INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIPS AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

INFRASTRUCTURE SECTOR LINES UP BEHIND ROAD USER CHARGING – WITH LIGHT EVs AS THE STARTING POINT

Earlier this week, Infrastructure Partnerships Australia convened a roundtable on the pathways to implementation of road user charging reform. Attendees included former Victorian Treasurer Tim Pallas and former Federal Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher, the private sector and industry bodies.

"Road user charging is a rare area of reform that is on a unity ticket – and that was clear at the roundtable – the Venn diagram is finally lining up. Since the roundtable, Government, Opposition and all states of all colours have acknowledged that reform in this space must happen," said Infrastructure Partnerships Australia Chief Executive Officer Adrian Dwyer.

"There was universal agreement that the current system is unfair, unsustainable and inefficient, and that delays to reform will only make the problem worse - and that we now have an opportunity to design a system that is fair, future-proof and supports uptake of EVs.

"A distance-based charge on light EVs is the logical starting point. Heavy EVs can be included, but starting there alone won't address the issues structural to this debate – namely, the core issue of fairness as more light EVs join the fleet.

To support continued EV uptake, Mr Dwyer said a portion of revenue should be allocated towards charging infrastructure on a time-limited basis and revisited as the network grows and battery technology improves.

"We should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Reform should start with a simple, straightforward system – such as a uniform per-kilometre charge for light EVs – that can be scaled up over time to include other vehicle types and new tracking technologies," said Mr Dwyer.

"International experience from New Zealand and the US shows transparency, including that drivers can clearly see how much they are paying, is critical to a positive user experience and, therefore, successful reform."

Following the 2023 *Vanderstock* High Court decision in Victoria, Mr Dwyer said cooperation between the Commonwealth and the States is critical.

"The States have the infrastructure and capability to administer a road user charge but lack the legislative framework to do so.

"To the extent that a pilot is required, NSW is ideally placed to be the test bed for a national system that can be rolled out. NSW already has the legislation in place - all that is required is for the Federal Government to endorse that system and secure the revenue stream against a High Court challenge.

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"We urge Treasurers, through the Council of Federal Financial Relations tomorrow and the Federal Government's Economic Roundtable next week, to deliver the necessary, and most optimal, solution to secure ongoing road funding – a charge on light EVs," said Mr Dwyer.

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