LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, TRANSPORT, AND CITY SERVICES
Ms Jo Clay MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Mark Parton MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into EV Vehicle Adoption in the ACT

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Submission to The Inquiry into EV Vehicle Adoption
Standing Committee on Planning, Transport and City Services
[redacted]

From: Peter LeCornu (individual submission)
[redacted]

I am making this submission based on my experience in being an electric car owner for the past five months.

Context

In February 2022, my wife and I took delivery of a Tesla model 3 after examining a wide range of options for electric cars. We are both retired and only have one car (the Tesla replaced a Toyota Camry hybrid car). Hence, we wanted a car that we could take on long trips as well as around Canberra. A minimum criterion for evaluating electric cars was therefore a minimum distance of at least 400 kms between charging. As well as driving it around Canberra, we have driven to the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, down to the south coast of NSW, to Cowra, Parkes and Young in western NSW as well as down to Bendigo via the Hume highway.

Charging Infrastructure (terms of reference – c, d and e)

As we have a stand-alone house and have solar panels, we installed a Tesla wall charger which we use to charge the vehicle, primarily during the day utilising electricity generated from our solar panels. Hence, we have little need for using charging infrastructure elsewhere in the ACT. We have used the chargers in the Canberra Centre but we don't regard this as essential.

Our biggest need for charging infrastructure is when we travel. I was very grateful that I made the decision to purchase the Tesla as it gave access to the Tesla supercharger network. We would have struggled to have travelled to the Sunshine Coast if we had purchased a non Tesla electric car. The current reality is that the charging infrastructure is currently inadequate. All electric car drivers must make plans (and alternate plans B and C) on where they intend to charge if they are to have a successful long distance trip. In the next section, I will share my experiences with the current charging infrastructure and then draw together some conclusions regarding the charging infrastructure in the ACT and surrounding region.

My experience with the Tesla supercharger network (where it exists) has been overall very positive. Tesla usually installs a minimum of 6 chargers in each location and I have always found a free charger when I have arrived to use. They charge quickly – I have normally only stayed between 20 and 45 minutes. I particularly like the chargers which are located in shopping centres as they provide access to a variety of cafes or restaurants to purchase morning tea or lunch. A key to their success is that there are multiple chargers available. Also, you are charged a waiting fee if you leave your vehicle charging when it becomes fully charged. This is important to ensure that the chargers are vacated as soon as possible and therefore are available to users who need them.

I have also utilised Tesla destination chargers, which are primarily located in motels. The destination chargers are similar to the chargers I have at home and allow charging of the car overnight. It is great to arrive at a motel with sometimes only 20% charge left in the car and to charge it overnight and drive out with 100% fully charged in the morning. This program has been encouraged by Tesla with

the advantage to the motel owner of people booking into their motel to take advantage of the overnight charging. It is important to prebook the charger when booking such accommodation. I have had one occasion where the charger was not available as another electric car was already using the one charger they had (I had been pre-warned that this might happen and had a plan B).

However, Tesla superchargers and destination chargers have not covered all the areas in which we have travelled. For example, when we travelled to the sunshine coast in Queensland, we had to travel via the coast highway which had Tesla superchargers and not through the inland route where there no such chargers. On the south coast of NSW, there are no Tesla superchargers between Sydney and Narooma. Similarly, there are no Tesla superchargers in the Cowra, Parkes and Young area. When travelling in these areas, we relied on NRMA chargers and chargers provided by third parties, accessed through the plugshare app. NRMA have demonstrated a strong commitment to electric cars by providing access to their charging stations initially for free and should be congratulated for the initiative.

The problem with the NRMA chargers (and most third party charging infrastructures) is that the number of chargers are limited. For example, in most cases, they only install one charger. This means that you can't count on the charger working or the charge is being used by someone else. In such situations, you MUST have a plan B. My experience has been mixed. In popular locations (e.g. Wallsend near Newcastle and Batemans Bay), I have found the charger not to be available. In less popular locations (e.g. Cowra and Parkes), I had no trouble accessing the NRMA charger – However, in 3 days travelling in the area, I only saw one other electric car, indicating a low take-up of electric cars in this area.

I have also had to rely on using a standard AC power point to charge the car. My best experience in this regard was when staying at a caravan park on the south coast of NSW where the unit had an external AC power point. This made it easy to boost the charge in the car over night and this worked as we did not travel very far each day on many days we were holidaying on the coast.

Based on the above experiences, I recommend that the ACT Government should:

- be encouraging the installation of multiple chargers in convenient locations (e.g. shopping centres). These locations should ensure that drivers need to pay if a car is located in an electric charging spot and are not utilising the charging facility (e.g. an electric car that is fully charged or a non-electric car parked in the spot)
- be encouraging motel owners to install destination chargers so as to attract electric car owners to come to Canberra as part of the tourism strategy for the ACT
- work with the NSW Government, South Coast Local Councils and providers of electric charging infrastructure to ensure more chargers are available on the south coast of NSW. Given the high take-up of electric cars in the ACT and that the south coast of NSW is a popular destination for ACT residents, there is a need for more charging infrastructure in this area.

Fuel efficiency standards (terms of reference – h)

The lack of national fuel efficiency standards is holding back the uptake of electric cars in Australia. The range of electric cars available in Australia is very limited, especially when compared to the range of cars available in the United Kingdom, another left hand driving market. There are also significant delays in getting an electric car if you order one today. One key reason for this is the lack of national fuel efficiency standards. Companies which sell and distribute cars in Australia can't get their parent companies to send electric cars to Australia when we have no fuel efficiency standards

but many other countries do. Australia will continue to be a dumping ground for less efficient vehicles whilst no such standards exist.

The implementation of national fuel efficiency standards would not only encourage the uptake of electric cars in Australia but would contribute to reducing pollution in cities leading to reduced economic and health costs. The Federal Government's Future Fuels Strategy admits that a modest number of EVs by 2030 would save $200 million in health costs. Implementing national fuel efficiency standards would, over time, lead to reduced costs for families and their cost of living.

The ACT Government has recently announced that only zero emission passenger vehicles will be registered in the ACT from 2035. It is hard to see this being achieved without a greater range of zero emission vehicles becoming available. This requires the implementation of national fuel efficiency standards. Hence, the ACT Government should be arguing for the Federal Government to introduce national fuel efficiency standards.

Territory taxes and chargers for EV purchases

Thank you to the ACT Government for providing two years of free registration and exemption from stamp duty for me and other purchasers of electric vehicles. Whilst I did not utilise the zero interest loans for purchase of zero-emission vehicles, it is a worthwhile Government program to encourage uptake of electric vehicles. These programs should be continued until there is a closer parity in pricing between electric vehicles and petrol drive cars.

The ACT Government should not introduce a per km electric vehicle tax as introduced by Victoria in the foreseeable future. This can only discourage people from taking up electric vehicles. There is a need for a complete review of the taxation on vehicles and how it relates to road funding. There is currently a mess of federal taxation, state taxation, significant exemptions for certain groups, national road infrastructure programs, state road infrastructure programs, local Government road fixing programs as well as poor incentives to move road transport (which impacts on road quality) to rail transport. The ACT Government should be encouraging a broader discussion with other States and the Northern Territory and the Federal Government on such a broad reform. I am not opposed to paying 2 cents per km to travel my car on roads if there is a clear program which ensures that I can drive on quality well maintained roads and that all users of the roads are treated equally.

Thank you for taking the time to read this submission.

Peter LeCornu

19 July 2022