECO Daily has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Light Duty Truck of the Year award, achieving a final Best Value Analysis score of 6.01 out of 10.

Its result highlights the value of combining an approachable driving environment with the flexibility of a separate truck chassis. For Fleet Managers, that combination provides options for moving people, carrying equipment and fitting bodies to suit different operational tasks.

The Daily 50C Cab Chassis represented the range during judging. Its cab layout and available eight-speed Hi-Matic automatic transmission offer a useful proposition for organisations whose employees move between passenger vehicles and light trucks.



A platform for different jobs

Single and crew cab configurations, different wheelbases and weight ratings allow buyers to tailor the Daily to their requirements. The separate steel chassis accommodates trays, service bodies and specialist equipment, supporting applications across councils, utilities, construction and maintenance fleets.

That versatility can help organisations standardise their assets while retaining the flexibility needed to deliver different services. Common controls and supplier relationships can also simplify driver familiarisation and fleet administration.

Understanding the result

The Daily's lower overall score compared with the heavy-duty winner needs context. The light-duty segment offers fewer engine and transmission variants and suspension options than the heavy-duty segment, limiting the points available under a framework that recognises breadth of choice.

All light-duty finalists returned similar scores, with the Daily achieving the highest total in its category.

The result therefore needs to be read within the segment and alongside the intended application. A Fleet Manager still needs to match payload, body requirements, access, driver suitability and support to the work being performed.

For buyers reviewing their next replacement, the Daily offers a practical example of how a versatile platform can support productivity when the specification is matched carefully to the organisation's needs.



Category	BVA Score
Driving / on road	1.56
Engine / transmission	0.88
Chassis / suspension	0.48
Safety / sustainability	1.14
Manufacturer support	1.02
Workspace ergonomics	0.93
Total	**6.01**

Heavy Duty Truck of the Year Winner

MAN TGS takes the heavy-duty honours

The MAN TGS has won the 2026 Fleet News Group Heavy Duty Truck of the Year award, recording a final Best Value Analysis score of 7.73 out of 10.

The result recognises a truck family offering Fleet Managers scope to match vehicles to different applications while maintaining consistency across the fleet.

The TGS 26.540 with a TN sleeper cab represented the range during judging. Its 12.4-litre six-cylinder engine produces 397kW and 2,500Nm, paired with MAN's 12-speed TipMatic automated manual transmission.

However, the fleet proposition extends beyond the output of one vehicle.



One family, multiple applications

Different engine outputs, cab choices and rigid and prime mover configurations give buyers flexibility when specifying trucks for their operations.

That breadth matters when an organisation needs vehicles for different tasks but wants to simplify the way it manages them. Standardisation can support common driver controls, more consistent familiarisation and closer relationships with service providers.

It also allows Fleet Managers to select capability for the application while retaining a familiar platform across parts of the heavy vehicle fleet.

The judged 26.540 combined a 6x4 configuration with rear air suspension, providing the panel with a reference point for the range's driving characteristics and workplace.



Supporting the working day

A truck's contribution to productivity depends on more than its engine and chassis. Driver comfort, accessible controls and a practical cab layout all influence how effectively the vehicle supports a working day.

The TGS brings those considerations together with manufacturer support through MAN and Penske. Service arrangements, parts availability, driver training and fleet technology form part of the ownership proposition.

For Fleet Managers seeking to do more with available resources, these elements deserve attention alongside the specification.

The winning result reinforces the value of considering how the vehicle, its driver environment and supplier support work together throughout ownership.

Category	BVA Score
Driving / on road	1.52
Engine / transmission	1.68
Chassis / suspension	1.20
Safety / sustainability	1.14
Manufacturer support	1.32
Workspace ergonomics	0.87
Total	**7.73**

Fleet NEWS GROUP AWARDS

The inaugural Fleet News Group Awards Night, held in Sydney, brought the fleet community together for an evening of networking, celebration and recognition.













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