



12 February 2025

The Hon Richard Marles, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Defence  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Deputy Prime Minister,

I write to you in my capacity as President of the Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) – a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to accelerating the transition of our transport networks to electric drive as quickly as possible. We represent the consumers and end-users of electric vehicle (EV) technology, whether as drivers, riders, commuters or enthusiasts.

Since 1973, AEVA has made the case that transport electrification is essential to reduce the nation's dependence on liquid fuels, improve the air quality of our cities, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the cost of moving people and goods. With electric car numbers exceeding just over a quarter of a million, progress is extremely encouraging. We appreciate and acknowledge the Federal Government's efforts to pass enabling legislation like the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES), and removal of Fringe Benefits Tax on leased EVs.

We appreciate that in your role as Minister for Defence that you will be well aware of the precarious nature of Australia's liquid fuel supplies, such that:

- Liquid fuel supply in Australia continues to depend on private suppliers, market forces and a limited fleet of foreign-owned tankers. Our efficient "just-in-time" supply has led to Australia being the only oil importing country that does not meet its International Energy Agency (IEA) obligations to retain a 90 day stock of net oil imports.
- In 2023, the IEA noted that Australia imported 94.1% of its net oil requirements, at a cost of A\$59.9 billion, 10% of our total imports. Refined petroleum was A\$37.7 billion of this total, making it our number one import by value.
- Australia imports refined fuels, mainly from Singapore, Korea and Malaysia, which have large-scale refineries with low costs. A small amount of imported oil is refined in Australia's two remaining refineries, which operate with subsidies.
- Our shipping routes are a major risk to supply. Tankers from our suppliers of fuel, particularly refined fuel, cross the conflict-prone South China Sea, the strategic Straits of Malacca, or the seas around the Korean peninsula.
- In turn, 30 percent of the world's traded crude oil is transported via the Red Sea and Straits of Hormuz where even minor conflict using drones has caused serious disruption to shipping. The 1973 oil crisis demonstrated how conflict in the Middle East could profoundly disrupt global oil supplies.
- The Russia-Ukraine war has shown that energy disruption to an entire continent was possible with serious repercussions.

We appreciate that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) accepts that the strategic risk extends well beyond insufficient reserves and refineries, and that the development of alternative fuels and shifting to renewable energy sources are crucial. We also understand that the ADF plans include electrification of the ADF fleet where feasible. Defence forces in Australia and internationally have identified the strategic risk of fuel insecurity and have been able to plan for the energy transition without politicising the issue.



While a fuel shortage would cripple our private and public transport sector, a fleet of electric cars, buses, trucks and trains would be resistant to such disturbances. Although large parts of our electricity generation and distribution networks are foreign owned, the energy is generated with minimal dependence on imported fuels.

Our association is promoting five policies in the lead up to the Federal election that will accelerate the transition to electric transport. Details of these policies are attached. We are advocating that the incoming Federal Government should:

- build on the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES) by extending it to the year 2035, by ensuring that all new light vehicles are zero emission by 2035, and by extending emissions standard to heavy vehicles;
- undertake that any future federal road user charge will be universal (ie applied to all vehicles, not just EVs) and be based on vehicle mass as well as distance driven;
- work with state and local governments to continue to build a well-planned, reliable network of public EV charging infrastructure with binding service level agreements;
- legislate "right to charge" provisions, so EV drivers and riders may access charging infrastructure for their EV at home or work; and
- invest heavily in interstate freight and passenger rail, and support charging infrastructure for light and heavy vehicles.

On this last point, we see heavy haulage as a key opportunity to enhance the nation's prosperity through electrification. It is our view that more goods should be moved by rail rather than road freight if we are to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Railways need a massive investment in track upgrades, realignments and eventually, electrification (overhead, battery or a combination) in order to be competitive with long distance trucking. With a fraction of the emissions and cost per tonne-kilometre, electrified rail is the mature technology solution in waiting.

For over 50 years the AEVA has advocated for electrification of transport at every level, and leadership from government is a necessary pillar for driving this change. We look forward to any opportunity to work with the Government on good policy which works, is fair, and delivers the widest range of benefits to the end user, and enhances Australia's security.

If you have any questions or would like further detail on our policy recommendations, feel free to contact us on the details provided.

Sincerely,

A black rectangular box redacts the signature of Dr Chris Jones. A small purple mark is visible above the box.

Dr Chris Jones  
President,  
Australian Electric Vehicle Association