



Media release

For immediate release

Road User Charging must be Universal

The Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) has reiterated that any future federally collected road user charge (RUC) must be universal – and apply to all road-going vehicles regardless of fuel source.

Meetings between the Commonwealth and state and territory governments in December 2023 discussed the need for a fairer way to cost roads and their maintenance, particularly since the High Court ruled that states cannot go it alone. The AEVA believes this is a golden opportunity for reform of the fuel excise, fuel tax credits, and how roads are costed in Australia.

Dr Chris Jones, National President of the AEVA argues that if a road user charge is to be implemented, it must be universal and factor in the mass of the vehicle.

“A universal, mass × distance road user charge should eventually replace fuel excise as the user-pays component of roads and their maintenance. This should also be extended to heavy vehicles, as trucks are responsible for the bulk of road damage”, Dr Jones said.

Including the vehicle weight accounts for the relative inefficiency of heavier vehicles, and would help drive sales of smaller, lighter vehicles. Jones says that while some EVs are heavier than an equivalent petrol or diesel vehicle, they can hardly be singled out for road damage.

“Australia’s two most popular family vehicles tip the scales at well over 2 tonnes, and neither of them are EVs”, he said, referring to the Ford Ranger and Toyota Hilux.

AEVA has produced an options paper examining the implementation of a universal, mass × distance RUC. One option would be to introduce a low per tonne-kilometer RUC that is gradually increased as fuel excise revenue declines. Alternatively, the fuel excise (and fuel tax credits) could be scrapped completely, and a full RUC levied on all vehicles, including trucks and buses. In all cases, annual odometer readings would be used to determine distances driven, while state and territory licensing departments record the vehicle weight.

A universal, mass × distance road user charge would need to be led by the Federal Government and administered through state/territory transport departments, with revenue redistributed proportionally for road maintenance.

Dr Jones says EVs will still end up being cheaper to own and operate, and are the lowest cost option for households who rely on cars for their transport needs.

“EV drivers recognise the need for road costing reforms. We just want to ensure that it’s fair, doesn’t discourage EV ownership, and sets the nation up for the future.”

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About AEVA

The Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) LTD is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the cause of switching Australia's transport networks to electric drive as quickly as possible. Formed after the oil price shocks of 1973, the AEVA is the longest continuously running EV society in the world.

We represent all EV users and enthusiasts; current and prospective.

AEVA media contact

Christopher Jones | president@aeva.asn.au | 0418908002