



THIS IS ELECTRIC PTY LTD

This is Electric Pty Ltd - Submission to the Climate Change Office – Draft Transport Plan

About us

This is Electric Pty Ltd is a social enterprise dedicated to supporting communities transition to renewable energy and reduce emissions. We do this by providing electrical contracting services to electrify households, business and communities across Tasmania. Currently, we are focussed on ensuring the Tasmanian community, local business and households have appropriate charging infrastructure to support the rapid shift towards electric vehicles that is currently underway.

We are also committed to ensuring the transition away from fossil fuels and gas is not only rapid, but equitable and accessible and benefits are shared locally.

Introduction

We thank the Tasmanian Government for the opportunity to consider the State of Play Report (the report) and Draft Transport Plan (the plan) for the transport sector.

It is very encouraging to see the focus in the report and plan on increasing the use of public and active transport in the community. The initiatives included in the plan will play a key role in reducing our transport emissions.

As noted in the report, battery electric vehicles (EVs) will also play a key role in our transition away from fossil fuels in the transport sector. Tasmania's EV uptake is steadily increasing, however, a very rapid transition will be required in our communities to ensure we continue to reduce emissions as much as possible by 2030. We must collaborate and work together to reduce barriers to EV adoption and usage in the community, to support this transition.

Research indicates that there are still many barriers preventing more widespread adoption of EVs. These include upfront cost of EVs, access to charging infrastructure and range anxiety. In addition, there is also a lack of consumer knowledge and awareness of the technology and costs involved.

One of our current priorities is to support governments, local businesses and communities to continue to expand the EV charging network in Tasmania, in a way that engages communities, raises awareness of the technology and reduces identified barriers to EV uptake and usage. We are working with local community groups, councils and businesses to develop plans for operating a local, community based EV charging network in Tasmania. We would be very willing to discuss this project further with the government.

Increasing community charging infrastructure

Recommendation 1. The Tasmanian Government provide a grants program to support widespread public ‘destination charging’ sites. Destination charging is low-cost, can be highly visible, and addresses range-anxiety and other barriers to EV adoption.

Thanks to Tasmanian and federal government funding and investment, we now have a crucial network of DC rapid chargers operating on Tasmania’s main highways and regional centres.

To further increase resilience and reduce emissions in the transport sector, we consider that this charging network will need to be expanded further, but also that the type of charging infrastructure will need to be diversified as well to meet community charging needs.

We note that the majority of EV charging is occurring at home (up to 90%), however, there will be an increasing demand for public charging with more EVs on the road. We understand that around 40% of usage of current charging network in Tasmania is from vehicles registered interstate. Diversity in public charging infrastructure will be critical to support the local, interstate and international tourism industry in Tasmania and also in areas of high density housing with limited off-street parking.

We anticipate that public charging customers will generally prefer affordable and accessible public charging in locations that are convenient and co-located with other services, and where they plan to park for an extended length of time (at destinations). Possible locations for public charging in Tasmania include local businesses, community halls, visitor centres, cafes, wineries, popular beaches, dog walking parks, regional and rural towns and other popular tourist destinations, park and ride facilities, and free all day parking around city centres or shopping complexes.

We think there is an opportunity to install a network of accessible, simple to use AC, three phase ‘destination’ chargers around Tasmania, in strategic locations and in close consultation and partnership with local businesses and communities. Supporting installation of ‘destination’ chargers in these locations will serve the community’s need for public charging, while also avoiding the need to invest in more costly rapid charging in every location.

The ‘destination’ chargers can be installed much more easily than rapid chargers – for far less capital investment, and could be scaled up quickly in response to community needs. These chargers would also largely work within the current network and grid capacity in many cases – reducing the need for complex upgrades. These chargers are a simple, affordable and accessible solution that would support the current DC fast charging network, and increase the diversity, resilience and reliability of Tasmania’s public charging network as a whole.

A wide network of this type of charging infrastructure would also support increased uptake of EVs with smaller batteries and ranges, by facilitating longer trips around the state. This

would increase affordability of EVs in our community, and support the second hand EV car market. Installing a wide network of affordable and accessible community chargers will also mean that home chargers may not be required in every residence, further reducing cost for EV owners. In many cases, home charger installations require upgraded mains and are not possible in some residences.

We also think there is an opportunity in ensuring that public charging infrastructure is visible to the public, at least in the initial phases of EV adoption. Highly visible charging infrastructure acts as a useful and reassuring reminder for both those who may consider purchasing an EV and EV drivers themselves.

However, installing and maintaining public charging infrastructure is not yet a financially viable investment for many businesses, councils, or community groups. This is due to installation and hardware costs in addition to the ongoing costs involved in managing public charge points in Australia currently (primarily power connection and software costs).

We consider that government investment that supports organisations and businesses willing to install and maintain community charging infrastructure and ‘destination’ chargers has great potential to support the rapid growth and resilience of the public charging network needed in Tasmania, particularly in smaller communities and regional areas where investment in DC rapid charging is not likely to be commercially viable.

We recommend that the government considers providing financial support, such as subsidies or grants, that support and encourage local businesses and community groups to install public charging infrastructure in their communities. This approach is currently underway in NSW, with support provided to vehicles for [‘Electric vehicle destination grants.’](#)

Community engagement and consultation

<p>Recommendation 2. The Tasmanian Government to support local councils with strategic policy development to manage EV infrastructure projects, and consider how communities might be engaged through this process.</p>
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We consider that it will be important to take a community centred approach to future rollout and installation of charging infrastructure in Tasmania. Effective community engagement has the potential to build more awareness of the technology within our communities while ensuring community support for infrastructure installation, and that the infrastructure is meeting the needs of particular communities. This will ultimately encourage continued uptake and usage of EVs in our communities, reducing our transport emissions more quickly.

As noted in the report, local councils will play a key role in determining the process and policies for installation of public charging infrastructure in their municipalities. We strongly support the proposal contained in the plan to consider options to support local government in its strategic planning for the transport sector in this space. In particular, it will be important that councils develop consistent and compliant policies that provide for open and transparent processes and approaches to procurement and tenders for investment in public

charging infrastructure. An additional consideration is ensuring that where possible, tendering and procurement processes are consistent with the government's Buy Local Policy, to support local suppliers and services and the Tasmanian economy. This will increase local jobs and further facilitate development of skills and training needed in the EV charging industry.

It will also be important to ensure local and state government policies set clear expectations in relation to how our local communities should be engaged in the process of identifying locations and installing charging infrastructure. This is particularly the case where installation of privately owned charging infrastructure is proposed in public spaces (rather than private spaces owned by businesses for example).

We understand from the report that draft Tasmanian Planning Policies will identify land and plan for infrastructure to support the use of EVs. We encourage the government to consider how to best incorporate community consultation and engagement into planning processes, to ensure any public investment in charging infrastructure is in response to identified community needs and takes into consideration appropriate accessibility, ease of use and safety issues in each community.

This approach will ensure that the transition to renewable energy in the transport sector will not only occur more rapidly, but will also ensure community needs are taken into account and projects have community support.

Support for diverse electric transport

Recommendation 3. Consider how future destination charging can support other electric forms of transport, such as e-bikes and scooters.

We strongly support increasing public transport and providing further support for diverse transport needs including e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters.

Along with the support for uptake of this transport, there will also be a need to consider the charging needs arising from diverse types of transport. There may be opportunities to utilise future EV charging infrastructure to support charging of other diverse electric transportation, for example EV chargers could incorporate charge points to provide free charging for e-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters (where this is safe and appropriate).

Similarly, we think that there are significant opportunities to engage communities effectively in the process of expanding infrastructure to support uptake of diverse transportation options.

Training and skills

Recommendation 4. Consider specific investment into EV automotive courses and subsidised training.

As noted in the report, there is also a need to ensure the transport sector has the skills and workforce capability to support the transition, for example the maintenance of EVs and charging infrastructure. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is difficult to find skilled automotive personnel willing to work with EVs. Where there may be a willingness to do such work, appropriate training courses is not currently available.

Supporting TAFE programs that are cross-disciplinary and ensure the workforce has the skills to specialise in the maintenance and installation of charging infrastructure will be critical to ensure an effective and rapid transition to reduce emissions in the transport sector.

Data and modelling

Recommendation 5. Utilise EV registration data to develop EV maps to aid public investment and decision-making, including sub-station upgrades that may be required.

The plan also notes the importance of modelling future EV uptake and sales, to support planning and decision making.

This modelling is important to understand where investment and infrastructure will most likely be required. For example, it would assist and support investment in charging infrastructure in Tasmania if State Growth could publish EV registrations by suburb – currently registrations are only broken down by suburb for ICE vehicles (for example, see the ACT Government EV Outlook to support investment in charging infrastructure). This would also aid TasNetworks, as the Network Planner, to better forecast demand growth and future substation needs.

We also support exploration of options to improve data capability. In the EV charging space, the number of public chargers required will be determined by the uptake of EVs, particularly among tourists and locals who do not have access to dedicated off-street parking to charge at home or work. Data identifying particular areas and suburbs with a high density of non-detached dwellings will be helpful to support investment in charging infrastructure in those areas. In addition, information about driver behaviour generally, such as average length of trips and the origins and destinations, as well as the range of EVs registered in Tasmania. All these factors will impact on need for public charging infrastructure in Tasmania, and will support targeted and appropriate future investment.

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