RAC State Budget Submission 2026-27

Priorities for a safer, sustainable and connected WA

For the better

RAC is a voice for over 1.3 million Western Australians. Since our foundation in 1905, RAC has existed to be a driving force for a better WA by championing change that will create a safer, sustainable and connected Western Australia.

Purpose

The driving force for a better WA.

Vision

2030: A safer, sustainable and connected future for Western Australians.

Mission

Delivering great member services and experiences, while inspiring positive community change that makes life better in WA.

RAC State Budget Submission 2026-27

The 2026-27 State Budget is an opportunity to fund critically important programs and projects to save thousands of lives and prevent serious injuries, reduce harmful vehicle emissions and better connect Western Australians. These initiatives will also create thousands of jobs and help safeguard WA's productivity and liveability.

RAC's five priorities for the 2026-27 State Budget are:

1. Further investment in low-cost safety treatments on country roads through the Regional Road Safety Program – to complete the state road network and comprehensively address the local government sealed road network.

2. Enabling local governments to work with Main Roads WA to determine and then implement safer speed limits at scale across their networks.

3. Expediting the delivery of cycling infrastructure and enhancing streets and places for active travel.

4. Accelerating investment in bus priority measures along key corridors to support improved reliability and uptake of public transport in Perth.

5. Scaling up electric vehicle charging infrastructure and extending financial support to accelerate the transition to sustainable vehicles.

Our key priorities

1. Low-cost safety treatments on country roads

The challenge:

- Over five years, more than 500 people have been killed and over 2,500 seriously injured on WA's regional roads[1].
- Regional WA has a fatality rate of 18.6 road deaths per 100,000 population[2], which is significantly higher than the WA and national averages of 6.3 and 4.8 road deaths per 100,000 people in 2024, respectively[3]. While other states have higher fatality rates in regional areas than in metro areas, WA's regional fatality rate is particularly high.
- Much of the regional road network is unforgiving of mistakes, with high-speed two-way traffic, roadside hazards such as trees and a lack of safety features.
- 44 per cent of deaths and serious injuries in regional WA occur on local government managed roads (accounting for more than 270 deaths and serious injuries each year)[4], meaning that both state and local roads need to be improved to deliver road safety targets.
- Infrastructure Australia has prioritised poor quality parts of Australia's regional road network[5] and more specifically single vehicle, run-off road crashes in WA[6], as issues of national significance.

The opportunity:

The Regional Road Safety Program (RRSP) is a landmark WA Government initiative delivering effective, low-cost safety treatments such as sealing shoulders, installing audible edge lines, medians and/or centre lines. The RRSP, announced by the WA Government in August 2019[7], was originally costed at $900 million and modelled to reduce regional road trauma by 60 per cent. To date, around 10,000km of state-controlled regional roads have been upgraded since the program was established in 2020[8].

RAC has welcomed the funding, but it is critical the program is rolled out in full (around 14,400 km[9]), so that the safety benefits are realised across the whole WA regional network.

Early evidence indicates that the RRSP is having a positive impact[10]. Crash reduction analysis (to December 2022), which was undertaken across 163 Regional Road Safety Program projects, indicated a 50 per cent reduction in fatalities and a 35 per cent reduction in serious injuries when compared to the five years prior.

Local governments manage around 26,000km of sealed regional roads[11], which would benefit from similar low-cost treatments as the state network, but less than 1,000km of local government roads have been upgraded under the existing RRSP. Therefore, a tailored program, akin to the RRSP, offers a clear opportunity to reduce risk across these local networks.

In 2022, RAC commissioned the National Transport Research Organisation (NTRO) to develop a business case to seek funding to improve the safety of sealed, high speed local government roads in WA. The WA Local Government Association and Main Roads WA were project partners, supporting the project through: a funding contribution; active participation in the project working group; and a

joint commitment to use the deliverables to improve road safety outcomes. The review identified approximately 8,000km of local government roads in need of urgent upgrades using criteria including: high-speed limit (90km/h or more) sealed roads; routes providing a regionally significant function[12]; roads with a 'high' crash rate[13]; and high-speed peri-urban roads identified by Main Roads WA.

In 2025, Main Roads WA commissioned NTRO to update the business case to align with Infrastructure Australia's funding submission requirements and so that the treatment unit rates matched current market conditions and delivery mechanisms. As part of this process, the proposed treatments were also updated to maximise the crash reduction benefits by applying shoulder sealing and audible edge and centre lines on all roads, ensuring a more comprehensive, uniform and equitable application of safety treatments.

The updated version of the business case has been submitted to Infrastructure Australia and still identifies low-cost safety treatments for approximately 8,000km of high speed sealed local government roads. This investment would realise an estimated reduction of more than 750 deaths and serious injuries over a 30-year lifespan.

The WA Government announced in the 2025-26 State Budget that $250 million will be allocated over five years to expand the RRSP to local roads across the State[14]. RAC has welcomed the funding for this first stage of local roads investment, however, to reach the total projected reduction in KSI, the WA and Australian Governments must continue to co-fund these safety treatments across all 8,000km of local government roads.

Funding these programs will assist with the delivery of *Driving Change: A Road Safety Strategy for Western Australia 2020–2030* (*Driving Change*) and the *National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30*, which have both identified making regional roads safer a priority to reduce road trauma. In addition, they respond to Infrastructure Australia's priority listing: *Regional Road Network Safety Improvements*, and strongly align with other priority listings, including *Regional and Rural WA Road Network Safety Improvements,* and *Road Access Improvements to Remote WA Communities*.

RAC calls on the WA Government to:

- Ensure that the existing Regional Road Safety Program is fully funded and delivered.
- Co-fund with the Australian Government the Regional Road Safety Program (Local Roads) program to apply low-cost safety treatments to approximately 8,000km of high speed sealed local government roads to prevent hundreds of deaths and serious injuries.

2. Network wide speed limit reviews for local government roads

The challenge:

- Travel speed affects reaction time and braking distance: With less time to react to hazards, driving at higher speeds increases both the likelihood of a crash and the impact speed if there is a crash. The human body is fragile and can only tolerate a certain amount of force, meaning that impact speed is arguably the most influential factor determining crash outcomes.

- Speed limits have historically reflected typical travel speeds rather than the human body's ability to tolerate the energy released during a crash. This means that most of them do not align well with the Safe System principles committed to by the WA Government in its state road safety strategy 2021-2030: *Driving Change*.

- Speed limit reductions have also traditionally been set on a case-by-case basis and considered at the road rather than network level, which limits opportunities for a more consistent approach.

- The time and resources required to undertake network wide speed limit reviews, coupled with the cost of purchasing and installing signage, are barriers to implementing safer speed limits at-scale, particularly if local governments are required to pay for signage.

- *Driving Change* identifies safe travel speeds as a priority and the strategy's targets (50-70 per cent reduction in people killed and seriously injured by 2030) are largely predicated on speed limit reductions. However, the safer speed actions within the 2021-2023 action plan were limited and progress has been modest - we need to act now to meet the 2030 targets.

The opportunity:

Speed limits should reflect the fragility of the human body and its ability to tolerate force in the event of a crash. Even the safest vehicles, road designs and the presence of proven, and often costly, road safety treatments are sometimes not enough to save lives and prevent the life-changing injuries that occur from crashes at higher speeds. It's also not feasible to wait for the billions in funding that would be required to upgrade local government roads to make them safer for the speeds drivers currently travel at.

Recognising the importance of speed reforms, *Driving Change* action plans have identified actions relating to working with local governments to identify and implement safer speeds in local areas, including funding for changes in speed zoning signage and supporting trials (Action 27 from the 2021-23 action plan and Action 7 from the 2024-26 action plan). Further actions identified for 2024-26 include modelling the expected effects of speed on crashes and road trauma as well as reviewing and updating the WA speed zoning policy to ensure it is in line with best practice (Action 1).

Since June 2022, the Shire of Augusta Margaret River and RAC, with support from Main Roads WA, have been working on a Safer Speeds Trial Project (the Trial) [15], to test a new approach to assessing speed limits on local government roads within the Trial area, focusing on harm minimisation and analysing roads in a holistic, area-wide way, and ultimately create a Blueprint for Safer Speeds.

The design of the Trial has involved reviewing network data including traffic, speed, crash history, movement and place, and community nominations alongside a literature review of best practice speed limit setting. A set of principles for speed zoning, prioritising harm minimisation, were agreed to and helped guide the proposed speed limit reductions.

Table 1. Speed limit principles

Road type	Old speed limit	New speed limit
Town centres	40-50km/h	40km/h (area wide)
Residential streets	50km/h	40km/h (area wide)
Urban major roads	60-70km/h	50-60km/h
Peri-urban residential roads	70km/h or 110km/h (open default)	60km/h (area wide)
Sealed rural undivided roads	70-110km/h (open default)	70-80km/h

The Trial commenced in May 2025, with new speed limit signs progressively installed over a four-month period on approximately 550 roads. Comprehensive evaluations will take place 12 months after the Trial commences and then after three years.

The Blueprint will provide a process for an approach to speed limit setting across a wide and varying road network and be able to be replicated for other local government areas. Further, early learnings from the Trial have highlighted that network wide assessment and implementation of new speeds and speed limit signage must be sufficiently resourced.

RAC calls on the WA Government to:

- Establish, fund and resource a $5 million per year program led by Main Roads WA that enables local governments to assess their road network speed limits holistically and then implement safer speed limits.

3. Upscale investment for a high-quality active transport network

The challenge:

- Active travel plays a fundamental role in achieving net zero emissions by 2050, but current rates of walking and riding remain low, even for short trips[16]. According to RAC data, 47 per cent of car trips in Perth made between June 2024 and June 2025 were under 5km in distance and 10 per cent were under 1km[17].

- RAC member sentiments point to high levels of dissatisfaction with active transport infrastructure where fear of sharing the roads with motorists is the main barrier to cycling more often. While 85 per cent of members feel comfortable riding along a busy street on a shared path and 75 per cent on a protected on-road bike lane, just 11 per cent would feel comfortable mixing with traffic[18].

- Currently, only 31 per cent of the 5,568km Long Term Cycle Network (LTCN) is constructed to an adequate standard[19]. The lack of adequate infrastructure significantly inhibits the ability to swap short vehicle trips with active travel especially to key community destinations such as primary schools. For example, within the 1km catchment of all primary schools in the Perth metropolitan region, just 36 per cent of the LTCN is completed to an adequate standard with over half of this network either non-existent, inadequate or needing significant improvement. Approximately 75 per cent of all secondary routes within primary school catchments are either non-existent, inadequate or needing significant improvement.

- Underinvestment is a major barrier to realising the benefits of active travel. The State Government's annual investment in active travel infrastructure is only around 1.3 per cent of the 2023-24 combined capital expenditure of Main Roads WA, Public Transport Authority, and Department of Transport and Major Infrastructure[20].

- The WA Government invested an annual average of $75m between 2017 and 2025[21]. However, in 2023-24, only a small proportion went directly to Local Governments[22], despite their responsibility for over three quarters of the network[23]. Under the current grant framework, LTCN projects also require a higher local government contribution (1:1) than road-based projects (2:1) potentially making active transport infrastructure less attractive to deliver.

- Furthermore, as of 2024, the Western Australian Bicycle Network (WABN) Grant Program has a narrow eligibility criterion where the funding stream for the Perth and Peel LTCN is largely only available for primary and secondary routes within 2km of METRONET stations. This program framework predominantly supports commuting trips as opposed to short local trips; it prioritises outer suburbs; and excludes many local governments from accessing funds.

The opportunity:

Transitioning short vehicle trips to active travel modes presents a big opportunity. Most people can cycle 5km in 20 minutes. Making it easier for people to travel by active modes reduces emissions, lowers household transport costs, manages congestion, reduces pressure on the health system[24], and saves on road building and maintenance costs[25]. It increases physical activity, provides opportunities for social connectedness by humanising our streets and places[26], and can

improve mental health[27].

Investing in active travel creates a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable economy by providing travel options for people of all ages and abilities, that are affordable and virtually emission free. International examples show that the economic, health, and climate benefits generated by such networks outweigh the initial investment often within just two years[28]. In 2022, the Australian cycling and e-scooter economy contributed over $18.6 billion in economic, health and social and environmental benefits nationally[29]. And, modelling from New South Wales estimates each extra kilometre walked adds $5.24 of value and cycling (off road) adds $2.97, accounting for the economic benefits derived from better physical and mental health over a lifetime, cleaner air, and fewer road injuries[30].

Numerous cities and countries are scaling up investment to deliver a high-quality active transport network; Ireland committed 20 per cent of the transport capital budget annually (€360 million / $588 million AUD) to walking and cycling for five years from 2020[31]; Scotland allocated 10 per cent of the transport budget to active travel in 2024–25[32], and many other others including Santiago (Chile) [33], Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) [34], Singapore[35], and Abu Dhabi (UAE)[36]. And there are numerous examples of cities seeing the return on investment; Paris invested €250 million ($403 million AUD) from 2021–2026 to make all streets cyclable by 2026[37] and saw cycling trips rise from 3 per cent in 2010 to 11 per cent in 2023, now surpassing car trips for trips from the outskirts to the centre[38]; and the City of London reported a 57 per cent increase in cycling volumes between 2022 and 2024 due to sustained investment[39].

RAC members strongly support investment in off-road and shared path infrastructure to make local streets feel safer for cycling[40]. Recent research shows strong community support for off-road shared paths and better connections between bike routes, local destinations, and public transport, and that infrastructure solutions are among the most impactful solutions for encouraging active transport[41]. To meet this demand and address safety concerns, increasing the active transport investment from 1.3 per cent of the transport capital budget is essential for unlocking suppressed demand and enabling more people to choose walking and riding.

Finally, addressing the gaps in secondary route infrastructure around primary schools will help to address the decline in active travel to school. The WA Bicycle Network Plan highlights the importance of connecting schools and stations to active transport[42], and with school catchments accounting for much of the network, targeted investment in these areas would deliver high-impact results. By prioritising the completion and upgrade of secondary routes within school catchments, we can enable safer, more direct walking and cycling access for students and the broader community, reduce short vehicle trips, and foster lifelong active travel habits from an early age.

RAC calls on the WA Government to:

- Increase the proportion of the transport capital budget allocated to active transport infrastructure from around 1.3 per cent to 10 per cent to complete the Long Term Cycle Network within a decade. This should prioritise secondary routes in primary school catchments where infrastructure is inadequate or non-existent.
- Amend the funding structure of the WABN Grants Program for LTCN projects so that for each dollar the local government spends, the WA Government contributes $3 rather than $1.
- Expand the WABN Grants Program funding criteria to include all LTCN routes within precincts such as schools, activity centres and all train stations.

4. Capitalise on Perth's high-frequency bus network

The challenge:

- The population is projected to grow by nearly 32 per cent between 2021 and 2036. Tens of thousands of new residents are expected along high frequency bus service corridors, and population growth in the City of Stirling alone may have over 54,000 new residents by 2036 and could generate around 18,000 additional peak hour vehicle trips. This will increase congestion unless viable alternatives are provided.

- With each hour of peak delay costing around $20 per person in lost productivity[43], traffic congestion affecting thousands of daily bus users imposes a significant economic burden.

- Mixing buses with general traffic impacts their reliability, efficiency and attractiveness as a transport mode, and for six years running, RAC Members have nominated the time it takes to get to their destination with public transport as one of their top three barriers to using it more often.

- Infrastructure Australia has found that by 2031, bus boardings in Perth are estimated to grow by 40 per cent with significant crowding expected on major routes. Without action, the annual attributed cost of time spent traveling under crowded conditions is expected to increase nearly ten-fold, from $17 million in 2016 to $159 million in 2031[44] further impacting the attractiveness of the network.

- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), while desirable for key corridors, faces barriers such as high costs, space constraints, network and fleet interoperability challenges and long delivery timelines. These challenges underscore the need for interim bus priority improvements as planning for a mid-tier public transport system progresses.

- New corridors previously identified for bus priority, such as the proposed high frequency transit corridor between Alkimos and Eglinton Stations are not being achieved, risking a default to standard bus service levels, limiting patronage potential and locking in car dependency in a rapidly developing area.

The opportunity:

While recent State investment has focused on expanding Perth's rail network, buses remain a heavy mover, typically supporting about half of all public transport trips. In 2024-25, buses carried almost 24 million more boardings than trains[45]. This reflects their critical role along key corridors, as well as a feeder service to the rail network, and facilitator of diverse trip types across the network.

The 900 series of bus routes perform a unique role within Perth's transport network, contributing towards the formation of a mid-tier service. Predominantly serving the Central Sub-Region, they operate at higher frequencies and longer hours than standard services they also run along major corridors, connecting key destinations unable to be covered by the rail network (such as QEII and UWA) as well as connecting the stations themselves. These 14 routes support some of Perth's highest patronage levels (particularly the 950 and 960 routes with up to 17 thousand and 9 thousand passengers per weekday respectively), delivering superior cost efficiencies per boarding[46].

RAC's 2025 Public Transport Member Priorities Tracker survey found that 41 per cent of members

would be more likely to use public transport if additional bus priority measures were introduced, and 59 per cent supported better connections (and corresponding connecting pedestrian infrastructure) to activity centres and destinations beyond Perth City Centre.

Providing more buses and investing in bus priority infrastructure along high demand routes such as the 900 series is a strategic opportunity to attract and transport a higher volume of passengers, more reliably and faster than standard buses and potentially other traffic. Key benefits of investing in bus priority include:

- Emission savings: One standard bus produces just one tenth of the emissions of 50 internal combustion engine cars over 100km[47]. With the WA Government transitioning exclusively to electric bus manufacturing from May 2025, the potential for ongoing emissions savings will significantly increase, particularly if additional car trips are switched to the bus.

- Optimisation of Road Space**:** With each bus capable of replacing up to 50 cars while using just 6 per cent of the road space, buses play a critical role in easing congestion and reducing car dependency, particularly during peak periods[48].

- Return on investment**:** Modelling shows that investing in efficient and sustainable transport modes delivers greater long-term economic and social returns than expanding car infrastructure[49]. Expanding bus priority is a cost-effective way to boost patronage and enhance the bus network, delivering greater returns than rail expansion thanks to lower operating costs per boarding[50] and system-wide benefits for all road users.

- Addressing perceived barriers to bus use: Research shows that customers highly value bus services with bus priority infrastructure for their reliability, comfort or safety compared to mixed-traffic bus services. This can result in a noticeable increase in patronage. In fact, for every 1 per cent improvement in service quality due to bus priority, overall ridership across the route has shown to grow by more than 1 per cent[51].

- Unlocking development potential and supporting land use planning: combining priority bus infrastructure with direct routing through activity centres in new developments enables greater transport choice in accessing employment, and retail development within walkable catchments, reducing car dependency and supporting sustainable urban growth.

- Reducing the number of people KSI on roads**:** Local and international research demonstrates that buses are significantly safer than private vehicles[52], especially within bus priority zones[53], and can reduce the overall risk of fatal and serious injuries, by: enforcing a slower on-road environment; reducing the number of vehicles on the road; reducing per person exposure; and progressing a multi-modal approach to travel.

- Progressing towards a mid-tier transport system: Bus priority measures are a critical step in elevating Perth's public transport network to a mid-tier system, bridging the gap between local buses and high-capacity rail. By improving travel time reliability, reducing delays, and enhancing passenger experience, bus priority enables high-frequency routes to operate more like rapid transit services. This supports mode shift, increases corridor efficiency, and lays the groundwork for scalable, cost-effective upgrades to meet growing demand.

In 2017, the Office of the Auditor General's Planning and Management of Bus Services report highlighted that over 20 corridors needed significant improvements to bus priority measures to support the high frequency bus series, and in 2019 PTA's Major Corridor Review outlined 24 potential high frequency corridors and 10 under-performing high frequency routes which would generate the

highest return on investment if transitioned to bus priority.

There are a range of bus priority measures, including Intelligent Transport Systems, queue jump facilities at signalized intersections and 24 hour bus lanes, offering scalable and tailorable solutions in line with corridor needs and growing demand. Since 2014, bus priority measures have been installed along Beaufort Street, Fitzgerald Street, Charles Street, Mounts Bay Road, Stirling Highway adjacent to UWA, Great Eastern Highway, Ranford Road and most recently along Albany Highway and Shepperton Road to support the Armadale Line shutdown.

A larger program is now needed to accelerate improvement and reliability of the high frequency series and support the rollout of additional bus priority measures in line with strategic transport portfolio objectives. Considering the potential for leveraging existing infrastructure investment in certain areas, the forecast levels of population growth along existing high frequency bus catchments, and the need for completing routes in line with PTA's desire for a "whole of corridor approach", RAC has identified some key opportunities over the short to medium term:

- Bus priority measures on Canning Highway east and west of Canning Bridge Station to support the 910 bus route, ongoing population growth, and in anticipation of area wide development including the Canning Bridge Bus Interchange and proposed ferry terminal.

- Continuation of existing bus priority treatments north along Beaufort Street between Salisbury Street to Russell Street in support of the 950 bus route.

- Wanneroo Road corridor:

    - Continuation of existing bus priority along Charles Street (north of Vincent Street to Nollamara Shopping Centre) connecting to services from Scarbrough Beach Road and providing access to ECU City (supporting the 990 bus route)
    - Implementation of bus priority measures along Wanneroo Road (south) to connect with the Charles Street section, offset demand along the Mitchell Freeway and support the 970 bus route.

- Allocation of long-term capital and recurrent funding to deliver enabling infrastructure that supports the future roll out of high-frequency bus services between Alkimos and Eglinton Stations, including bus priority measures and direct routing through activity centres to meet the needs of the rapidly growing population.

RAC calls on the WA Government to:

Commit an initial program cost of $120m over 4 years to develop and fund a program of works to deliver a 'whole of corridor' approach to bus priority treatments along the 900 series high-frequency bus routes. This includes the provision of more buses, corresponding pedestrian connectivity, and prioritisation of bus priority measures along Canning Highway, Beaufort Street and Wanneroo Road South, and enabling infrastructure in support of a high frequency bus service between Alkimos and Eglinton Stations.

5. Scaling up Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and extending financial support

The challenge:

- Tragically, modelling estimates more than 11,100 Australian adults die prematurely each year due to exposure to traffic-related NO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions[54].

- In 2021, Australia recorded the highest total oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions per capita (108kg) of all Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries; this was almost six and a half times the OECD average[55].

- As well as people's health, our environment is also impacted, a problem that is only worsening. In 2023, road transport made up nearly 18 per cent of national carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2-e) emissions, with cars alone accounting for 9 per cent of national emissions[56]. If we do not act, transport emissions are on track to be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia by 2030[57].

- Over the last 30 years, road transport CO_2-e emissions per person increased in WA by 12 per cent, whilst the national average declined by 3 per cent[58].

- In 2024, battery electric vehicle (BEV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) sales represented 13 per cent of new vehicle sales in Australia, lagging behind the global average of 22 per cent[59].

- Infrastructure Australia has identified the need for more EV fast chargers on national highways as an issue of national significance[60]. Australia still has a high number of EVs per public charging point compared with other countries, at 45 per public charging point as of 2024 (compared with between 10 and 30 in most IEA member countries), leading to long wait times. Australia has less than 1.1kW of public charging per EV, which is again low compared to other countries[61].

- According to our members who aren't considering an EV for their next vehicle purchase, the top barriers include cost and access to charging infrastructure.

The opportunity:

The broad adoption of EVs will reduce harmful vehicle emissions, help reduce reliance on fossil fuels, create employment in a developing industry, and reduce the cost of operating a vehicle.

Modelling by Aurecon shows only BEVs and Fuel Cell EVs (FCEVs) have the potential to come close to the magnitude of life cycle CO_2-e reductions from cars needed to meet Australia's climate commitments[62]. However, in the shorter-term PHEVs can also support the transition towards lower-emission road transport, providing a smaller but significant contribution towards the achievement of Australia's emissions reduction targets while the infrastructure and technology for BEVs and FCEVs continue to develop. Operating on WA's mixed grid, the life cycle emissions of BEVs are already lower than a comparable petrol vehicle by 55 per cent, and as the electricity mix continues to decarbonise, this gap will increase such that on a fully renewable grid, the emissions of a BEV would be 86 per cent lower. The life cycle emissions of an FCEV powered by green or grey[63] hydrogen would be 83 per cent

or 50 per cent lower than a petrol equivalent, respectively. The life-cycle emissions of PHEVs are lower than a comparable petrol vehicle by 43 per cent.

The Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia has underpinned several initiatives such as: grants for charging infrastructure; a commitment to increase the number of EVs in the government fleet; the WA EV charging network; and providing $3,500 rebates for purchasing an electric or hydrogen fuel cell vehicle. However, some of these initiatives have ended prior to EV market saturation, including completion of the WA EV Network during 2024/25 and expiry of the Zero Emission Vehicle Rebate in May 2025.

According to Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) EV projections for WA's Wholesale Electricity Market (WEM), the expected scenario[64] for 2030 estimates more than 300,000 passenger EVs (BEVs and PHEVs) within the SWIS area. At a national level, CSIRO's modelling projects that EVs will account for around 58 per cent of new passenger vehicle sales and 11 per cent of the total vehicle fleet in Australia in 2030[65]. To service the increasing number of EVs, Deloitte modelling suggests an eight-fold increase on 2023 levels of public charging capacity will be needed by 2033. This represents around 31,500 new public EV chargers nationally, with approximately 3,000 new public chargers needed in WA[66].

The WA Charge Up Grants third round closed on 30 June 2025. There is no state budget allocation beyond 2025/26. The rollout of workplace, destination and public fast EV chargers could be enhanced by continuing and expanding the scheme and amending the criteria, for example by:

- increasing the state government co-funding contribution towards purchase, installation and maintenance of EV charging hardware (currently dependent on site location and charger size but capped at a maximum contribution of 50 per cent);

- expanding eligible expenditure (for example, by including feasibility studies that can be costly for local governments if an alternative location needs to be selected, and extending the maintenance plan beyond 2 years); and/or

- relaxing applicant eligibility requirements (currently capped according to number of employees and turnover), especially where the charger is publicly available.

There is evidence that EV purchase cost remains a significant barrier to fleet adoption in Australia. According to a 2025 survey of over 8,600 fleet decision-makers from 30 countries (including 300 from Australia), the top three challenges to electrifying fleets identified by Australian respondents were: purchase price (52 per cent); charging infrastructure (50 per cent); and vehicle availability (40 per cent).[67] A complementary measure to augment the Charge Up Grants scheme would be to incentivise businesses to purchase EVs. Fleet purchases are a significant driver of EV sales and an important contributor to the second-hand market, which in turn assists with overall EV affordability for consumers. For example, the first three rounds of the New South Wales EV Fleets Incentive accounted for over 3,400 BEV purchases by businesses to 2024, constituting five per cent of all BEV registrations in that state.[68] A similar incentive in WA to provide businesses with one-off EV purchase subsidies could assist with offsetting the higher purchase cost of a BEV compared to an equivalent ICE vehicle. If a similar quantum of funding is applied to WA on a per capita basis this equates to an annual spend (based on the 2024/25 NSW Fleets Incentive budget) of approximately $6.8 million.

In a 2024 RAC survey, EV owners suggested more charging stations, particularly fast chargers, in more locations, especially in regional/rural areas as the main improvements needed to public charging facilities in WA. Other common suggestions included increased reliability of existing chargers and enhanced charge station amenities. The National Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Mapping Tool identifies many areas in regional WA where fast charging infrastructure could be optimally

located to meet demand including key transport routes (such as Great Northern Highway between Perth and Port Hedland) that are outside the WA and (proposed) National EV Charging networks. Research conducted by Future Smart Strategies for the Tesla Owners Club of Western Australia also highlighted Great Northern Highway as a major long-distance route that currently lacks an integrated EV charging network but would benefit from DC charging infrastructure, and an opportunity for the WA EV Network to be augmented with additional fast chargers between existing sites. Reducing the average distance between chargers from 200km to 100km would decrease the risk of EV drivers becoming stranded (if, for example, drivers must drive further because a charger is out of order or their driving range is reduced because of towing).

A key learning from operating the RAC Electric Highway®, and important consideration for the state's EV Charging Network, is that for the public to have confidence in using public charging infrastructure, it is critical not only to invest in the chargers themselves but also in amenities that improve comfort and safety while waiting for an EV to charge. This includes lighting and CCTV, as well as access to facilities such as seating, shelters, bins and toilets, and is particularly important in remote locations where stopping to charge a vehicle also doubles as a rest stop for drivers.

RAC calls on the WA Government to:

- Commit a minimum of $23 million to fund a second phase of the WA EV network program. This phase should prioritise the deployment of public charging infrastructure along key transport routes in regional and remote WA—such as the Great Northern Highway—that currently fall outside the existing network and are unlikely to attract private investment in the short to medium term. Public investment should aim to reduce the distance between chargers to 100km and ensure amenities are available.
- Commit a further $15 million to continue the WA Charge Up Grants Program and relax eligible expenditure and applicant criteria to accelerate rollout of workplace, destination and public EV fast chargers.
- Commit at least $6.8 million to an initial round of an EV fleet purchase rebate to complement the WA Charge Up Grants Program by incentivising WA businesses to purchase EVs.

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