



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT, AND CITY SERVICES
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into electric vehicle (EV) Adoption in the ACT

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Submission to the inquiry into electric vehicle (EV) adoption in the ACT

The Owners Corporation (OC) of [REDACTED] expresses its thanks for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into EV adoption in the ACT.

On behalf of our OC, we submit points related to the following terms of reference:

- c. Planning laws and regulations and education and promotions in relation to charging infrastructure requirements in a variety of residential, public and commercial configurations and precincts
- d. ACT Government's role in providing charging infrastructure

Background

Our complex was built during the recent past rapid expansion of higher density living in the ACT. In December, it will be 8 years old. It has 8 buildings of 3 storeys, with a total of 201 units.

We have 285 parking lots allocated under unit titles, most of them in a basement carpark. We also have a small number of open-air visitor parking spaces. There are no parking spaces for the building manager, let alone parking areas for other service vehicles, like our gardener's or removalist trucks. There is no space available to create this infrastructure.

Obstacles to the uptake of EVs have been identified by other OCs, but cost is a major one

The obstacles to the uptake of EVs are markedly different from those faced by owners of standalone properties or small strata buildings. In their case, the primary decision made is around finances regarding the purchase of the car, the economics of conversion for them as individuals and the relatively small cost of installing charging facilities. Householders are supported in this decision by subsidies at the time of expenditure (the decision to purchase an electric vehicle) and through reductions in registration cost. Apartment blocks must make a very large expenditure upfront before the majority of lot owners have decided to purchase. The expenditure is significant: for our complex, the cost estimate is around half a million dollars.

Also, the lack of certainty around installation increases the reluctance of our OC (and others) to incur any additional expenditure involving large outlays and loans at this time. Many OCs are needing to deal with the combustible cladding dilemma, rectification of building defects, and rising maintenance costs. The complications and cost of EV charging infrastructure is an additional burden on Executive Committees (ECs), whose members are volunteers. They cannot necessarily be expected to either personally or collectively possess all the requisite knowledge and ability to successfully address the specifics of such a complex and major infrastructure upgrade unaided. Neither can a strata manager worth their salt be expected to be able to advise on such a matter. And just in early August, the ACT Government announced that gas will be phased out by 2045: this imposes yet another major burden on OCs: to convert gas cooking, heating, and hot water systems to renewable electric energy. Our OC will need to convert its centralised gas hot water system.

Further, OCs can expect resistance from individual owners to the associated strata levy increases. Increases in other costs such as rates and building insurance, coupled with inflation rises in the construction industry (passed on as increased maintenance costs) have already seen hikes in strata

levies, even in those buildings that have not had to impose special levies or take out rectification loans.

This is not a time when optional larger expenditures, however justified, can be easily undertaken.

Currently, most schemes, advice, and subsidies assume recipients are acting as individuals, whereas lot owners need to act collectively. Subsidies to vehicle purchasers do not take into account many of the additional obstacles and costs incurred by the need for large scale installation and collective decision-making.

We join the call of other OCs for government actions considered to be instrumental in enabling us to meet the challenge of an EV future, including:

1. The provision of public charging stations adjacent to large apartment complexes or clusters of complexes, particularly in areas where cars could be left safely at night to charge.
2. Extending current encouragement schemes to allow free assessments of buildings as to their current draw down capacity, the required upgrade to enable EV charging (with regard to the number of vehicles housed in the building) and free advice on the infrastructure upgrades that would be required.
3. Changing the current method of subsidies for installation of chargers away from the assumption that EV purchasers live in a standalone house. To benefit apartment buildings, schemes must assume the majority of costs will be incurred well in advance of individuals purchasing an EV.
4. Changing the current subsidy scheme that assumes that the most substantial additional cost is the purchase of the charger, to a scheme recognising that the upfront upgrading of infrastructure far exceeds this cost in large strata buildings.
5. Changing to any subsidy scheme to recognise that the majority of costs must be made upfront collectively, regardless of the initial number of residents converting to electric vehicles.
6. The production of guidelines that assist OCs to plan effectively. OCs require very clear guidelines for installation, to understand the legal and insurance obligations that may arise.
7. Additional to assistance around initial installation, OCs require guidelines on the fair and reasonable administration of the system in a transitional phase where only a minority of owners may be gaining the benefit of installation through their ownership of EVs. This is a particularly important equity issue as early uptake can be expected to predominantly favour the most affluent of residents.
8. While outside the brief of this inquiry, the lack of standardisation of EV plugs may hinder any actions taken at a Territory level. Support and advocacy for standardisation across the EV industry must be a priority.

Executive Committee

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