



2nd November 2024

AEVA President's Report

The AEVA has for 51 years advanced the case for full electrification of our transport networks. Throughout this time, our optimism for the future has been tempered by the technologies of the present, and our goals were largely at the mercy of the laws of physics and material science. Around the time of our founding, the state of the art for electric traction was series-wound DC motors, rheostats and lead acid batteries; the potential for widespread adoption had limits.

Today we exploit the power of the lithium ion, the graphite and silicon anode and the stable electrolyte. Our battery chemistries are not only storing six times more energy per kilogram as those from half a century ago, they are now cheaper, faster charging and safer than ever before. Drive train technology deliver over 96% efficiency, and best of all, the electricity charging these EVs is increasingly renewable, with our grid frequently exceeding two-thirds solar, wind and hydro. It's not just electric cars; but motorcycles, boats, aeroplanes, buses, semi-trailers and locomotives. Full electrification of transport has never been closer.

Indeed, our federal government this year passed the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard, compelling vehicle importers to sell cleaner cars or pay a penalty. Various import duties have been lifted on new EVs, and fringe benefits tax has been removed, enabling businesses to electrify their fleets, so employees can get into an EV sooner. Charging infrastructure is being steadily rolled out around Australia with over 1000 DC chargers now allowing a full circumnavigation of the continent in an EV, if not for a few broken ones here and there. State and territory governments are doing some heavy lifting too, with incentives to accelerate uptake, funding charger roll-outs, supporting research into vehicle-to-grid, and actively, albeit slowly, electrifying their fleets of buses.

The technology is here, today. But so too are the incumbents. Purveyors of petroleum and the internal combustion engine are poised to lose political influence (and profits) through the arrival of the EV. New companies have leapt to the challenge, but only a handful of legacy automotive companies are taking the shift seriously. These laggards are piling pressure on governments to change the rules, or go slow on measures designed to accelerate EV uptake. Worst of all, some are enabling and even promoting brazen disinformation about electric vehicles and their capabilities.

Our association was founded with a goal of disseminating knowledge, and improving the public's understanding of EV technology. It remains essential that we continue this role in the face of deliberate misinformation. With lived experience and often professional backgrounds in the field, our members are well placed to counter these myths and misconceptions. But perhaps our strongest attribute is the trust we've acquired as *representatives of the consumer*. People are naturally sceptical of new technology and often find it easier to believe the words of a friend over those of an expert. At some point, no amount of facts will convince someone they can drive on sunshine, or that their battery will probably outlive their car. The only way to break through is to share our stories of how EVs offer convenience, clean travel, and low-cost motoring.

With the technology in our hands, and enabling policies at the ready, the AEVA continues to represent the interests of all Australians who stand to benefit from electric transport. In order to meet this challenge, we acknowledged the need to professionalise, grow our membership, and improve our advocacy impact. With help from Norsk Elbilforening (the Norwegian EV Association) we workshopped a strategy to achieve these goals in Perth last November, and set these plans in motion early in 2024.

The board resolved to establish three working groups comprised of members with a keen interest in advancing AEVAs impact. Our Policy Advocacy working group has helped craft and refine our positions on numerous matters ranging from vehicle efficiency standards, safety features for EVs,



road user charging, heavy haulage and rail, and fast DC charging to name a few. We have sent over a dozen letters to politicians and participated in parliamentary committees. We know we are making an impact as queries stream in from the media to comment on topical matters.

I must thank our regular contributors, particularly Warwick Cathro, Tom Singer, Heidi Richards, Ben Elliston, Peter Campbell and Chris Johnson for their participation and engagement on these matters. I must thank Jo Oddie in particular for her energy and organisational prowess in pulling an action plan together for the coming (election) year.

Our Membership Value working group has been enormously productive in ensuring we grow and retain our membership. A key priority has been to establish stronger relationships with our business members and extending special offers and discounts to AEVA members. We have developed a suite of presentation material for public workshops, crafted a new member's welcome pack, and have maintained a solid cadence with our ever-popular webinar series. Our inaugural membership survey was a huge success, generating valuable insights into our membership and the progress of EVs in Australia more broadly.

I extend my respect and gratitude to the members of this working group, particularly Ben Elliston for his enthusiasm and tenacity in seeing ideas through to implementation. Thanks also to Jamie Lovick, Sally Knight, Riz Akhtar, David Price, and Craig Harvey for your participation and Steven Dhu in particular for designing the welcome pack and 'Jumpstarter' packs. Ann Hoban and Richard Scherer must be acknowledged for their leading role in crafting and executing our member survey.

I would like to thank the AEVA's board of directors for their contributions, counsel and participation throughout 2023 and 2024, and in particular I'd like to thank Jude Burger for her tenure as the ACT director. Her commitment to process and accountability helped set the course for the organisation's direction and established a culture of diligence and professionalism. Our invaluable national secretary Warwick Cathro deserves praise for keeping contemporaneous minutes and delivering summaries for the website in good time. I thank outgoing Queensland director Les Smith for his tenure, and welcome Nathan Gore-Brown as our incoming representative for the state. Mike Polljonker's commitment to getting the AEVA Motorsport Development Committee off the ground was an exciting initiative from our SA director, and Jon Ettershank's relentless pursuit of exhibitors, speakers and sponsors for this year's national conference, Expo and AGM in Hobart should be commended. This extends to the Tasmanian branch committee for ensuring the show was a success.

In the last 12 months, our membership has grown from just over 1000 to 1580, and we look forward to welcoming many more new members between now and the end of the year. I have been an AEVA member for 14 years now, and without a doubt our most productive years have been the last three. The electrification of transport simply won't happen without a nation of informed consumers and end-users. The AEVA's mission is to foster this groundswell of support, and counter the fear, uncertainty and doubt sown by those with a vested interest in the failure EVs.

In good energy,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Jones', is placed within a light grey rectangular box.

Dr Chris Jones
President
Australian Electric Vehicle Association