Submission No 85

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ELECTRIC AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCE VEHICLES IN NSW

Organisation: Road Freight NSW

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Infrastructure for electric and alternative energy source vehicles in NSW

Submission 9 May, 2025.

ROAD FREIGHT NSW

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ROAD FREIGHT NSW

THE VOICE OF THE ROAD TRANSPORT INDUSTRY IN NSW

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Ms Lynda Voltz, MP
Chair
Infrastructure for electric and alternative energy source vehicles in NSW

1. MESSAGE TO THE CHAIR

Dear Chair,

On behalf of our Members, I welcome the opportunity to make this Submission to the Inquiry: ***Infrastructure for electric and alternative energy source vehicles in NSW.***

By way of background, Road Freight NSW began as NSW Road Transport Association (RTA) in 1893. The Organisation has developed to become a respected advocate for trucking operators, as a conduit to Government, regulators and enforcement agencies.

In 2015, the Organisation adopted the name Road Freight NSW (RFNSW) which articulates our independent and authoritative viewpoint thanks to our respected executive leadership and the passion and expertise of members contributing to the Policy Council.

RFNSW actively engages with Governments at all levels and the bureaucracy to advocate for better outcomes for the NSW freight industry, the economy and the wider community.

With the transport sector currently the third largest greenhouse emitter in Australia, and set to become the largest contributor of emissions by 2030 [1], it is imperative that industry and Government work together to drive the decarbonisation of our sector.

But in order to reach Australia's ambitious net-zero targets, our industry must overcome the significant challenges ahead of it. Accordingly, RFNSW is advocating for greater support and collaboration from all levels of Government to incentivise trucking operators to utilise more eco-friendly electric and other alternative energy powered heavy vehicles, on to our roads.

In addition to this Submission, I am available to give evidence to the Committee and attend any public hearing to participate in this important Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Simon O'Hara

CEO

Road Freight NSW

[1] Australian Government, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

2. FUNDING AND LOCATION OF ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS OR INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OTHER POTENTIAL ENERGY FUEL SOURCES

Whilst several of our RFNSW Members, most notably BlueScope, have successfully commenced the switch to electric trucks, the wider uptake of alternative energy sources within the freight industry is being hampered by the lack of access to reliable, EV charging infrastructure across the NSW road network.

For EVs, significant upgrades to existing public EV charging stations and the roll-out of new stations will be required to better support our Members in adopting green energy for their heavy vehicle fleets.

For Hydrogen Vehicles, access to refuelling stations is extremely limited with only a handful of stations available throughout the country.

Importantly, for the successful introduction of Electric Vehicles, more fast-chargers and in sufficient quantity, will be needed along major freight corridors and logistics hubs across NSW, to enable truckies to safely drive longer distances. Cost of electricity and quick reliable access will be a key factor in the success of EV's

For local EV fleets, and freight depots, grid capacity will the most challenging issue and it will require to be upgraded to accommodate for a major increase in power consumption. Charging a fleet of 50 plus vehicles overnight will place a significant burden on the existing

In China, EV manufacturer BYD, has recently unveiled a new fast-charging system, with two new BYD models that will be capable of receiving peak charging power of 1,000 kilowatts (kW), enabling them to travel 400km (249 miles) on a five-minute charge.

BYD is unique in the manufacturing market place as it has an end-to-end supply chain for manufacturing of EV's and batteries.

Chinese Heavy electric vehicle Windrose has a vehicle in Australia that is achieving 700klm per charge and fast charging capabilities not dissimilar to BYD.

RFNSW commends the NSW Government on its $149 Million investment in developing a world-class EV charging network, with 250 fast and ultra-fast charging stations to be rolled-out in coming years. The Government has promised 'at least 4 fast or ultra-fast chargers per station every 5 km in metropolitan areas and at 100 km intervals across all major NSW highways'. Critically, these chargers must accommodate heavy vehicles.

[redacted]tilise public EV charging infrastructure for light-vehicles, there will need to be sustained [redacted]g technologies.

RFNSW welcomes:

The development of shared-use EV charging hubs, such as the site at Mascot which features 22 dual-port chargers and can support a fleet of 60 electric trucks for supermarket home deliveries.

The development of a solar-powered Charge and Change Station at the Moorebank Intermodal Precinct, which allows an electric trucks to quick-swap their 2m x 1.2m batteries for fully-charged batteries in around four minutes.

These developments are key examples of Government and freight industry stakeholders effectively collaborating to deliver new eco-friendly infrastructure to support the decarbonisation of the trucking industry.

According to Scott Hannah, Managing Director of Hannah's Haulage, the 'electric concept should be targeting the 2-40 tonne market with short trips, local or 200km on a practical platform … container trucks, cement AGI's and express delivery last mile vehicles to start with.

'Sydney is the hardest spot in Australia due to hilly terrain, locally, up the Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands and Newcastle hills everywhere," he said.

'Topographical aspects will need consideration in and around greater Sydney and the regions to ensure that the availability of charging infrastructure in prioritised for those areas with frequent road ascents to ensure heavy vehicles have enough juice to do the longer distance loads.

'Public charging sites need to be in every garage same as fossil fuels, service stations would negotiate electricity pricing same as fuel. Failing that, fast-chargers would need to installed in depots and client facilities when trucks are loading or unloading to insure a full day's work is achievable.'

3. THE VIABILITY OF ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES FOR FREIGHT, HEAVY VEHICLES AND OTHER LICENSED VEHICLES IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

As per Response 1, see above.

RFNSW commends the NSW and Commonwealth Governments on their shared investment in alternative energy refuelling stations across the State.

The Commonwealth is co-funding the $80 million roll-out of hydrogen refuelling networks with the NSW Government on key freight routes.

But it is clear that more will need to be delivered in order for our Members to operate on a decarbonised fleet, particularly in regional and rural areas.

For Hydrogen to be a successful alternative fuel in the Heavy Vehicle space, the critical areas of availability and cost need to be addressed. To reduce cost, Hydrogen needs to be produced in large scale. Currently Hydrogen fuel costs about $18/kg. To make it commercially viable to carriers, the price needs to be closer to $4/kg.

Transport, storage and dispensing Hydrogen remain problems for the Hydrogen industry and further work to find commercially and operationally sustainable solutions.

RFNSW welcomes private companies like NewVolt Infrastructure working with Government and industry to develop a national network of shared charging stations for electric trucks, strategically-located along key freight routes.

The cost of purchasing new EV heavy vehicles is problematic for the industry. Some of the costs are 100% more than internal combustion engines heavy vehicles. The higher the payload required the greater the disparity is.

Regional operators like their metropolitan counterparts, will struggle with the initial purchase of the EV heavy vehicle, particularly if deployed to rural and regional areas with limited options for charging and range with full-loads.

The tyranny of distance remains an obstacle for a country like Australia and a large State like NSW.

Ann Lopez, 2025 National Transport Woman of the Year from Lopez Bros Transport, has some views on cost. With her husband Phil, she runs a container transport business that we would hope would be one of the first group of operators to start running EV heavy vehicles due to shorter distances involved.

[redacted]

As a smaller fleet operator, any expectation that we should transition to EV or alternative fuel vehicles will at this stage, I believe, largely be driven by cost," she said.

"Currently, these vehicles are well outside our ability to justify and get any return for our business. Improvements to vehicle efficiency to reduce our fuel spend and emissions is where we may be able to start making changes – such as tyre choices, better quality road infrastructure, increased mass allowances and other productivity mechanisms - renewable diesel may also help.

"To encourage any take up amongst smaller fleets, there needs to be the same financial incentives or funding that is currently offered to the larger fleets – to invest in recharging infrastructure or in the purchase of vehicles.

"There also needs to be significant efforts to provide EV and alternative fuels recharging infrastructure more widely across the state to enable take up."

However, companies like Janus Electric operate a swap in and swap out battery for their heavy vehicles. This mirrors pro-active initiatives undertaken in China, in relation to some taxi's in major Cities like Shanghai and elsewhere.

Currently the cost of Hydrogen powered heavy vehicles is around 400% more than external combustion engines making this technology prohibitive without Government subsidy for most carriers.

4. USE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND MEASURES TO ENSURE A COMPETITIVE MARKET, INCLUDING RING FENCING POLICIES

RFNSW believes the transition to eco-friendly heavy vehicles necessitates greater operational and business support from Government if industry is to achieve net zero targets by 2050.

Already, the NSW Government is taking positive measures to better support truck operators transitioning to EVs, through a two-year trial allowing zero-emission heavy vehicles (powered by heavier lithium-ion batteries) to access the State's road network under additional masses.[2]

Under the Trial, zero-emission trucks will be able to operate at up to eight tonne on a single steer axle, when fitted with minimum 385mm wide tyres; and up to 10.5 tonne on a single drive axle or up to 18.5 tonne on a tandem drive axle.

Currently Australian regulations limit the width of heavy vehicles to 2.5m wide. European and American vehicles are built to 2.55m wide. The Australian market is relatively small in world terms, and narrower vehicles specifically built for the Australian market increase the manufacturing cost and availability. Being able to access vehicles built at scale would assist in reducing vehicle purchase cost.

RFNSW also calls on the NSW Government and Councils to introduce local noise curfew exemptions for silent electric trucks.

Allowing electric heavy vehicles to operate outside regular curfews would result in greater operational flexibility, efficiencies and productivity for our Members, many who are small to medium-sized family-run businesses.

[redacted]cope said: 'Changing to zero emission transport vehicles is viewed by BlueScope as critical to [redacted]al.

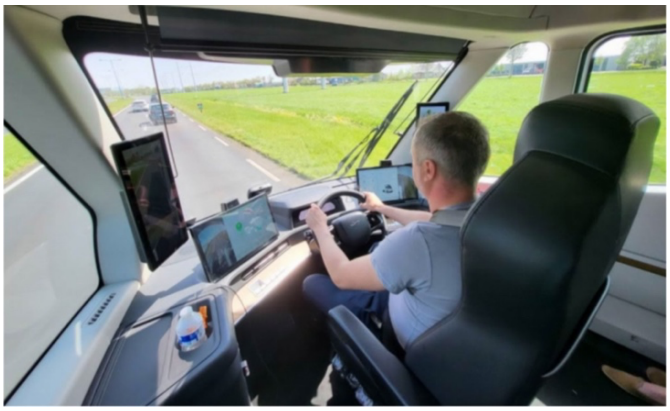
[redacted] by the introduction safe, operationally and commercially sustainable vehicles that are fit for task.'

[2] Transport for NSW, 2024.

5. MEASURES TO ENSURE THE TRANSITION OF WORKERS FROM AFFECTED INDUSTRIES AND INDUSTRY STANDARDS

According to the NSW Government, the freight transport and logistics sector provides more than 330,000 full time jobs and that could grow as high as 565,000 by 2060–61. [3]

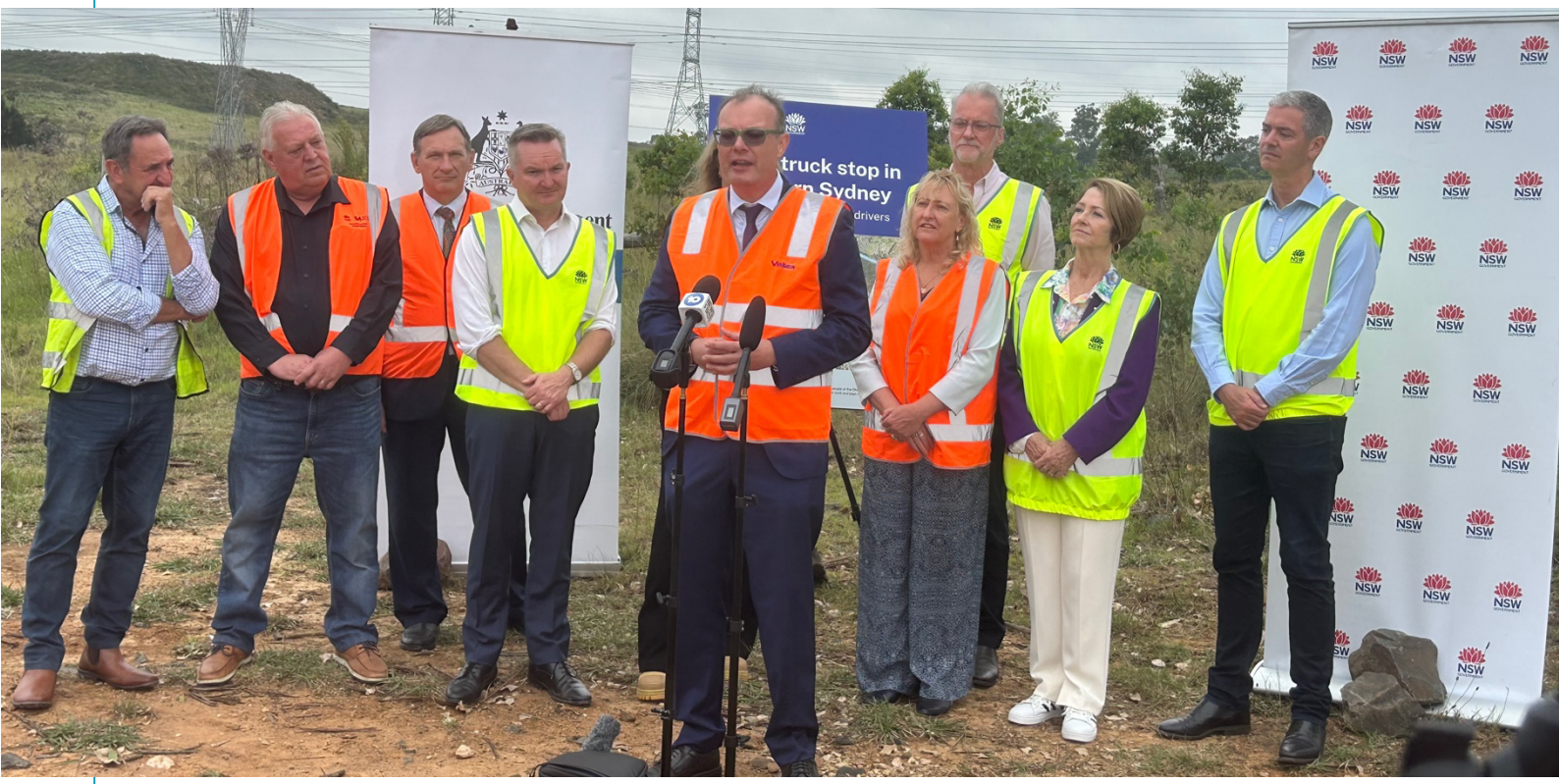
To support the workforce transitioning to electric and alternative energy-sourced heavy vehicles, the NSW Government will need to work with RFNSW and stakeholders to develop training and programs which ensure a sustainable workforce now and into the future.



[3] Transport for NSW, 2024

6. RFNSW RECOMMENDATIONS

- NSW Government to conduct roundtable with RFNSW and other industry stakeholders to develop a road map for the decarbonisation of the State's freight industry;
- Review results from the NSW Government's Zero-Emission Heavy Vehicles Trial with a view to implementation of additional masses for clean, green trucks;
- NSW Government to commit to sustained investment in fast charging EV stations in strategic freight routes across metro and rural and regional areas, working with Hydrogen suppliers on ways to increase supply, and access to Hydrogen;
- NSW Government to engage with trucking operators, many of whom are small to medium sized family run businesses, to assist with capital expenditure required for the electrification of their fleets;
- NSW Government to engage with RFNSW fuel partners for discussions on how best to incorporate existing truck stop locations to provide charging or hydrogen re-fuelling.



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