Fleet NEWS GROUP

ALL THINGS FLEET

Fleet Technology Edition

Case Studies ▪ Expert Advice ▪ Reviews

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Technology with a purpose

Technology has become part of almost every fleet conversation, but the real story is not the technology itself. It is how Fleet Managers are using it to improve efficiency, strengthen safety and support more sustainable operations.

In this issue, we share stories about a range of technology solutions being applied in very different ways. Some are improving vehicle utilisation, others are reducing administration, identifying safety risks or helping organisations make better replacement decisions. Each solution starts with a practical fleet challenge and a desire to achieve more with the resources available.

Suppliers are also leading the charge with artificial intelligence. The most valuable applications are not trying to replace Fleet Managers. They are helping them analyse more information, identify trends faster and ask better questions. The knowledge, judgement and organisational understanding of the Fleet Manager remain essential.

Recognising fleet excellence

This issue also introduces the finalists in the Fleet News Group Awards across the fleet management excellence and fleet vehicle categories.

Receiving more than 80 nominations was one of the most rewarding parts of the awards program. It gave us the opportunity to hear stories from organisations across the fleet community and become engulfed in the passion of other fleet nerds like me.

Each finalist is striving towards higher levels of fleet management maturity and best practice. They are documenting processes, using data, engaging stakeholders and demonstrating the vital role fleet plays in delivering services, supporting customers and controlling organisational costs.

The finalists listed throughout these pages have chosen to stand up and share their achievements with the industry. Now the fleet community has the opportunity to recognise their efforts.

I encourage you to read their stories, consider the evidence and vote for the organisations and vehicles you believe deserve to win. Your vote rewards excellence while encouraging others to improve the way fleets are managed across Australia.

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Inside

AI insights **powers fleet data**

For decades, fleet teams have had access to more data than they could realistically use.

Fuel transactions, maintenance costs, lease end dates, accident claims, infringements and utilisation records all contain valuable signals. The challenge has been turning that information into decisions without needing to be an Excel specialist, business intelligence analyst or full-time report writer.

Summit Fleet Leasing and Management is taking a practical approach to that problem with its AI Fleet Insights™ program. Rather than using AI as a novelty, the business has focused on using it to reduce repetitive fleet tasks, help Fleet Managers ask better questions and deliver information in a format that supports action.

From research to fleet application

The program has been several years in development, beginning well before generative AI became a regular topic in fleet meetings.

Jon Bates, Technology and Business Systems Manager at Summit Fleet Leasing and Management, said his interest in AI started with research papers and the mathematical concepts behind the technology.

"I originally got into AI about sort of four years ago or thereabouts, and have been developing tools in it for my personal purposes first, and then started to apply it to fleet," Bates said.

The early challenge was that AI models could only draw on information they had been trained on. They did not automatically know a business's private fleet data, policies, contracts or customer records.

The breakthrough came through a technique called retrieval augmented generation. In simple terms, this allows an AI model to retrieve relevant business information and use it alongside the user's question.

"The way that you actually start to apply that in a really useful way is using techniques that we call retrieval augmented generation," Bates said.

For fleet, this means combining AI with current information such as vehicle records, fuel data, maintenance history, contracts and fleet policies.

Solving an internal problem first

Summit's first AI tool was developed to help its own people respond to tender documents.

Tender responses can take considerable time, with staff needing to locate past submissions, policies and supporting material. The Tender Assistant was designed to search Summit's previous tender content and prepare a relevant draft response.

"The system basically refines the query into a better query because people ask in different ways," Bates said. "Then what it does is actually go and search our corpus of tender documents that we've responded to before."

This early project demonstrated an important lesson for any fleet organisation considering AI. The technology is only as useful as the information, processes and governance behind it.

Summit needed to prepare the source material properly, including removing customer names from previous tender documents so private information would not appear in a future response.

From one vehicle to the whole fleet

The next stage was applying the same thinking to fleet data.

Summit initially released an AI-generated summary for individual vehicles. It could identify unusual fuel use, inaccurate odometer readings, overdue maintenance and potential contract kilometre overruns.

Customers quickly saw the value but wanted broader capability.

"This is great for one vehicle," Bates said of the feedback. "We want to run it on the whole fleet."

That created a much bigger challenge. A single vehicle's data can fit within an AI model's limits. Thousands of vehicles, with years of fuel, maintenance and operational transactions, cannot simply be loaded into a chatbot.

The solution was to combine traditional data analysis with AI. The system first gathers and aggregates the relevant data, then uses AI to determine what information is needed, which fleet data sources should be examined and how the answer should be presented.

It is more sophisticated than placing a chat interface over an existing dashboard.

Asking questions in normal language

The latest version of AI Fleet Insights™ uses a chat-style interface. A Fleet Manager can ask questions in normal language rather than selecting fields, building reports or waiting for a data analyst.

Questions could include:

- How does the fuel economy of Toyota HiLux vehicles compare with Ford Rangers?
- Which vehicles are due for replacement this year?
- Where are the biggest accident risks in the fleet?

> IT'S DOING THE WORK OF WHAT WOULD TAKE A DATA ANALYST LITERALLY HOURS MINIMUM, IF NOT DAYS

- How can utilisation be improved and cost reduced?
- Which drivers or vehicle groups require closer attention?

The system can produce summaries, detailed reports, spreadsheets and PDFs. It can also group information in practical ways, such as identifying vehicles due for replacement by model and showing the earliest and latest planned end dates.

Bates said the real benefit is the time saved.

"It's doing the work of what would take a data analyst literally hours minimum, if not days," he said.

The Fleet Manager is not removed from the process. Instead, the technology gives them more time to interpret results, engage operational stakeholders and decide what action is appropriate.

Turning reporting into action

Traditional fleet reporting can explain what happened. The more useful question is what should happen next.

A report on accident claims may identify a high number of low-speed incidents, missed fuel events, animal strikes or concerning driver behaviour trends. AI Fleet Insights™ can then identify areas for investigation and suggest possible mitigation actions.

This is where the technology could be particularly useful for smaller fleet teams.

Many Fleet Managers understand the patterns in their fleet because of their experience. However, they may not have the time or technical resources to prove those insights with data.

AI can help turn that knowledge into evidence that is easier to present to Finance Managers, Executives and operational leaders.

Dominic Natoli, Strategic Sales and Marketing Manager at Summit Fleet Leasing and Management, told Fleet News Group the opportunity is not simply to provide more information.

"The key here is not just giving customers a tool to say, 'great, we can all produce data'," Natoli said. "But then off that data, what is an action that you can take that's going to improve the efficiency or safety or cost of that?"

Data quality still matters

For all the potential of AI, Bates is clear that fleet data needs to be managed properly.

"Data governance is a really important part of any data analysis system, whether it's a report, whether it's BI, or whether it's AI," he said.

Fleet organisations with inconsistent vehicle descriptions, incomplete asset records or unreliable odometer data should not expect AI to solve every problem automatically. It can help manage some inconsistencies, but clean data will always produce better results.

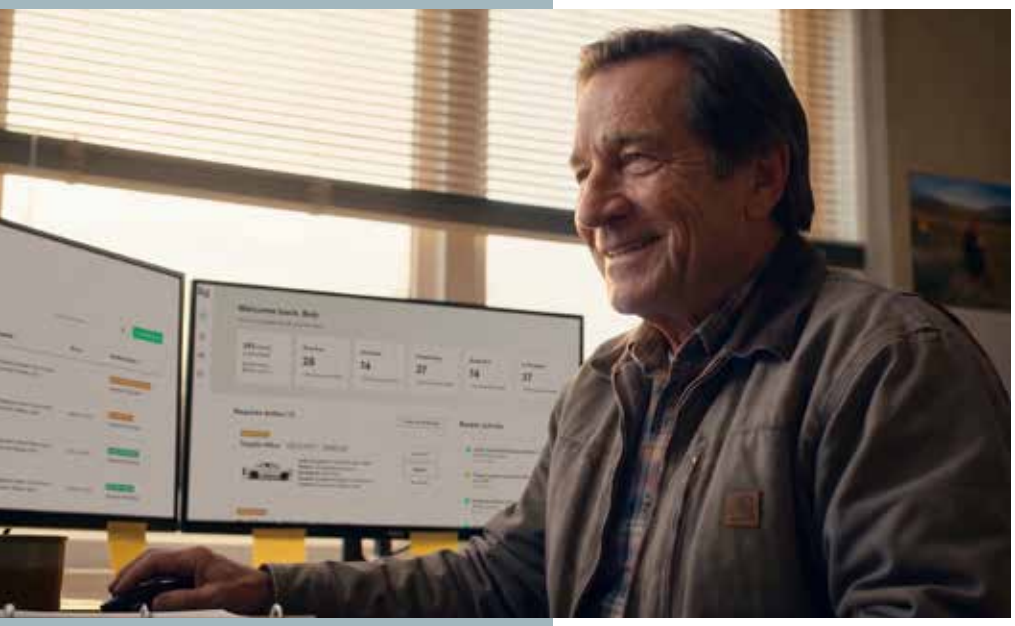
"Getting their data clean [is] the first thing they have to do," Bates said.

That is an important message for the fleet sector. AI is not a substitute for fleet management maturity. It is a tool that extends the value of good processes, quality data and experienced people.

For organisations under pressure to do more with less, practical AI tools could become an important part of the Fleet Manager's toolkit. The future of fleet management will still depend on people making sound decisions. But those people will be better equipped when they can move quickly from a question to an answer, and from an answer to action.

TRADITIONAL REPORTING	VS	AI FLEET INSIGHTS
2–7 days end-to-end	TIME FRAME	Seconds to minutes
High (requests, wait, follow-ups)	CUSTOMER EFFORT	Low (ask once in plain-English explanation)
Manual spreadsheet analysis	ANALYSIS EFFORTS	Automates complex data analysis
Dependant on analysis interpretation	INSIGHT QUALITY	Consistent, explainable insights

More **enterprise AI value ahead**



AI is useful now, but enterprise fleet value is still coming

Artificial intelligence is already helping Fleet Managers work faster. It can draft policies, analyse spreadsheets, summarise documents and turn a rough idea into a usable position description within minutes.

According to Eden Shirley, Managing Director and Founder at FleetGuru.ai, these applications are valuable, but they remain largely personal productivity tools rather than enterprise fleet solutions.

"I feel like AI is a very personal benefit at this stage, and there is a gap between enterprise benefit and personal benefit," Shirley said.

The next phase will require organisations to move beyond standalone chatbots and build systems that can use trusted company data to deliver accurate and repeatable operational outcomes.

Personal productivity is the starting point

Most Fleet Managers are currently using large language models to complete individual tasks. They may ask an AI platform to review a procedure, extract information from a spreadsheet, research a topic or improve a report.

These tools can save time and improve the quality of everyday work, but they are generally operating outside the organisation's core fleet processes.

As Shirley explained, there is "a very big difference" between an individual using AI to fast-track a business case or improve a position description and an enterprise using it to automate operational decisions.

At enterprise level, an AI system needs to produce outcomes that are "repeatable and accurate" as well as trustworthy.

Enterprise AI needs structured data

The main barrier is not the language model. It is the quality, structure and accessibility of the organisation's data.

Enterprise AI needs to connect fleet information from maintenance systems, telematics, fuel cards, accounting platforms, customer databases and operational systems. That information must then be organised so the AI can understand relationships between vehicles, costs, locations, work orders, demand and business activity.

Shirley described this as creating a central organisational brain.

For fleet, that could mean combining sales forecasts with vehicle locations, maintenance schedules and operating costs to predict where assets will be needed. It could also help determine when vehicles should be serviced, replaced, relocated or removed from service.

The language model interprets the question, while structured data controls the answer.

"It is not an LLM making up what should happen to a car," Shirley said when describing FleetGuru.ai's maintenance technology. "It is published information from OEMs that says these are all the services and repairs and actions that need to be done."

This controlled approach reduces the risk of incorrect or invented responses.

Knowledge Capture

Systems data is only half the picture. Every fleet also runs on judgement that lives in people's heads: the coordinator who knows a particular model always comes back with a second fault, the manager who knows which repairer to trust with a gearbox, the unwritten rule about when to repair rather than replace.

For AI to act on that judgement, it has to be written down where the system can read it. In practice that means documenting the decision rules behind everyday calls: what gets approved automatically, what needs a second opinion, and what to do when the usual answer doesn't fit. Some of it can be recovered from history, because years of work orders, quotes and approvals are a record of thousands of expert decisions that AI can learn patterns from. But the fastest route is still the plainest one: get the experts to explain how they decide, and capture it as clear procedures the system can follow.

Once that knowledge is in the system, automation follows. Approving a standard service, booking a repair or authorising a known cost can happen without a person touching it, with the experts only pulled in for exceptions.

> THE FIRST ENTERPRISE-LEVEL BENEFITS FOR FLEET MANAGERS ARE LIKELY TO COME THROUGH FLEET SUPPLIERS

That is how automation spreads across the fleet maintenance spectrum rather than staying stuck on a few scripted tasks.

What enterprise AI will look like for fleets

In practical terms, Fleet Managers will eventually spend less time logging into separate platforms and manually combining data.

A Fleet Manager could receive a message in Microsoft Teams advising that 10 vehicles are due for servicing, reply with an instruction to schedule them, and have the system complete the bookings.

AI will also improve predictive maintenance, total cost of ownership modelling, route planning, tendering, demand forecasting and asset allocation.

Instead of relying on fixed rules, systems will increasingly evaluate multiple signals and estimate the probability of future events.

Suppliers will lead the next step

Many organisations are still working through data security, privacy, sovereignty, system integration issues, and AI usage policies. This means the first enterprise-level benefits for Fleet Managers are likely to come through fleet suppliers.

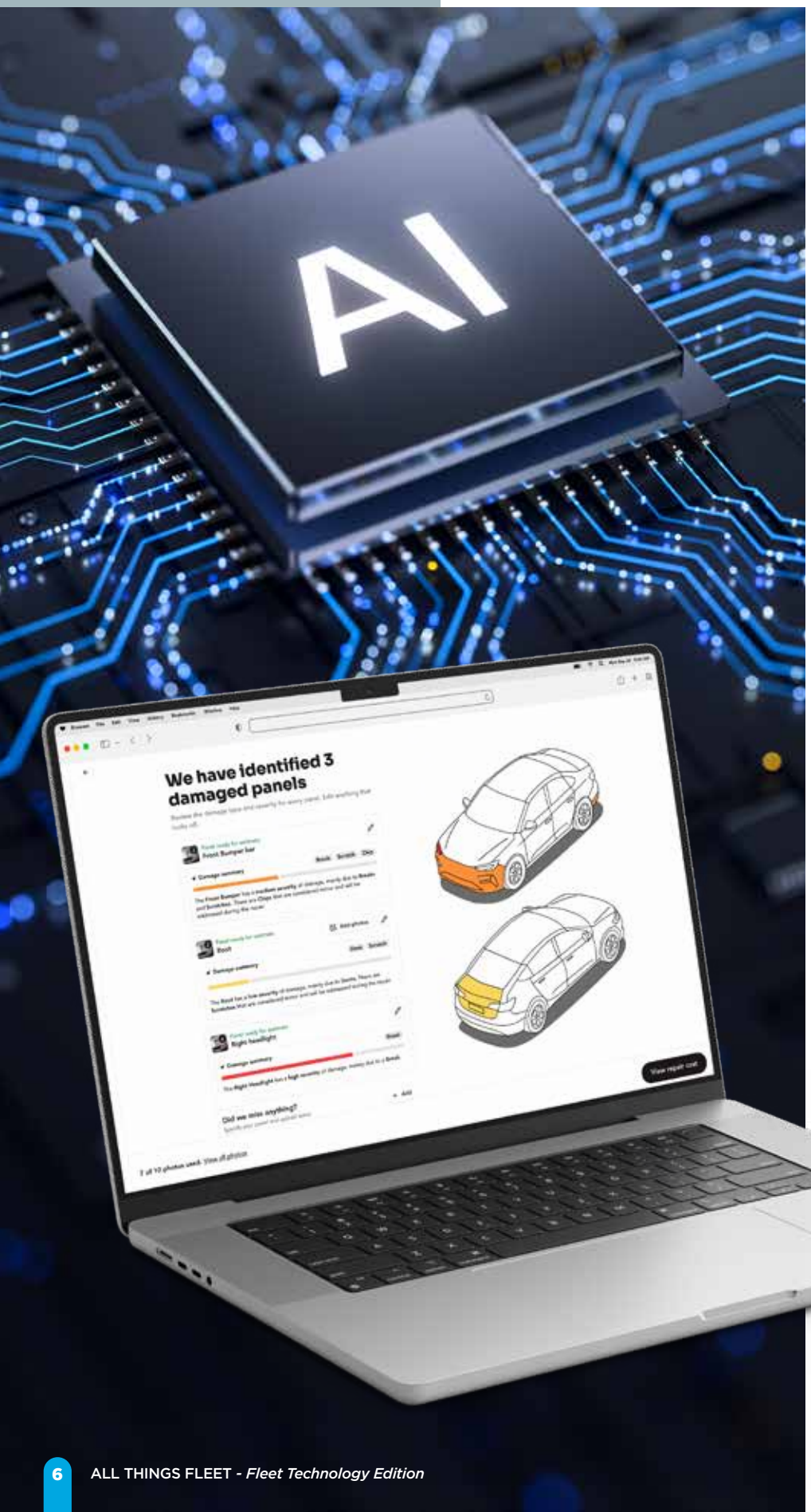
Telematics providers, fleet management organisations and maintenance platforms are already developing AI tools using structured fleet data.

"The major service providers are obviously leading the charge," Shirley said.

In the short term, Fleet Managers should continue using AI to improve their own productivity while asking suppliers how their platforms are applying it. The most useful preparation costs nothing: start documenting how your fleet decisions actually get made, because those procedures become the raw material the systems will run on. The larger opportunity will arrive when those tools connect reliable data with repeatable actions across the fleet operation.

That is when AI will move from being a helpful assistant to becoming part of the organisation's operating model.

AI fast-tracks damage estimates



DingGo has launched Crash Intelligence, an AI-powered platform designed to estimate the cost of minor vehicle damage from a small number of photographs.

The platform is aimed at dealerships, repairers and fleet operators that need a faster way to assess dents, scratches, scuffs and minor collision damage.

Crash Intelligence uses data from hundreds of thousands of completed Australian repairs managed through DingGo's network. The company says the platform matches photographed damage against actual repair outcomes to provide an estimate within seconds.

For fleets, the technology could support faster decisions following minor incidents, during end-of-lease inspections or when preparing vehicles for disposal. It may also help Fleet Managers compare likely repair costs before deciding whether work should be approved.

DingGo claims the platform can achieve approximately 95 per cent accuracy for smaller, photo-based repairs. More complex damage may still require a detailed physical inspection before work is authorised.

"We hear the same pain point over and over again, from dealer principals to service managers," said DingGo Co-Founder and CEO Shaun Janks.

"They know that there's revenue in the damage they see every day, but they have no fast, reliable way to price it. By the time a quote comes back from a third party, the customer is gone and the margin goes with them."

The platform may also help repairers reduce the time spent preparing initial assessments and re-quoting work.

DingGo says every completed repair managed through the system contributes further data, which is used to improve future estimates.

DingGo

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CRASH INTELLIGENCE
AI Damage Assessment
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Connected trailers deliver insights

Connected trailers move fleet efficiency beyond the truck

For years, the trailer has often been treated as the quiet part of a transport operation. It carries the load, follows the prime mover and is serviced when something goes wrong. But as fleet operators look for more productivity from existing assets, that approach is starting to change.

Connected-trailer technology is turning trailers into active sources of operational information. Rather than simply knowing where a truck is, Fleet Managers can gain visibility of trailer location, refrigeration performance, technical health, cargo conditions and maintenance needs.

Brad Lane, General Manager – Sales Excellence & Marketing at Freighter Group, told delegates at TruckShowX that the change is not simply about installing another telematics device. It is about replacing fragmented data and reactive fleet practices with a clearer view of how the whole transport task is performing.

"We aren't just seeing a change in technology, we are seeing a fundamental shift in what fleet operators demand from their equipment to stay competitive," Lane said.

"The industry is moving away from guesswork and towards real-time data [and] unified intelligence."

The trailer becomes part of the fleet data platform

For many transport operators, telematics has traditionally focused on the truck and driver. Yet the trailer can contain some of the fleet's most valuable assets and most critical operating risks.

A refrigerated trailer may be carrying temperature-sensitive food or pharmaceuticals. A dry freight trailer may be waiting at a customer site, underutilised or disconnected from the truck that brought it there. A trailer's braking, tyre, refrigeration and load systems may all hold valuable information that is rarely visible until a defect, delay or service issue occurs.

Connected-trailer platforms bring these data points together. GPS location, component diagnostics, refrigeration temperature, security status and maintenance indicators can be made available through a single system.

Lane said this matters because many fleets are made up of different trailer brands, ages and telematics systems.

"Most fleets are a mix of different brands and ages, leading to fragmented silos where nothing communicates," he said.

The opportunity is to create one view across the fleet rather than requiring dispatchers, workshop teams and Fleet Managers to move between separate portals, spreadsheets and manual records.

For a transport business, that can mean faster decisions about where trailers are, whether they are fit for service and whether they are performing the work expected of them.

Moving maintenance from reaction to prediction

Downtime remains one of the most expensive problems in freight transport. A trailer defect can delay a delivery, disrupt a planned load, require an unplanned repair and leave equipment unavailable when demand is highest.

Connected systems can support a more disciplined approach by identifying emerging technical issues before they become roadside failures.

> TOTAL TRANSPARENCY MEANS YOU CAN PROVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE LOAD EVERY SECOND OF ITS JOURNEY

Lane described telematics as an integration of telecommunications, IoT and data analytics, with practical applications including "real-time component diagnostics to identify mechanical issues before they become critical" and predictive maintenance.

The value is not that technology eliminates maintenance. It is that it gives workshop teams and Fleet Managers more time to plan it.

When trailer data is linked with maintenance systems, fleets can schedule inspections and repairs around known utilisation patterns, planned downtime and upcoming work. That may reduce breakdowns, avoid unnecessary servicing and help ensure the right parts and labour are available before the trailer enters the workshop.

This is especially important as transport operators work to do more with existing fleet assets. Higher trailer utilisation only delivers a benefit when asset reliability keeps pace.

Protecting the cargo, not just tracking the asset

For temperature-controlled transport, connectivity has another important role: demonstrating that cargo conditions have been maintained throughout the journey.

Lane said real-time location and temperature monitoring were becoming increasingly important in sectors such as food and pharmaceuticals.

"Total transparency means you can prove the integrity of the load every second of its journey," he said. "This isn't just about tracking it, it's about protecting the value of the cargo."

Digital records can reduce reliance on manual temperature logs and paper-based compliance records. This can save administration time, reduce the risk of human error and make it easier to provide evidence when a customer, auditor or regulator needs it.

The same principle applies beyond refrigerated freight. Load status, door activity, trailer location and security alerts can help operators respond earlier when a delivery is delayed, a trailer is moved unexpectedly or a load may be at risk.

Integration is where the real value sits

The biggest gains from connected trailers are unlikely to come from simply fitting hardware. They come when the data becomes part of daily fleet decision-making.

Lane outlined a staged approach that starts with identifying the data gaps that matter most to the operation, whether that is temperature fluctuations, unplanned maintenance or utilisation inefficiencies.

A pilot program can then test the value in a small group of trailers before the technology is integrated with transport management, enterprise resource planning and maintenance systems.

"This is where the real efficiency gains occur," Lane said. "Dispatchers and Fleet Managers should have a single unified source of truth to make informed decisions."

That is an important distinction for fleets considering connected-trailer technology. Data that sits in an isolated dashboard may be useful, but data that helps schedule work, plan maintenance, protect cargo and improve trailer utilisation has a direct operational purpose.

A more mature approach to trailer management

The connected-trailer shift is also a maturity issue for fleets.

Trailer management has often focused on compliance, repairs and replacement. Those activities remain essential, but technology creates an opportunity to manage trailers as productive, measurable assets that influence customer service, operating cost and revenue.

The challenge for Fleet Managers is to ask better questions. Which trailers are sitting idle? Which assets are repeatedly generating defects? Are refrigeration issues causing hidden customer-service risks? Is trailer data being used to improve planning, or simply collected because the technology is available?

Connected trailers will not replace fleet expertise. They will make that expertise more valuable.

As Lane put it: "A smart factory builds a smart trailer." For fleet operators, the next step is ensuring those smart trailers are supported by equally smart management practices.

Alignment data drives efficiency

Alignment data puts tyres at the centre of fleet efficiency

For many fleets, wheel alignment is still treated as a workshop task triggered by irregular tyre wear or a driver complaint. But precision alignment technology is changing that conversation.

When every axle angle is measured, recorded and connected to operational results, tyre workshops can become a valuable source of fleet-efficiency data. The information can help Fleet Managers identify unnecessary drag, improve tyre life, reduce fuel use and build a clearer picture of how a vehicle is performing in its actual application.

Lachlan Van de Haar, CEO of Big Wheels Truck Alignment, says the starting point is looking beyond a basic adjustment.

"We use an OEM-approved truck cam technology… to look at every single axle and every angle on each vehicle," he said.

That creates a much richer maintenance record than a simple pass-or-fail assessment. It also gives fleets evidence to compare before-and-after fuel use, tyre wear and driver feedback.

Measuring the hidden drag

Poor alignment does more than wear out tyres. It creates rolling resistance that asks the engine to work harder for every kilometre travelled.

"Poor alignment introduces drag into a vehicle," Van de Haar said. "If you're seeing the excessive tyre wear and things like this, then obviously something is dragging, which is also going to cause an inefficiency."

This is where alignment data becomes useful for fleet decision-makers. A workshop can identify the mechanical issue, but the fleet team can connect it to operating cost, vehicle deployment and replacement planning.

In a case study involving urban delivery trucks, Big Wheels measured fuel use over 8,000 kilometres before alignment and another 8,000 kilometres after the work was completed. The assessment used invoices and telematics data to verify the result.

The study reported a 7.6 per cent reduction in fuel use, along with projected annual savings of around $3,057 per truck when fuel and tyre savings were combined.

The biggest lesson was not that every fleet will achieve the same result. It was that alignment can be measured as an efficiency intervention rather than treated as a reactive repair.

Matching alignment to the job

A truck operating in stop-start metropolitan deliveries has very different demands from a prime mover hauling refrigerated trailers between Melbourne and Sydney.

That is why the workshop data needs to be considered alongside the fleet's real operating environment. Turning circles, road surfaces, axle loads, trailer configuration and route type all influence the ideal alignment settings.

Van de Haar said the approach is to "purpose build the vehicle set-up based on what it's doing".

"We didn't just sort of straighten the wheels, we didn't just toe, you know, set toe and forget," he said. "We precision aligned them, so we camber, caster, toe and thrust angle aligned to suit their application."

For the linehaul case study, the work extended beyond the prime mover. The drive axles and all three trailer axles were adjusted so the whole combination tracked correctly.

"We didn't just let them follow in the breeze," Van de Haar said.

The reported outcome was a 10.1 per cent reduction in fuel use. Whether those figures are replicated in another fleet will depend on the condition and use of its assets, but the principle remains relevant: trailers need to be included in efficiency analysis.

A better conversation with drivers

The data opportunity is not limited to fuel and tyres. Driver feedback can show whether an intervention is also improving ride, handling and fatigue.

In the urban delivery study, drivers reported improved comfort, braking confidence and less vibration and noise after alignment. One driver said, "The truck just glides and I finish my shift feeling less tired or less stressed and feeling more confident about the driving on the road."

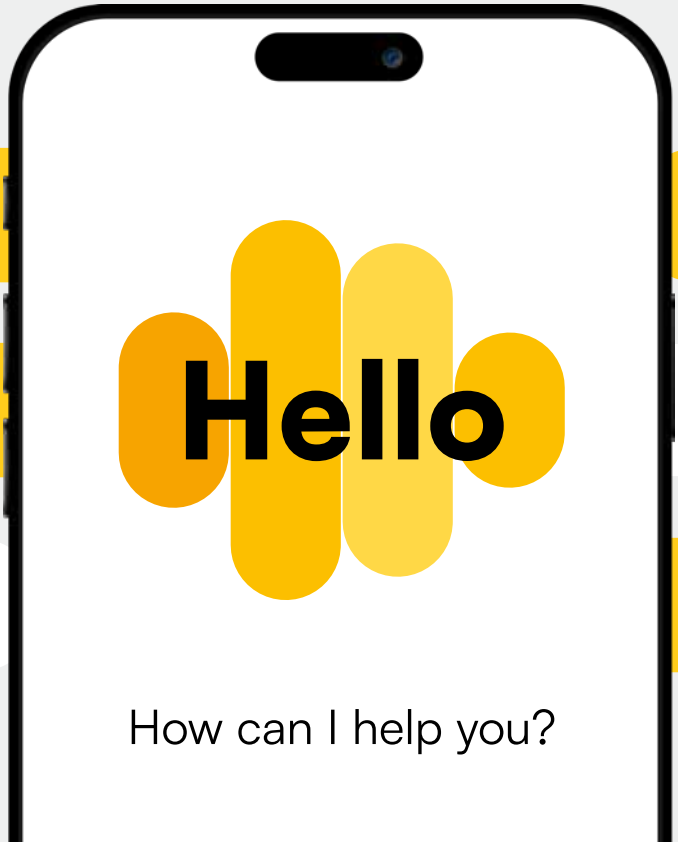
For Fleet Managers, this turns a tyre workshop visit into a broader fleet-performance discussion.

The most mature fleets will not wait for tyres to wear prematurely before taking action. They will use alignment records, telematics, tyre life and driver feedback to identify patterns, prioritise work and demonstrate the value of maintenance investment.

Precision alignment may be a technical workshop service, but the data it creates can help the whole fleet work more efficiently.

Meet Mic

Your AI-powered fleet guru



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Technology built for safer journeys

Technology with a single goal: getting everyone home safely

When Mainfreight Australia first partnered with AutoSense in 2019, the objective was simple: support drivers and strengthen safety across its growing transport network.

Seven years later, that commitment remains unchanged. What has evolved is the scale of the partnership, sophistication of the technology and depth of insight to protect drivers and everyone sharing the road with them. Today, the technology helps Mainfreight identify and respond to fatigue and distraction risks before they become serious incidents.

In October 2024, Mainfreight Australia had 158 Guardian cameras installed across its fleet. Today, the fleet operates 815 AutoSense systems, including a combination of Guardian by Seeing Machines cameras and AutoSense Vision cameras.

The technology has become a critical part of Mainfreight's safety ecosystem, providing real-time fatigue and distraction detection, event monitoring and operational insights, to improve drivers' safety. Over seven years, fatigue events fell by more than 94%, from 15.48 (July 2019) to just 0.85 (May 2026) events per 10,000km driven.

A system of education, transparency and trust

Mainfreight places a strong emphasis on driver education and transparency so drivers understand how the system works, when events are triggered and how privacy is protected. Footage is reviewed and only used in cases of fatigue and distraction events causing significant concern.

Many drivers start their shifts at night and spend long hours on the road. To provide multiple layers of protection, Mainfreight combine's Guardian's round-the-clock monitoring centre with its own dedicated team. Together, they detect fatigue or distraction events, conduct welfare checks and provide real-time support to drivers to address risks quickly.

Turning data into action

Technology alone does not improve safety outcomes. Guardian's data, combined with event verification from the 24/7 human support team, gives Mainfreight's team insights that support driver coaching and reveal long-term trends.

"We get the monthly Guardian report, which shows us trends and performance over the previous 12 months," confirms Brooke Bailey, Fleet Safety & Transport Compliance Manager. "It's really useful for understanding what's working well, where we can continue to improve and the progress we're making."

One of the most significant developments in the partnership has been Mainfreight Australia's adoption of AutoSense's Fatigue 5 program. Developed with AutoSense sleep and fatigue specialist Katrina Aubrey, the program identifies high-risk drivers and moves beyond recording fatigue alerts to understand why they occur.

As Ashley Taylor, National Support, Australia at Mainfreight says: "Nobody ever thinks they're tired. We've had a couple of drivers that have had some serious health issues, and it's through Katrina's specialist review of a driver who may be nodding off a lot, and providing her assessment in the Fatigue 5 report, that these issues have been picked up."

Every month, Ashley and Brooke review the Fatigue 5 report before engaging with drivers to intervene before fatigue escalates into a serious safety issue. The approach has helped create more constructive conversations around fatigue.

Continuing to raise the bar

For Mainfreight, the value of the partnership lies in its ability to evolve alongside the business as risks and obligations change. As Chain of Responsibility obligations evolve, the business is focused on continuous improvement, not just compliance.

The Guardian Gen 3 technology is the latest development to help Mainfreight manage fatigue and distraction risks. The Early Drowsiness Detection feature alerts drivers when they're fatigued before a microsleep happens, using face and eye-tracking algorithms that measure head position, eye gaze and closure.

"You can always do better. You can always do more," Ashley says. "We're constantly reviewing our processes. We're still learning every day, but that's the benefit of working with good people and trusted providers like AutoSense."

For both Mainfreight Australia and AutoSense, the goal remains the same: helping every driver get home safely.

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Telematics builds trust

Turning truck data into customer confidence

For transport operators, telematics can be much more than a map showing where each truck is located. Used effectively, it can support driver coaching, maintenance planning, fuel management and the detailed reporting increasingly demanded by customers.

Hino-Connect is Hino Australia's factory-fitted telematics platform, providing operational data from the vehicle alongside remote diagnostics and customer support. For The Careful Carriers, the system has become an essential part of meeting its contractual obligations.

Deeper data from the truck

Aaron Daniel, Manager – Future Technology & Innovation at Hino Australia, said one of the advantages of an original equipment manufacturer telematics system is the depth of information available directly from the vehicle.

"An OEM-type arrangement gives you the full suite of data you can pull out of the truck, whereas some systems only give you very high-level stuff," Daniel said.

Hino-Connect can monitor information including fuel consumption, harsh braking, harsh acceleration, excessive engine speed, vehicle location and excessive idle time. It also provides service information, operational alerts and remote diagnostic support.

That level of detail allows organisations to move beyond simply identifying a problem and begin understanding why it is occurring.

"If you're going to coach somebody properly, you need to know the full package of information," Daniel said.

The platform's Business Intelligence module also provides reports across selected date ranges, vehicles and drivers. This gives Fleet Managers the flexibility to use a high-level dashboard or examine the performance of individual assets in greater detail.

Reporting that protects the contract

The Careful Carriers operates an integrated transport service for a major supermarket customer. Owner Zacc Smith said technology is important because the business faces extensive weekly reporting requirements covering safety, fuel use, compliance, incidents and vehicle performance.

"Because the Hino-Connect system has telematics, we're able to get reports off it to see harsh braking, excess idling, all those KPIs that we like to watch," Smith said.

The customer requires information on fuel consumption, speeding events, breakdowns, accidents and other compliance matters. While telematics does not complete the entire reporting matrix, it supplies data that would otherwise be difficult or time-consuming to collect.

> THE ORGANISATION HAS DATA IT CAN USE TO DEMONSTRATE COMPLIANCE

"There's a lot that is requested or required of customers that I wouldn't be able to do without the telematics," Smith said.

Asked whether the business could comply with the contract without Hino-Connect, his response was direct: "No."

The system also helps The Careful Carriers identify avoidable costs. An alert can show when a truck has been idling excessively at a delivery point, allowing the business to investigate the cause and discuss it with the driver.

"If we didn't have that, we just wouldn't know," Smith said.

Connecting operations and maintenance

Hino-Connect includes remote vehicle monitoring, with severe fault alerts provided to the customer and a Hino-Connect Specialist. This can help determine whether a truck should stop immediately, return to a dealership or continue operating while repairs are arranged.

The platform also includes a service module that tracks maintenance intervals and highlights vehicles requiring attention. Hino-Connect is standard on all Hino 500 and 700 Series models, and now on 300 Series Hybrid Electric models, with Business Intelligence access complimentary for the first 12 months and remote diagnostics and Enhanced Care included for five years.

For Fleet Managers, the broader benefit is visibility. Rather than relying on assumptions, manual records or conversations after an event, the organisation has data it can use to demonstrate compliance, improve driver performance and provide customers with evidence that contractual requirements are being managed.

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HINO

From diesel fitter to fleet developer

Andrew Railz did not set out to become a software developer. His fleet management journey started in a far more traditional place: a workshop.

Now Managing Director at Railz Asset Management, Railz began his career as a diesel fitter before moving into workshop operations. Wanting to better understand the broader management task, he completed university studies in maintenance management - a decision that eventually took him to a large Regional Council.

It was there that theory met the reality of managing a large and diverse local government fleet.

“I realised pretty quickly that I probably had the theory, but I didn’t have the experience to manage a fleet of that size,” Railz said.

Rather than trying to work everything out alone, he sought advice from experienced fleet professionals through IPWEA and the wider local government network. His final role was Branch Manager, Fleet and Trade Services, where he was responsible for fleet operations as well as electricians, carpenters and painters, with a workforce of 55 people at one stage.

Fleet becomes a service enabler

Railz has watched fleet management evolve from a largely back-office function into a recognised profession.

He believes organisations now have a better understanding of the role fleet assets play in delivering visible community services such as roads, waste collection and drainage.

“Fleet is a service enabler,” he said.

Replacement planning sits at the centre of effective fleet performance.

Poor replacement planning affects service delivery, cost, risk and resource capacity. However, Fleet Managers have historically lacked the tools to translate those consequences into language that resonates with executives and finance teams.

The consequences compound over time. Weak justification for replacement funding creates backlogs that grow with each deferred decision. Those backlogs in turn distort workshop demand, inflate spare asset ratios and shift expenditure toward reactive maintenance, unplanned downtime and compliance exposure.

In the past, requests for additional funding were often based heavily on the Fleet Manager’s experience and relationships. Today, management expects evidence, traceability and clearly documented reasoning.

Moving beyond spreadsheets

Fleet technology has travelled a similar path.

Early systems, including basic Microsoft Access databases, could record assets and maintenance histories, but offered little assistance with optimisation. Knowledge was often held by the Fleet Manager or senior mechanic rather than captured in documented processes, a risk that grows as experienced employees leave the industry.

Telematics, better fleet systems and improved reporting have since given Fleet Managers more visibility. Instead of relying solely on instinct, they can use utilisation, maintenance, downtime and condition data to support decisions and improve efficiency.

That same evolution led Railz towards his latest venture.

After years of building fleet replacement models in Excel, he reached the limits of what spreadsheets could reliably manage.

“Essentially, I broke Excel,” he said.

The problem was not simply calculating when an asset reached an optimal replacement point. Many councils do not have the capacity to fund an optimal replacement program, so they must prioritise assets according to operational risk and funding constraints.

Railz's Fleet Model is designed as a decision-support tool that aligns fleet replacement planning with service, risk and funding requirements. Fleet Managers can model and compare the effects of different capital budgets, replacement delays and sustainability scenarios without losing sight of the original plan. Organisations can test fleet decisions before committing to a budget or operational change.

Making consequences visible

The replacement planning application is designed around real-world fleet management challenges, including incomplete data, funding and resource constraints, replacement backlog and operational continuity.

It includes a built-in data engine that automatically applies industry benchmarks where council data is unavailable, enabling Fleet Managers to model and compare multiple replacement scenarios in minutes rather than weeks. A fleet specification library covering common fleet assets reduces the administrative burden and the time required to establish a replacement program.

Future stages will enable users to model and compare asset lifecycle costs, including maintenance expenditure and workshop resource requirements.

For Railz, the objective is not to remove the Fleet Manager from the process. Human judgement remains essential. The aim is to give fleet professionals better evidence and a clearer way to explain their recommendations.

"It's not about replacing the Fleet Manager's judgement," he said. "It's about giving them the facts to back it up."

It is the latest step in a career that began with maintaining diesel equipment and has evolved into helping Fleet Managers secure a stronger seat at the executive table.

Manheim's new tech-driven auction ecosystem

We know good Fleet Managers should be across emerging technologies and understand which ones can help them. It's a broad and opaque sector bristling with revolutionary claims, but sorting the wheat from the chaff is essential for success.

There are procurement technologies to buy vehicles in the first place, telematics technologies to reduce running costs and collate vehicle data, and aggregated data technologies to best dispose of the assets when it's time to turn your fleet over.

This latter category is where Manheim Australia plays its part. As a leading automotive auction marketplace and remarketing solutions provider, it's our job to connect as many buyers to ex-fleet and lease cars as possible, thereby maximising their disposal value.

This much is clear. But how do we use this broad umbrella term of 'fleet technologies' to expedite this process? The clearest and most relevant examples that come to mind are Manheim's unprecedented site relocations, which we are in the thick of right now.

Manheim has now moved its Brisbane auction facility to the TradeCoast precinct. A greenfield site with room for nearly 1000 cars under a roof, four drive-through auction lanes, and inspection facilities. We will repeat these moves in Sydney and Melbourne in the coming months.

Fleet technologies are an important part in ensuring we sell assets for our network of vendors as effectively as possible at these new sites. Case in point our flash new Detectary photo booths which we are rolling out starting in Brisbane, and which capture immersive 360-degree interior images and long-anticipated underbody shots.

These technology-laden booths do two important things to help us improve our services to fleet partners: We can capture more detailed vehicle images to create better listings and thereby make assets more desirable to the secondary wholesale market, and we capture images more quickly so cars are consigned and ultimately sold off more rapidly.

The end results? Clear potential for faster and higher-yield sales for Fleet Managers and financial controllers.

Phase two of our fleet technology roadmap is arguably even more important: New partially automated inspection tunnels that will help us recongise vehicle damage more effectively; including potentially capturing unfair wear-and-tear. These are just around the corner for us now, and will soon begin calibration work to be as fit-for-purpose as possible.

They will give each car two sets of checks; the tunnel's scanning abilities and those of our human inspectors who will verify and validate. This will capture more detail and reduce errors.

Better, more accurate inspections and listings will strengthen our marketplace, build consumer trust, and ultimately help our fleet partners - be they leasing companies, large and small businesses, governments or not-for-profits - more effectively dispose of their cars.

New sites, new technologies, and ongoing improvements to our buying process such as simulcast platform, invoice portal and more, ensure Manheim stays as match-fit as possible and plays its part in the wider fleet ecosystem. That's ultimately what effective and selective use of fleet technologies is all about!

Keeping **pace with technology**

Vehicle technology is advancing beyond larger screens and longer equipment lists. For fleet buyers, the changes are reaching deeper into powertrains, safety systems, software architecture and the way vehicles need to be introduced to drivers.

Meng Chen, Head of Product at MG Motor Australia, said the company's priority was to use technology to improve the ownership and driving experience.

"MG's technology will always want to let the customer feel that the vehicle is better to drive and also safer to drive and also easier to own," Chen said.

He pointed to improvements in electric motors, batteries, system integration and control algorithms as examples of where technology can deliver practical benefits. These systems need to work together to improve performance and range without automatically adding a significant price premium.

Safety creates fleet opportunities

Safety technology is particularly important in the fleet market, where minimum safety ratings are commonly included in vehicle procurement policies.

Chen said MG had worked to improve the safety performance of several models, including moving the ZS from a four-star to a five-star ANCAP rating.

He explained that adding a centre airbag to improve protection in far-side impacts helped improve adult occupant protection. While the additional equipment increased the cost of producing the vehicle, it also expanded the potential market.

"With a five star, that we can also open a very different market opportunity," Chen said. "We can sell more fleet customer, and we can also enable the retail customer to perceive the vehicle as a safer one."

This highlights the commercial relationship between safety, scale and affordability. A higher safety rating can make a vehicle eligible for more fleet tenders, with increased sales volumes helping manufacturers absorb the cost of the additional technology.

Handover is becoming more important

The increasing complexity of new vehicles is also changing the role of dealers.

Drivers moving from a five or seven-year-old vehicle may be unfamiliar with regenerative braking, advanced driver assistance systems, charging information, software menus and the operating characteristics of hybrid or electric powertrains.

Chen acknowledged that the automotive industry needed to continue investing in customer education.

"Vehicle gets more software driven, and the handover conversation, the standard of the deliver process is matters more than ever than it used to be," he said.

This challenge is amplified for fleets, where one vehicle may be used by several employees and drivers may not receive the same personal handover as a private buyer.

"Speaking to the fleet customers specifically, that handover process matters even more because you've got multiple drivers who may not all get the same one-on-one time privately as the retail customer buyer," Chen said.

For Fleet Managers, vehicle delivery may therefore need to be supported by internal inductions, driver guides and ongoing training rather than relying solely on the dealership handover.

'China time' meets Australian conditions

Chen described "China time" as the faster pace of vehicle and technology development being driven by intense competition in the Chinese market.

However, he said shorter development cycles should not mean removing local testing and validation. Vehicles still need to be assessed for Australian roads, climate and towing requirements before reaching customers.

Software-first vehicle architecture will also allow manufacturers to make changes more quickly after a vehicle has been delivered. Chen said MG was working towards offering over-the-air software updates across every model sold in Australia within the next 12 to 24 months.

For fleets, this could help vehicles remain current during their operating life. It will also require Fleet Managers to consider how updates are controlled, communicated and incorporated into driver training.

Technology is evolving quickly, but its fleet value will depend on more than the specification sheet. Safety, local validation, driver education and long-term support will determine whether the latest features deliver measurable operational benefits.

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Rhino **Guard reduces plastic waste**

Sustainability is more than changing the powertrain

Fleet decarbonisation conversations tend to focus on the vehicle's energy source. Battery electric, hydrogen and lower-carbon fuels all have an important role, but a presentation at TruckShowX highlighted why fleets also need to look beyond the powertrain.

Scott Donnelly, New Energy & Emissions Reduction Lead at TR Group, and Will Samuel, General Manager at Rhino Guards, explained how component selection, manufacturing, recycling and supply security can contribute to a fleet's environmental performance.

Look at the whole vehicle

TR Group operates approximately 10,000 trucks and trailers across Australia and New Zealand, including more than 100 low and zero-emission vehicles.

Donnelly said new technology still needs to meet fundamental operational requirements.

"Nothing we do works unless it works operationally," he said. "If it doesn't stack up on uptime, whole-of-life cost and supply security, simply our operators won't touch it, and nor should they."

This approach applies to major investments such as alternative powertrains, but also to smaller components fitted across thousands of vehicles.

For fleets preparing environmental, social and governance disclosures, the questions are becoming more detailed. Organisations increasingly need to understand what products are made from, how they are manufactured and what happens at the end of their working life.

Closing the loop on plastic

Rhino Guard's recycling program began after a customer asked what happened to its plastic mudguards at the end of their service life.

The answer was uncomfortable. Large plastic components were generally sent to landfill and, in some cases, burned.

Rhino Guards responded by developing a process that allows used guards to be collected, cleaned, shredded and returned to the manufacturing process. The company then measured the carbon footprint of the recycled product across approximately 50 data points, including raw materials, freight, energy use, manufacturing and distribution.

The independently verification from Toitū Envirocare resulted in a 76 per cent reduction in carbon emissions compared with manufacturing guards from virgin material.

The measurement process took several years and required detailed evidence from suppliers and transport providers.

The lesson for Fleet Managers is that environmental claims need reliable data behind them. Measuring an initiative can turn a good sustainability story into information that can be included in procurement decisions, customer reporting and emissions reduction plans.

Whole-of-life cost still matters

A lower-carbon component will have limited value if it fails early or creates additional downtime.

TR Group replaces approximately 3.2 per cent of its mudguards each year, meaning a durable component may remain in the fleet for decades.

"Fleet economics is a brutal multiplier," Donnelly said. "That $100 saving in a part can easily turn into $1,000 of cost if you factor in failure, downtime, rework, tyre damage or early replacement."

Quality indicators such as fading, brittleness and cracking therefore matter because they can signal material degradation and shorter replacement cycles.

Recycled materials may also improve supply security by reducing dependence on virgin plastic, offshore production and volatile shipping routes.

Practical innovation at scale

Samuel said transport innovation does not always need to involve a new driveline or highly visible technology.

"Sometimes it's a lot simpler," he said. "Who would have thought that recycled plastics equals carbon reduction equals innovation?"

For fleets, the opportunity is to examine the full asset rather than treating the powertrain as the only source of emissions reduction.

A genuinely lower-carbon vehicle should combine an appropriate energy source with durable components, recycled materials, repairable designs and a clear end-of-life pathway.

The individual saving from one component may appear modest. Applied across thousands of vehicles and long replacement cycles, however, these decisions can improve environmental performance, lower operating risk and support a more mature approach to fleet management.

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Smartrak **powers regional safety**

Technology turns fleet data into a safer regional operation

For a regional utility, fleet safety is about much more than vehicle condition. It is also about knowing where people are, understanding the risks they face and having a reliable process when something goes wrong.

Wannon Water operates across a large and varied area of south-west Victoria. Its 115-vehicle fleet supports travel to treatment plants, remote headworks, customer sites and emergency call-outs, often on unsealed roads, through bushland and in areas with limited mobile coverage.

Many of these trips are completed by employees working alone, sometimes up to two hours from a major centre. That operating environment made improved visibility and communication a clear priority.

From lone-worker safety to fleet management

Wannon Water began working with Smartrak in 2015 after a workplace health and safety assessment identified the need to better support employees working in isolation or remote areas.

What started as a lone-worker safety initiative has since developed into a broader fleet management platform. The system now supports employee safety, compliance, driver behaviour monitoring, utilisation analysis and vehicle bookings.

This is a useful example of fleet management maturity. Rather than treating telematics as a stand-alone tracking tool, Wannon Water has integrated the technology into everyday operating processes.

Faster awareness when incidents occur

Automated crash detection provides an immediate alert when a significant vehicle incident is identified. This allows Wannon Water to escalate the event through established internal response procedures without relying solely on the driver making contact.

For employees travelling in remote areas, that extra layer of visibility can be critical. Regular testing also helps ensure staff understand how the system works and know that alerts are being monitored.

Managing risk during bushfire season

Regional operations also require a practical response to bushfire conditions.

Wannon Water uses geofencing to mirror CFA high-risk zones. Managers can be alerted when an employee enters a danger zone during a Total Fire Ban, allowing the organisation to communicate quickly, postpone non-essential work or escalate its response where required.

This turns location data into an operational decision-making tool, rather than simply a record of where a vehicle has travelled.

Using data to change behaviour

Telematics data provides insight into speeding, harsh braking and acceleration. Importantly, Wannon Water has taken an education-first approach instead of using the information primarily for disciplinary action.

Drivers receive monthly behaviour reports and anonymous comparisons with broader organisational trends. This gives employees a clearer understanding of their driving and helps reinforce safer habits.

The long-term result has been a steady decline in overspeed events over more than a decade. It also shows that transparency matters. Staff are more likely to accept fleet technology when they understand why it is being used and how the data supports their safety.

Planning the transition to electric vehicles

The same fleet data is now helping Wannon Water assess electric vehicle suitability.

When a pool vehicle is due for replacement, trip distances, usage patterns and driver behaviour can be reviewed to determine whether an EV is suitable. The fleet already includes four electric vehicles and one plug-in hybrid, with further adoption planned as confidence and operational evidence grow.

For Fleet Managers, the lesson is clear: technology creates the most value when it is linked to documented processes, employee education and better decisions. In Wannon Water's case, a safety system has evolved into a platform supporting risk management, fleet efficiency and long-term sustainability.

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25,000 kilometre EV journey

Schneider Electric's 25,000 kilometre EV journey offers lessons for Australian fleets

When Schneider Electric launched its On-the-Go Learning Centre, the goal was simple: take practical training directly to electricians, contractors and customers across Australia. Travelling by electric vehicle made sense. It aligned with the technologies being showcased and demonstrated how electrification can work in everyday conditions.

Several months into the tour, the roadshow has become something more than a mobile training centre. As the EV and trailer travel between metropolitan centres, regional communities and country towns, the journey is providing a realistic picture of what operating an electric fleet looks like on Australian roads.

By the end of the tour, the vehicle will have travelled around 25,000 kilometres. There have been long highway stretches, busy city stops, regional detours and hundreds of charging sessions. Together, they've created a useful reference point for fleet operators considering the transition to electric vehicles.

The experience has shown that EVs are well suited to many fleet applications, but success depends less on the vehicle itself than the planning that sits around it.

Planning starts before the vehicle leaves the depot

For fleets, every journey begins well before the ignition is switched on. Routes, schedules and driver requirements are all mapped out in advance, and operating an EV simply adds another consideration to that process.

Towing the Learning Centre has meant looking beyond the next charging station. The team needed to consider whether chargers are easy to access with a trailer attached, what alternatives exist if a charger is unavailable and how each charging stop fits within the day's schedule. Those decisions have become routine rather than exceptional, but they still require preparation.

Schneider Electric believes the same approach applies to businesses beginning their own electrification journey. Before selecting vehicles, organisations should understand how those vehicles will be used. Daily distances, operating hours, depot locations and charging opportunities all influence the right solution. Starting with a pilot fleet builds confidence before broader rollout.

Success also depends on the right charging infrastructure and intelligent energy management to optimise charging, balance demand and minimise costly grid upgrades. Schneider Electric supports organisations across the entire electrification journey, from residential to ultra-fast fleet charging.

Australia's charging network continues to evolve

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the journey has been the variation in charging experiences across different parts of the country.

Travelling between Sydney and Brisbane, the Pacific Highway presented few surprises. Charging locations were readily available and the trip progressed largely as expected, reflecting the continued growth of infrastructure connecting Australia's major population centres.

Regional routes have been less predictable.

On one trip through country New South Wales, the driver found a charger positioned at the rear of a one-way car park. While accessible for a passenger vehicle, it proved challenging for an EV towing a trailer. Later in the journey, a charger listed on a public charging app failed to respond after repeated

> THE DISCUSSIONS TAKING PLACE AT EACH STOP SUGGEST AUSTRALIA'S EV MARKET IS MATURING.

attempts. Rather than waiting indefinitely, the team adjusted its plans, charging overnight from a standard power outlet before continuing the next morning.

Neither situation stopped the journey, but both reinforced the value of understanding charging options before setting out.

For fleets operating across regional Australia, charging infrastructure has improved considerably over recent years, although gaps still exist in some locations. Schneider Electric sees continued investment beyond metropolitan areas as one of the biggest opportunities to support wider fleet electrification.

Looking beyond the charger

The roadshow has also highlighted that successful fleet electrification extends well beyond installing charging stations.

At one venue, mains power wasn't available to operate the On-the-Go Learning Centre. Instead of relying on a generator, the team powered the trailer directly from the Kia EV for the entire day, using only around nine per cent of the battery. It wasn't part of the original plan, but it demonstrated another practical application of electric vehicles that the team now intends to use wherever possible.

Experiences like this have reinforced Schneider Electric's view that successful fleet electrification is about more than vehicles and chargers. It requires an integrated energy technology approach. This enables smart charging, load management and real-time visibility, helping businesses optimise energy use, reduce costs and avoid overloading infrastructure. By integrating EV charging with broader energy systems, organisations can build sites that are scalable, efficient and ready for future fleet growth.

Conversations have shifted

The discussions taking place at each stop suggest Australia's EV market is maturing.

Earlier conversations often centred on the vehicles themselves. Today, customers are asking different questions. How will charging affect productivity? Is there enough infrastructure along regional routes? What changes are needed at depots? How can businesses prepare their sites before additional vehicles arrive?

Those are practical operational questions rather than questions about the technology itself.

Electricians and contractors attending the Learning Centre are also seeing increasing interest from businesses planning future charging installations. For many organisations, attention has shifted from whether to electrify towards understanding how to implement the transition successfully.

Lessons that only come from driving

Not every insight has come from a charging stop.

Travelling through Bathurst, the team took the opportunity to complete a lap of Mount Panorama before continuing west. Elsewhere, range testing explored how different highway speeds affected battery consumption while towing. Driving at lower speeds extended the available range, although travelling too slowly proved impractical on busy regional roads where surrounding traffic was moving considerably faster. Further testing found a more suitable balance between efficiency and safe traffic flow.

These are the kinds of operational details that rarely appear in product brochures but quickly become part of everyday fleet management.

A practical picture of fleet electrification

The On-the-Go Learning Centre wasn't designed as an endurance trial, yet it has become a valuable demonstration of how electric vehicles perform in real operating conditions.

The kilometres travelled suggest that many of the foundations are already in place. Australia's charging network continues to expand, EV technology continues to improve and businesses are becoming more familiar with the planning required to operate electric fleets successfully.

The journey hasn't suggested that every fleet can electrify overnight. Vehicle suitability, charging infrastructure and operating requirements will differ from one business to the next. What it has shown is that the conversation has moved beyond possibility. For many Australian fleets, the focus is now on planning the transition well, understanding the operational requirements and building the right energy infrastructure to support it.

By Tim Pratt, Vice President, Power Products, Schneider Electric.

HiLux capability goes electric

Electric technology, traditional HiLux expectations

Toyota's first battery-electric HiLux uses dual electric motors, sophisticated traction control and an unconventional rear axle to preserve the capability customers expect from Australia's best-known work ute.

Replacing a diesel engine with a battery and electric motors is relatively straightforward. Making the finished vehicle behave like a HiLux while carrying tools, crossing rough ground and operating in extreme temperatures is the more difficult engineering task.

Toyota's solution begins with a 59.2kWh lithium-ion battery and separate electric motors driving the front and rear axles. Together, they produce 144kW and 468Nm, with the all-wheel-drive system able to vary torque distribution from an even 50:50 split to rear-wheel drive.

The electric drivetrain's immediate torque should be useful at low speeds, particularly on loose or uneven surfaces. However, Toyota has also calibrated the power delivery to work with a six-mode Multi-Terrain Select system, which manages motor output, wheel slip and braking for different off-road conditions.

The HiLux BEV has a claimed NEDC range of 315km in pick-up form and 245km as a cab-chassis. Payload reaches 855kg, while braked towing capacity is 2,000kg. Those figures will not suit every diesel application, but they provide a workable starting point for fleets with predictable routes, depot charging and clearly defined daily distances.

A different kind of rear axle

The most interesting engineering change sits behind the battery.

Rather than retaining the conventional live rear axle used by diesel HiLux models, Toyota has fitted a De Dion rear axle with leaf springs. The design keeps the rear wheels mechanically linked, supporting wheel articulation and load-carrying performance, but mounts the electric transaxle to the chassis rather than carrying it with the axle.

Reducing the amount of unsprung weight helps the suspension control wheel movement and improves ride quality, particularly when the vehicle is unladen. At the same time, the leaf springs preserve the robust, load-focused characteristics expected from a work ute.

Independent front suspension, electric power steering, hill descent control and a full-size spare wheel further demonstrate that Toyota has developed the BEV for operational use rather than treating it as a lifestyle derivative.

Toyota says prototypes were tested with major mining companies for more than two years, including operation in temperatures reaching 50°C, without recorded downtime. That program placed particular pressure on the battery's thermal management, electrical components and underbody durability.

The whole-of-life-cost position

Fleet News Group's modelling estimates annual whole-of-life cost at $17,688 for the HiLux SR 4x4 BEV, compared with $16,650 for the SR 4x4 diesel and $15,870 for the WorkMate 4x4 diesel.

That places the BEV SR $1,038 a year above the equivalent diesel SR, despite a $17,000 difference in the estimated NSW driveaway price. Across four years, the modelled WOLC difference is $4,152.

The HiLux BEV is therefore not the lowest-cost option in this comparison. Its case rests on finding applications where the range is sufficient, charging is controlled and reduced tailpipe emissions carry operational value. The important achievement is that Toyota has used electric-drive and suspension technology to produce something more useful than an electric ute wearing a familiar badge.

Toyota HiLux variant	WorkMate 4x4 diesel	SR 4x4 diesel	SR 4x4 BEV
Estimated NSW driveaway price	$60,000	$66,000	$83,000
Combined consumption	8.6L/100km	7.2L/100km	20kWh/100km
Tailpipe CO_2	194g/km	189g/km	0g/km
ANCAP rating	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
Annual WOLC	$15,870	$16,650	$17,688

Fleet News Group estimates based on 48 months and 100,000km. Driveaway prices were calculated in NSW and rounded up.

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Pre-production model shown

Find out more about the New Toyota HiLux

OH WHAT A FEELING

Smarter **data drives resale value**

Better data, stronger bids: How technology is changing fleet remarketing

For fleets and leasing companies, selling vehicles at the end of their working life is more than an administrative task. The result achieved at auction can influence whole-of-life costs, lease performance and the funding available for replacement vehicles.

Manheim's investment in imaging, inspection and auction technology is designed to give sellers better information before the sale while helping buyers bid with greater confidence.

Reducing uncertainty for buyers

Online auctions have expanded the potential buyer pool, but remote bidders need enough information to assess a vehicle without standing beside it.

Manheim's new Detectary photo booths capture 360-degree interior and exterior images, along with photographs of the underside of each vehicle. This provides a more complete and consistent view than a standard set of auction photographs.

When buyers can clearly see the vehicle, they are better placed to assess its condition and likely preparation costs. Without that detail, bidders may lower their offers to allow for unknown risks.

Better images cannot guarantee a higher price, but they can reduce uncertainty and give buyers more confidence to bid closer to the asset's perceived market value.

AI brings consistency to damage assessment

Manheim is also investing in damage detection technology that can use AI to identify dents, scratches and other end-of-life damage.

For Fleet Managers, this creates a more consistent basis for deciding how a vehicle should be prepared and priced. It can help separate normal wear and tear from damage that may materially affect the sale result.

This information can then support three important decisions: whether to repair the vehicle, how to set the reserve price and whether damage costs should be recovered from a driver, customer or lessee under the relevant agreement.

Where a repair is likely to increase the auction return by more than it costs, completing the work may be worthwhile. Where the financial benefit is limited, the fleet may choose to sell the vehicle in its existing condition and adjust the reserve accordingly.

For leasing companies, documented damage can also provide evidence when recovering repair costs or the reduction in sale value caused by excessive wear.

Better evidence for reserve setting

Reserve prices are often based on age, kilometres, market guides and recent auction results. Inspection data adds the actual condition of the individual asset to that calculation.

A vehicle in better-than-average condition may justify a stronger reserve. A damaged vehicle may require either rectification or a more realistic price expectation.

Using consistent images and condition information should make the reserve-setting process more disciplined and reduce the risk of making decisions based on incomplete or subjective assessments.

Reaching more auction buyers

Technology inside the auction lane is also important. Manheim's new facilities include high-definition cameras, upgraded audio and improved live simulcasts for online bidders.

A reliable digital auction experience allows buyers to participate from anywhere and follow the sale clearly. More active buyers can create stronger competition, particularly for well-presented vehicles with detailed condition information.

Cox Automotive Australia CEO Stephen Lester said the investment would improve Manheim's capabilities across its automotive, salvage and industrial operations.

"These significant and exciting capital investments demonstrate Manheim's commitment to excellence for our thousands of buyer and seller partners across the automotive, salvage and industrial sectors, and will take our operational capabilities to new heights," Lester said.

"Modern, future-proof, newly built and with long-term leases, these facilities demonstrate our commitment to the Australian market as a leading asset auctioneer."

For fleets and leasing companies, the benefit is a more transparent disposal process. Better photography, consistent inspections and AI-assisted damage assessment can support stronger decisions before auction—and give buyers the confidence needed to compete for the asset.

Manheim
Cox Automotive

Take Charge of Used EV Sales

Boost Trust & Drive Value with AVILOO Battery State of Health Tests at Manheim

AVILOO battery test certificates help Dealers confidently wholesale EV trade-ins by addressing a key barrier to purchase. For Dealers looking to source high-quality used EVs, AVILOO tests add trust and value to both purchase and resale.

AVILOO

Look out for SoH certificates on used EV's listed at **manheim.com.au**

Better data decisions

Technology should improve the service, not just the fleet

Fleet technology has moved beyond being an optional efficiency tool. Used properly, it can help fleet practitioners improve service delivery, strengthen compliance and turn operational data into better organisational decisions.

For many years, the business case for new fleet technology was difficult to establish. Systems could be expensive, integration was complicated and the financial return was not always easy to demonstrate.

That situation has changed. Fleet Management Information Systems, telematics, electronic inspections, digital work orders, supplier platforms and artificial intelligence tools are becoming more accessible and more capable. At the same time, fleet practitioners are being asked to manage broader responsibilities with fewer resources.

The opportunity, however, is not to introduce technology for technology's sake. The real value comes from using it to improve the level of service delivered to the organisation.

Start with the organisational outcome

Chapter 1 of the IPWEA Plant and Vehicle Management Manual makes the purpose of fleet management clear: organisations operate fleet assets to meet organisational objectives.

This should also be the starting point for technology investment.

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

A new platform should not be justified simply because it produces more reports or has an impressive dashboard. It should address a defined operational requirement. This might include improving vehicle availability, reducing maintenance downtime, processing defects faster, providing accurate replacement forecasts or giving operational teams better visibility of their assets.

Chapter 21 of the PVMM links fleet management with defined levels of service. These may cover reliability, responsiveness, safety, environmental performance, legislative compliance and cost. Technology can help measure whether those service levels are being achieved and provide objective evidence when they are not.

This is where fleet becomes a genuine value-added function. Rather than only supplying and maintaining assets, the fleet team can help operational departments improve the way services are delivered.

Good technology still needs good data

The foundation is data.

Chapter 8 of the PVMM explains that fleet practitioners need accurate information to support decision-making, efficient processes, compliance and reporting. It also highlights the importance of standard asset descriptions, consistent coding and clearly defined minimum data requirements.

Installing new technology over inconsistent or incomplete data will not solve the underlying problem. It may simply produce unreliable information more quickly.

Before implementing new systems, fleet practitioners should establish a disciplined fleet inventory, standardise asset classifications and maintenance codes, define ownership of each data field and ensure information is updated throughout the asset lifecycle.

Once that foundation is in place, information from internal systems, telematics providers, maintenance suppliers, fuel systems and other sources can be combined more effectively.

Artificial intelligence may then help identify trends, exceptions and areas requiring attention. However, its output will only be as useful as the information it receives.

Turn reporting into decisions

Many organisations collect large amounts of fleet data but still lack meaningful KPI reporting.

Chapter 13 of the PVMM recommends linking fleet measures to the organisation's Critical Success Factors and the fleet's Key Result Areas. This means reporting should focus on the outcomes that matter, rather than producing data simply because it is available.

Useful measures may include utilisation, availability, downtime, scheduled maintenance compliance, whole-of-life cost, fuel use, maintenance failures and response times.

Technology can automate these reports, highlight exceptions and reduce the manual work required to prepare information. More importantly, it can help the fleet practitioner identify where management action is needed.

The objective is not a larger dashboard. It is a better decision.

Strengthening compliance

Technology also has an important role in Chain of Responsibility and broader fleet compliance.

Chapter 27 of the PVMM identifies systems and controls, documentation, corrective actions and training as key procedural elements of Chain of Responsibility. Electronic daily checks, automated defect notifications, maintenance records, licence monitoring and audit trails can provide evidence that processes are being followed.

For heavy vehicle fleets, these systems are becoming difficult to ignore. Paper forms that cannot be located, faults that are not escalated and disconnected maintenance records create unnecessary risk.

Technology will not remove accountability, but it can make responsibilities clearer and provide the evidence needed to demonstrate that the organisation's systems are operating.

The best approach is to begin with the service outcome, establish sound data practices and then select technology that removes duplication, replaces outdated processes and supports measurable improvement.

That is when technology stops being another fleet expense and becomes an organisational enabler.

Powered trailers – the new frontier in trailer technology

Trailer technology has greatly advanced in the past few decades – we have seen vast improvements in suspension and braking, and the digital revolution has seen increasingly sophisticated levels of telematics systems become widespread.

But one area that has not changed since the very first wagon was hitched to a horse-drawn cart is the nature of the trailer itself. Centuries ago, the first wagons were towed machines that were simply pulled along, incapable of contributing to forward motion. Centuries later, they still are. But that is all set to change.

The motive power revolution

Many international manufacturers of axles for use in heavy trailers and dollies are now offering innovative electric axle types that are collectively referred to as either 'powered axles', or 'e-axles'. Their fitment to either a heavy trailer or dolly results in what is collectively referred to as a 'powered' trailer or dolly.

Within those broad terms lie crucial differences in technology and capabilities. Powered axles and e-axles will all typically feature regenerative energy capabilities, and some may also be capable of providing motive power.

An axle with regenerative energy capabilities means that it includes a physical mechanism to recover the kinetic energy from a rotating axle (either during braking or coasting), and transform it into electrical energy.

An axle capable of providing motive power means that it can use an on-board power source to drive one or more of the trailer's axles and assist its motion.

There are already trailers operating on roads in Australia with regenerative energy capabilities, which are delivering considerable energy savings and assisting decarbonisation. But industry and operators are keenly eyeing off the benefits of motive power.

Benefits of powered trailer technology

Recovered energy can be used to power ancillary trailer equipment (e.g. cooling/heating units, hydraulic pumps), and charge batteries either on the trailer or the towing vehicle.

If supplied to a motive power axle, it can reduce the load on the truck, thereby improving fuel/energy efficiency and extending its range, permit use of a lower powered truck, resulting in greater overall efficiency (also referred to as a 'virtual hybrid' combination).

It can also improve the vehicle's performance on grades, and assist in situations where truck drive axle traction limits forward motion.

Regulatory roadblocks

Despite this, the Australian regulatory pathway for trailers and dollies to feature axles capable of providing motive power is presently not clear, although work by HVIA is uncovering avenues and will lead to on-road trials of powered trailer equipment.

The primary issue is the Australian Design Rule (ADR) package. It was not drafted with consideration of powered trailer technology, and powered trailers are not included in the current set of vehicle categories.

Additionally, the ADRs that could apply to powered trailers do not align well with their characteristics and functions, so regulators are unsure of how to manage the safety considerations, and eventually revise the regulations to permit them to operate on public roads.

The (powered) path forward

To overcome that, HVIA consulted with members and external stakeholders including vehicle standards and road safety professionals from all states and territories, the Federal Department of Infrastructure, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, and other industry associations.

That work led to HVIA's Guideline for on-road trials of powered trailers, released in late 2025, to serve as a starting point for on-road trial discussions. Contact me for a copy at a.ritzinger@hvia.asn.au.

It is hoped that they will be used throughout 2026 and 2027 to guide negotiations between road managers, regulators, and the industry, so they can collaboratively design an approach that ensures the safe, efficient, and productive on-road trials of powered axle technology.

Adam Ritzinger Chief Technical Officer HVIA

Hyundai's pathway to electrification

Hyundai technology gives fleets a pathway to electric

For fleet operators, the arrival of the Hyundai STARIA Load hybrid is about more than saving fuel. It adds another step to the emissions-reduction pathway while allowing organisations to retain a familiar vehicle, supplier and operating model.

The technology is important, but so is the broader product strategy. Hyundai can now offer STARIA Load customers diesel and hybrid powertrains, with a battery electric version expected later in 2026. That gives fleets the opportunity to move from internal combustion to hybrid and eventually to battery electric without changing brands at every stage.

Making electrification automatic

The STARIA Load hybrid combines a petrol engine with an electric motor, battery and regenerative braking system. Rather than requiring the driver to plug in, the vehicle manages the movement between petrol and electric assistance automatically.

Electric support is particularly useful during low-speed operation and repeated acceleration, where conventional engines are often least efficient. Energy recovered during deceleration is stored in the battery and reused rather than being lost through the brakes.

For drivers, there is little new behaviour to learn. The vehicle is refuelled normally and the control systems manage the powertrain in the background. This makes the HEV particularly relevant for fleets that want an immediate emissions reduction but are not yet ready to install charging infrastructure or change operating schedules.

The result is combined fuel consumption of 6.2L/100km, compared with 7.0L/100km for the diesel. That represents an 11.4 per cent reduction in published fuel consumption.

The difference in carbon dioxide emissions is greater. The hybrid produces 147g/km, compared with 183g/km for the diesel—a reduction of almost 20 per cent. Over 100,000 kilometres, that equates to approximately 3.6 tonnes less tailpipe CO_2.

Standardisation matters during transition

Vehicle standardisation has always helped fleets reduce complexity. Fewer brands and models can mean simpler servicing arrangements, more consistent driver training, common accessories, familiar safety systems and better leverage with suppliers.

That benefit becomes even more important during an emissions transition.

A fleet may not be able to replace every diesel van with a BEV at once. Regional vehicles, high-utilisation applications and vehicles without reliable depot charging may need to remain diesel for longer. Urban vehicles could move to hybrid now, while predictable metropolitan routes may be suitable for BEVs once the electric STARIA Load arrives.

Using one manufacturer across those applications allows the fleet to change the powertrain without completely rebuilding its support model. Drivers remain familiar with the basic cabin layout and controls, while fleet teams can maintain established relationships around ordering, servicing, parts, safety and account management.

The right fleet partner is therefore no longer simply the manufacturer offering the lowest-priced vehicle today. It is the manufacturer capable of providing suitable options as operational requirements and emissions targets evolve.

STARIA Load Whole-of-Life Costs

Despite costing approximately $3,000 more upfront, the Load Hybrid records an estimated annual WOLC of $15,115—$110 less than the diesel.

The hybrid will not suit every task, and the forthcoming BEV will require the same fit-for-purpose assessment. But the expanding STARIA Load range gives fleets something increasingly valuable: the ability to reduce emissions progressively without abandoning standardisation along the way.

Powertrain and variant	Driveaway price*	Fuel or energy consumption	CO_2 emissions	Annual WOLC**
STARIA Load Diesel	$53,000	7.0L/100km	183g/km	$15,225
STARIA Load Hybrid	$56,000	6.2L/100km	147g/km	$15,115

** NSW driveaway price when assessed, rounded up. ** Fleet News Group estimate based on 48 months and 100,000 kilometres.*

New STARIA Load Hybrid.
Lighten the load.

Lighten the load for your fleet with the new STARIA Load Hybrid. With a hybrid engine and 4,935 litres of cargo space you can worry less about fuel and more about business.

Hyundai Genuine Accessories required to be purchased and fitted by an authorised Hyundai dealer at an additional cost. Please consult with an authorised Hyundai dealer before fitting accessories.

Explore Hyundai Fleet

HYUNDAI

Fleet News Group Awards 2026

The finalists in the 2026 Fleet News Group Awards represent organisations and suppliers improving safety, efficiency, sustainability and service across the fleet sector.

Finalists across Fleet of the Year, Fleet Sustainability, Fleet Technology, Safe Fleet of the Year and Fleet Supplier of the Year demonstrated excellence through stronger performance, reduced risk, lower emissions, innovation and outstanding service.

More than 80 nominations reflected a strong commitment to fleet excellence and continuous improvement, highlighting the sector's diverse achievements and leading practices. Judges selected finalists following interviews assessing their approach, results and impact.

The winners will now be determined by online industry voting and announced at the Fleet News Group Awards night in Sydney on 14 October.

Fleet Supplier of the Year Finalists

BRIDGESTONE

Bridgestone Australia has transformed tyre management from a routine maintenance task into a strategic fleet performance solution. Its Total Tyre Management program combines tailored advice, vehicle-specific tyre selection, technical expertise, reporting and performance analytics to help fleets improve reliability, maximise asset utilisation and reduce cost per kilometre. With more than 1,000 service locations, 280 mobile service vehicles and 24/7 support, Bridgestone can respond quickly wherever vehicles operate. Its collaborative approach helps customers solve operational challenges, reduce downtime and make better decisions using real fleet data.

DAIMLER TRUCKS CANBERRA

Daimler Trucks Canberra has quickly established itself as a trusted fleet partner in the ACT, supporting government customers with truck and bus maintenance, repairs and new vehicle purchases. The nomination highlights a team that responds quickly, identifies maintenance issues early and consistently goes beyond expectations to keep vehicles operating. Whether assisting as soon as a vehicle arrives or accommodating urgent requests at short notice, the business has earned praise for dependable and practical support. Its willingness to help customers when it matters most demonstrates the responsiveness fleets value.

Fleet Supplier of the Year Finalists

Euclidic Systems has demonstrated how a technology supplier can deliver a complex national fleet project with minimal disruption. The business successfully coordinated the replacement of legacy telematics devices with upgraded 4G hardwired technology across approximately 650 vehicles operating in metropolitan, regional and remote locations. Its team worked around restricted access, changing schedules and operational demands while keeping vehicles available for work. Strong collaboration, responsiveness and practical problem-solving helped the project stay on track and meet its timeframe. Euclidic Systems showed that reliable execution and flexible support can create measurable fleet value.

Kia Australia demonstrates what a genuine fleet partnership should look like. Its coordinated national approach brings together the manufacturer, fleet sales leadership and dealer network to provide consistent support across every customer touchpoint. The nomination highlights the strong alignment between Kia's fleet team and dealer partners, ensuring operational needs are understood and delivered efficiently. Kia listens, adapts and develops practical, fit-for-purpose solutions rather than focusing on short-term transactions. Its combination of national oversight, local support, clear communication and accountability gives customers confidence across regions and fleet sizes.

mycar Tyre & Auto gives fleet operators national support through more than 275 company-owned stores, a mobile servicing network and over 1,500 technicians. Because the network is company-owned rather than franchised, customers receive consistent fleet pricing, national warranty coverage and service standards wherever vehicles operate. mycar supports scheduled servicing, tyres, brakes, batteries and EV maintenance across metropolitan and regional Australia. It is also advancing digital booking through its AutoGuru integration, helping provide live availability within the FleetGuru Maintenance Portal. This combination of scale, consistency and innovation helps reduce downtime.

Sensium has built a reputation as a collaborative and innovative fleet technology partner. Through a long-term relationship, the business has consistently delivered practical value, dependable support and solutions designed around customer needs. Its work included a pioneering DTC telematics fleet deployment in New Zealand, demonstrating a willingness to introduce new technology and support better fleet outcomes. Sensium's approach goes beyond supplying a product, focusing instead on partnership, reliability and continuous improvement. By combining technical capability with responsive service, the business has shown how a specialist supplier can make a meaningful operational difference.

Toyota Fleet Management stands out because its people combine fleet knowledge with customer support. The nomination praises a team that answers the phone, understands fleet operations and remains engaged after the agreement is signed. Its capability across finance, fleet management, salary packaging, electric vehicles and hybrids allows customers to solve needs through one trusted partner. Toyota Fleet Management is recognised for an honest approach to electrification, recommending technology that suits the operation rather than pushing a solution. Built on trust, consistency and customer outcomes, this is a partnership that lasts.

Safe Fleet Award Finalists

CV Services has delivered measurable improvements in fleet safety by combining strong leadership, advanced telematics and proactive driver engagement.

Since partnering with Geosecure and implementing the Geotab telematics platform in 2023, the organisation has used detailed fleet data to identify risks, improve driver behaviour and support informed safety decisions. The results demonstrate the impact of this approach.

Comparing the first and second halves of FY26, police-recorded speeding infringements fell by 50 per cent. Total vehicle incidents decreased by 31 per cent, from 29 incidents to 20, while at-fault incidents were reduced by 50 per cent, from 20 to 10.

CV Services also introduced real-time in-vehicle audible speeding alerts in October 2025. This initiative contributed to an 82.5 per cent reduction in speeding events across the fleet, demonstrating how timely feedback can create significant behavioural change.

These outcomes have been supported by proactive driver coaching, performance monitoring and management commitment to using data to address risk before incidents occur. Continued investment in AI-powered video telematics and driver engagement is helping CV Services strengthen its safety culture and pursue further improvements.

Vote for CV Services in the Safe Fleet Award to recognise an organisation achieving clear, sustained and measurable reductions in fleet risk.

Townsville City Council has developed an integrated fleet safety program that combines technology, education, accurate data and practical collaboration with operational teams.

The council uses GPS telemetry and targeted reporting to identify risks such as speeding and harsh driving. This enables supervisors and fleet teams to intervene early, before unsafe behaviours contribute to incidents. Drivers and supervisors receive regular, practical information that supports accountability and continuous improvement.

Technology is also being used to address specific operational risks. AI pedestrian detection systems installed in refuse trucks improve operator awareness during bin-lift activities and help reduce the risk of incidents involving people working or moving near the vehicle.

Rather than relying solely on enforcement, Townsville City Council focuses on education and behavioural change. Clear communication, consistent monitoring and engagement with employees help create a positive safety culture in which people understand both the risks and their responsibilities.

The council has also worked to improve data accuracy through better mapping, zone management and system enhancements. This ensures reports are reliable and safety decisions are based on meaningful information.

Vote for Townsville City Council in the Safe Fleet Award to recognise a practical, data-driven safety program that is improving driver behaviour, strengthening compliance and preventing incidents across a complex local government fleet.

Elite Group has made safety a core organisational value across its diverse operations in transport, quarrying, landscaping and construction.

Managing vehicles across these sectors creates a wide range of operational risks. Elite Group addresses these challenges through a proactive safety culture supported by technology, driver training, compliance monitoring and continuous improvement. Its focus is on identifying and reducing risks before incidents occur, protecting drivers, contractors, customers and the wider community.

Modern fleet systems provide management with greater visibility of vehicle movements, driver performance, maintenance compliance and emerging operational risks. This information is used to identify trends, coach drivers, manage fatigue and maintain high standards of vehicle roadworthiness.

Safety performance is regularly reviewed through management reporting, toolbox talks and driver engagement programs. Employees are encouraged to identify hazards and recommend improvements, reinforcing the principle that everyone has responsibility for creating safer outcomes.

The organisation's approach extends beyond systems and policies. Leadership commitment and operational discipline ensure safety considerations are included in planning and everyday decision-making. Continued investment in people, processes and technology supports ongoing improvement throughout the business.

Vote for Elite Group in the Safe Fleet Award to recognise a company that has embedded fleet safety throughout its operations and continues to demonstrate strong leadership in risk reduction.

Fleet Sustainability Award Finalists

CITY OF PARRAMATTA

The City of Parramatta has delivered a structured and measurable fleet sustainability program that combines environmental improvement with stronger financial and operational performance.

Rather than treating electric vehicle procurement as a standalone initiative, Council adopted a whole-of-system approach. Its revised Fleet Policy embeds emissions reduction into procurement and operational decisions, helping align the fleet with Council's broader Net Zero objectives.

The program is supported by data analysis, infrastructure planning and staff engagement. Fleet utilisation information has been used to identify where electric vehicles are operationally suitable, helping ensure new vehicles are introduced without compromising service delivery.

Council has also developed a scalable EV charging facility integrated with solar energy. The facility is designed to support future fleet growth while helping minimise energy costs.

In FY2026, the City of Parramatta introduced 22 electric vehicles. These vehicles are expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 220 tonnes.

The program has also delivered $323,000 in procurement and infrastructure savings, as well as ongoing fuel savings estimated at between $4,000 and $6,000 per month.

The City of Parramatta's entry demonstrates how disciplined planning, policy reform and evidence-based decision-making can make fleet sustainability practical, scalable and financially responsible.

Vote for the City of Parramatta to recognise a program delivering clear environmental, operational and financial outcomes.

Blacktown City Council

Blacktown City Council's City Fleet has made sustainability a central part of how it plans, operates and manages its vehicles.

Its approach focuses on reducing environmental impact while continuing to deliver reliable, high-quality services to the community. Sustainability is embedded across fleet operations, with attention to emissions reduction, resource efficiency and long-term planning.

City Fleet has accelerated its transition to low- and zero-emission vehicles, supported by infrastructure and operational preparation. This approach reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves local air quality and delivers whole-of-life cost benefits.

The fleet also uses telematics, utilisation reviews and right-sizing strategies to improve how vehicles are selected and used. These tools help identify unnecessary vehicle use, reduce fuel consumption and ensure assets are matched to operational requirements.

Sustainability is reinforced through policy integration, stakeholder collaboration and staff engagement. By involving people across the organisation, City Fleet makes responsible fleet practices part of everyday decision-making rather than a separate project.

Its program is supported by targets, transparent reporting and continuous improvement.

Blacktown City Council's entry presents a practical, scalable model for sustainable fleet management balancing innovation with operational needs.

Vote for Blacktown City Council to recognise its leadership in embedding sustainability throughout fleet planning, vehicle use and service delivery.

Allianz

Allianz has established a clear and ambitious objective for its fleet transition, with an EV100 goal to replace all fleet vehicles with electric vehicles by the end of 2030.

Its approach recognises that a successful EV transition requires more than purchasing new vehicles. Allianz has introduced a range of supporting measures designed to address the practical, operational and behavioural factors that influence fleet sustainability.

Telematics has been implemented to provide better visibility of vehicle use and support more informed fleet decisions. Allianz is also actively managing vehicles and working to reduce the average kilometres travelled by each vehicle across the fleet.

Home charging has formed an important part of the transition strategy, helping drivers charge vehicles conveniently and supporting the day-to-day operation of an electric fleet. A reimbursement process has also been developed to address the costs associated with charging fleet vehicles at home.

Driver engagement is another central element of the program. By involving drivers in the transition, Allianz is helping employees understand the new technology, charging requirements and operating practices associated with electric vehicles.

Together, these initiatives show that Allianz is addressing the full fleet ecosystem, including vehicles, charging, reimbursement, utilisation and driver behaviour.

Vote for Allianz to recognise an organisation pursuing a comprehensive and actively managed transition towards a fully electric fleet.

Fleet Technology Award Finalists

The City of Port Phillip has shown how smart integration can make fleet management simpler, more secure and more efficient.

Working with AMTAC Professional Services and Council's internal digital team, the City developed a fleet solution that connects the iKLAS electronic key cabinet system with the OneCouncil platform. This created a seamless link between physical key control and digital vehicle bookings, access management and reporting.

The solution was designed to address common fleet challenges, including inefficient booking processes, misplaced or poorly managed keys, limited visibility of vehicle availability and unnecessary administrative work. Council staff can now access vehicles through a secure and automated system, while fleet managers have real-time information about bookings, vehicle use and driver activity.

Over the past 24 months, the system has reduced administration, improved scheduling and helped Council allocate vehicles more effectively. Better visibility of fleet activity has supported higher utilisation and reduced the need for additional vehicles. It has also helped minimise downtime by giving staff a clearer understanding of which vehicles are available and when.

This project demonstrates the value of combining practical fleet management with digital innovation. Vote for the City of Port Phillip in the Fleet Technology Award and recognise a solution that is delivering measurable operational improvements.

Connect Ability Australia has used fleet technology to improve safety, administration and service delivery for the people who rely on its transport services.

Through the implementation of the Geotab fleet management platform, the disability support organisation has digitised several important business processes. Billing and participant transport claims that previously relied on manual data entry are now more accurate and efficient, reducing errors and administration time. This allows employees to spend more time supporting participants rather than completing paperwork.

The organisation has also digitised vehicle safety inspections and incident reporting. This has strengthened compliance and accountability while helping staff identify and resolve vehicle issues more quickly.

Driver safety is a particularly important part of the project. Connect Ability Australia uses telematics data to monitor speeding, harsh braking, acceleration and other high-risk driving events. Because participants regularly travel as passengers, the organisation places a strong focus on maintaining safe and consistent driving standards.

The information collected through Geotab supports targeted driver coaching and helps the organisation take a proactive approach to risk management. It also provides clearer evidence to support operational decisions and continuous improvement.

Vote for Connect Ability Australia in the Fleet Technology Award and recognise an organisation using technology to create safer journeys, more efficient processes and better outcomes for staff and participants.

Blacktown City Council has turned fleet data into a practical technology solution that reduces costs, improves safety and supports lower-emission operations.

Telematics revealed that three diesel trucks used by mower crews were travelling relatively short distances and spending much of the working day idling while the machinery they carried completed the work. Rather than simply replacing the trucks like-for-like, Council used the data to redesign the entire operating model.

The result was one electric truck fitted with a custom beavertail body designed in-house to carry two machines. Its hydraulic ramps are powered by an auxiliary battery supported by solar panels, avoiding unnecessary demand on the truck's traction battery. A portable DC charger also gives Council flexibility to recharge the vehicle at different operational sites.

This single, highly utilised electric truck has replaced three ageing diesel vehicles. The change has reduced idling, fuel consumption, maintenance, registration and whole-of-life costs. Safety has also improved by removing trailers, reducing the number of vehicles and drivers on the road, and incorporating engineering analysis, ergonomic assessments and manufacturer-led driver training.

The project combines telematics, electrification, engineering and operational change in one scalable solution. Vote for Blacktown City Council in the Fleet Technology Award and support an initiative delivering measurable fleet, safety and environmental benefits.

Fleet of the Year Award Finalists

Ausgrid

Ausgrid is a compelling Fleet of the Year finalist because it shows how governance, operational discipline and innovation can be applied across a complex Australian utility fleet.

Supporting electricity distribution to more than four million customers, Ausgrid manages approximately 1,600 vehicles and 700 items of plant and equipment. It includes elevated work platforms, pole borers, prime movers, cable-handling equipment, boats and specialist off-road assets.

Its CEO-endorsed fleet strategy is built around four priorities: safe to work, fit for purpose, value for money and electrification. SAP, digital maintenance systems, telematics and Power BI dashboards provide whole-of-life visibility across procurement, servicing, compliance, incidents, fuel use and disposal.

Safety is managed through driver behaviour monitoring, targeted reporting, coaching and risk-based training, strengthening accountability and safety culture.

Ausgrid is also advancing fleet electrification at scale. Most of its passenger fleet has been electrified, electric vans and trucks have been introduced, and depot, substation and home-charging solutions are being developed. The target is to increase electrification from 11 per cent to around 60 per cent by FY2029, while maintaining storm and emergency-response reliability.

Vote for Ausgrid to recognise a safe, data-driven and future-ready fleet delivering value while preparing for the transition in energy and transport.

Blacktown City Council

Blacktown City Council is a strong Fleet of the Year finalist because it combines operational excellence, innovation and customer-focused service delivery across its fleet function.

The council's City Fleet team uses planning, lifecycle management and data-driven decision-making to provide vehicles that are fit for purpose, cost-effective and aligned with organisational and community needs. A strong governance framework supports consistency, accountability and whole-of-life decisions.

Technology has been integrated in a practical way. Telematics and analytics improve efficiency, reduce downtime and strengthen service reliability, helping the council maintain dependable operations while identifying opportunities for improvement.

A defining strength is the team's customer-centred approach. Close collaboration with internal stakeholders allows City Fleet to tailor solutions to operational requirements, strengthen relationships and ensure assets support frontline service delivery.

Sustainability is embedded in the fleet strategy. Progress in low- and zero-emission vehicle adoption, together with improved utilisation, is reducing environmental impact without compromising performance.

Backed by a skilled and proactive in-house team, Blacktown City Council has delivered cost savings, safety improvements, reliability and engineering innovation. Its shift towards a whole-of-life approach demonstrates a clear focus on long-term value.

Vote for Blacktown City Council to recognise a high-performing, future-focused fleet delivering for its organisation and community.

Parkes Shire Council

Parkes Shire Council has earned its place as a Fleet of the Year finalist by treating fleet management as a strategic function that supports safe, reliable and cost-effective community service delivery.

The council manages a broad asset base, including passenger vehicles, light and heavy vehicles, plant, earthmoving equipment and Rural Fire Service assets. This complexity is supported by documented policies, lifecycle planning and long-term replacement strategies integrated with wider financial planning.

Technology plays a central role. TechOne and Geotab provide real-time dashboards covering utilisation, maintenance, compliance, idle time, asset availability and driver behaviour. These insights allow the fleet team to act proactively, identify improvement opportunities and make evidence-based decisions.

A comprehensive preventative maintenance program, detailed asset histories, condition monitoring and performance reporting help maintain high standards of safety, reliability and regulatory compliance. Fleet data also guides replacement timing, improves operational efficiency, reduces emissions and lowers whole-of-life costs.

Parkes Shire Council demonstrates how strong governance, practical technology and disciplined planning can deliver measurable value across a diverse regional fleet.

Vote for Parkes Shire Council to recognise a modern, accountable and continuously improving fleet operation that supports organisational performance and better outcomes for the community it serves across the region every day.

Fleet Car of the Year Finalists

Nine vehicles have been selected as finalists in the 2026 Fleet News Group Vehicle Awards after completing a fleet-focused assessment using Best Value Analysis.

The finalists represent the variety of vehicles now being considered by Australian fleets, including passenger cars, SUVs, vans, utes, hybrids and battery-electric models.

The finalists were selected using Best Value Analysis, a structured process commonly used by fleet buyers to compare vehicles across several areas rather than relying on purchase price or driving performance alone.

The assessment considered whole-of-life cost, safety, sustainability, manufacturer support, market acceptance and workplace ergonomics.

Whole-of-life costs included servicing, expected maintenance, tyres, brakes and fuel or electricity consumption across typical fleet replacement periods. Vehicles were first compared with relevant models in their own market segment, helping ensure that different body styles and vehicle types could be assessed fairly.

The process also considered whether each model had demonstrated genuine relevance to fleet customers.

The nine finalists will now progress to a two-day evaluation in August. Experienced fleet buyers and fleet management professionals will drive, inspect and compare the vehicles, with all finalists displayed together during the judging program.

The judges will determine which models provide the strongest overall combination of financial value, operational capability, safety, driver suitability and manufacturer support.

The results will remain confidential until the Fleet News Group Awards night in Sydney on 14 October, when the industry will gather to discover which vehicles will be crowned the 2026 winners.

Fleet Car of the Year finalists

Toyota Camry Ascent Sport

MG ZS Vibe CVT

Subaru Forester Hybrid AWD

Fleet EV Car of the Year finalists

Volkswagen ID. Buzz Cargo

Toyota HiLux SR Double Cab BEV

Kia EV5 Air Long Range

Fleet Light Commercial Vehicle of the Year finalists

Kia PV5 Cargo

Isuzu D-MAX SX 2WD Single Cab

Hyundai STARIA Load Hybrid

Fleet Truck of the Year Finalists

Fleet News Group has announced the finalists for the 2026 Fleet Light Duty Truck of the Year and Fleet Heavy Duty Truck of the Year awards, recognising trucks that deliver strong value, capability and support for fleet operators.

The finalists were selected using a Best Value Analysis designed to assess more than headline specifications or purchase price. Manufacturers were invited to nominate eligible vehicles and were briefed on the judging process so they could provide the information required for a detailed comparison.

Each truck was scored against six weighted criteria. Driving and on-road experience accounted for 20 per cent of the result, while engine and transmission options also contributed 20 per cent. Chassis and suspension options, sustainability and safety, manufacturer support, and workspace ergonomics each carried a 15 per cent weighting.

The assessment considered how well each model could meet different fleet applications, including the range of engines, transmissions, chassis configurations, GVM and GCM options, safety systems, emissions performance, national servicing capability, warranty support and driver comfort. The breadth of each model range was also important because fleet operators often seek vehicles that can be standardised across multiple tasks and locations.

Scores were entered into a central assessment sheet and weighted to produce an overall ranking for the light-duty and heavy-duty segments. The highest-ranked vehicles progressed to the finalist stage.

The finalists were evaluated by the judging panel of Fleet Managers before the winners are announced at the Fleet News Group Awards night in Sydney on 14 October 2026.

Fleet Light Duty Truck of the Year finalists

IVECO Daily Cab Chassis

Isuzu NPR

Hino 300 Series Hybrid

Fleet Heavy Duty Truck of the Year finalists

MAN TGS

Volvo FH16

Hino 700 Series

Fuel costs make the EV decision easier

Petrol and diesel prices are unpredictable. EV total cost of ownership isn't.

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

Origin EV for fleet gives companies a complete end-to-end fleet electrification solution, from fully managed operating leases and flexible subscriptions, through to the installation and management of all your charging needs. Whether that's home, depot or public. Everything you need to run and scale an EV fleet.

Start with evidence, not assumptions

A question every fleet manager asks is: which vehicles in my fleet could I actually electrify? Origin analyses and compares your fuel card transactions to model EV suitability based on the distances your vehicles drive. What you get is a prioritised transition plan that includes: which vehicles to move first, how EV total cost of ownership compares to what you're running today, and which EVs would work best in your fleet to ensure they meet your operational needs.

One partner, end to end

Origin manages the full ecosystem - flexible vehicle access (subscriptions or operating leases), depot and home charging design, smart load management and fleet management. You don't need to coordinate three vendors to run an EV fleet.

Charging that actually works for fleets

Origin OneCharge solves the two charging headaches that trip up every fleet manager.

Home charging is the most convenient and cost-effective option for drivers - but without the right partner, reimbursing them accurately is a manual nightmare.

OneCharge captures exactly what each driver uses at home, automatically reimburses them, and rolls it into a single fleet invoice.

On the road, public charging means multiple networks, multiple apps, and drivers out of pocket waiting on expense claims. OneCharge gives every driver access to Australia's major charging networks through a single RFID card and app - with all costs consolidated onto your bill.

Scan to get your free fleet assessment

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

Origin EV fleet