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 electric vehicle (EV) Adoption in the ACT

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Inquiry into electric vehicle (EV) adoption in the ACT

To: Standing Committee on Planning, Transport, and City Services

From: Karen Maher

[redacted]

Submission to the 2022 - Inquiry into Electric Vehicle Adoption in the ACT

Dear Standing committee on planning, transport and city services.

Hi my name is Karen, my husband is Shane. We are a low/middle income family located in [redacted].

We currently drive two EVs, we have not filled up from a petrol station, for 8 months (Sold last fossil fuel vehicle in Dec 2021). And funny enough the sky has not fallen, also we have not seen the 4 horse men of the apocalypse yet. Not quite the disaster our critics predicted.

With some of the money saved by EV ownership, over the last couple of years, we have invested in a heat pump hot water system, trying to wean ourselves off town gas.
We are thundering down the "Towards Zero CO2 household" path. Hopefully getting closer to our "zero carbon footprint" for our home.

We have also vlogged our journey to owning 2 EV's and reducing our carbon footprint.

But this has not been easy, and we have had challenges along the way. I am going to "briefly" give you a story, of our journey on, how we got to this point, so you can all learn from our experiences, then we will offer suggestions by dot point, at the very end.

The Journey

We first got the idea of looking at EV's, from a press conference, our former Prime Minister Scott Morrison had on the 7th April 2019. And if we had not have seen that famous press conference, we might not own 2 EV's today.

We tried to hire an EV in Australia, but back in 2019, that was not possible. So whilst we were in NZ in September 2019, we hired an EV. Our first driving experience was on 9 Sep 2019, in a Japanese electric van (Nissan ENV200), in Auckland. Our minds were blown to say the least.

We travelled between Auckland and Rotorua, utilising New Zealand's fantastic charging infrastructure. We chatted to other EV owners, at charging stations, madly absorbing any information they could give us.

We came back to Australia, and we contacted the Australia Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) Canberra branch via numerous emails, but got no response. We checked out an EV store in Fyshwick, but it always seemed to be closed. So we were pretty much on our own, did not know any other EV drivers, so we had to figure it out for ourselves.

We test drove a 40 kWh Nissan Leaf from the Nissan Dealership in Phillip (September 2019), but $55,000 was above our budget limit of $50,000. We are a low/middle income family who had saved, for a couple of years, for a newer car.

So we hatched a mad plan, to import a second hand Japanese Nissan LEAF, from Japan (as we learnt from our Kiwi cousins) for less than $50,000, with a much larger battery 62 kWh. This model known as the E+, was not available in Australia at that time (eventually launched April 2021).

We contacted a Japanese car (JDM) import broker in Australia, and started the importing journey, then COVID hit. This caused a few delays.

Then on 29 May 2020 we purchased our first EV, in a Japanese car auction. It was a 2019 Nissan E+ LEAF. The car colour was white, it had a 62kWh battery, and we named her Yuki (Japanese word for snow).
Total Cost after auction, shipping, GST , Compliance , Rego + stamp duty, etc $49,000 AUD

The car arrived in Canberra on 25th Aug 2020, after going through vehicle compliance in Sydney. Little did we know at the time, Yuki was the first E+ (long range) Nissan Leaf to be registered on Australian Roads.

Unfortunatly Yuki (the Japanese EV), was sitting in our driveway for about 10 days, as we were inquiring, to see if we were eligible for Stamp duty exemption, from the Act Governmentwe purchased our second EV, in a Japanese car auction. It was a 2017 Nissan E+ LEAF. The car colour was black, it had a 40kWh battery, and we named him Kuro (Japanese word for black)
Total Cost after auction, shipping, GST, Compliance , Rego + stamp duty, etc $28,000 AUD.

Shane picked up Kuro from Sydney, after the completion of compliance on Jun 4 2021. There were lots of announcements at the time about “stamp duty concession” and “support for imported EV’s”, but again we missed out on stamp duty concession, due to a technicality. We gave up asking why at this time, and just got Kuro EV on the road. But we did get the registration discount, for which we are greatly appreciative.

We sold our last fossil fuel (Nissan Xtrail) car on 10th Dec 2021, and have been fully electric ever since. We only visit the service stations now to pump up tyres, and buy the occasional servo pie.

Buy driving two EV’s, and giving up fossil fuel cars, we save between $7,000 - $10,000 per year (depending on fuel prices). This money goes back to paying off our loans and investing in a heat pump hot water system (removing need for gas hot water, thus reducing carbon footprint).

In 2023 we hope to upgrade Kuro (40kw Nissan Leaf) to a BYD Seal/Atto 4 (Poor Man’s Chinese Tesla). We are doing this to extend our real world range to over 500km on long road trips. We are doing this because of poor, and sometimes broken charging infrastructure on the Hume Highway. And we do not think, this will be changed anytime soon.

Dot point suggestions

- A great announcement of the installing of 77 EV chargers over the next 12 months. But when installing EV chargers around town, put them in bunches of at least 3 or 4. The reason is, you get a good rotation of EV's across 3 – 4 chargers, during busy periods. It's a pain when you have to queue for a charger. Also if you have an EV charger break, you have at least 2 other chargers which are serviceable.

- Be aware not everyone can charge from a Tesla charger, that includes us. There may be need for duplication of charging infrastructure at these sites.

- When you install those 3 – 4 chargers at various sites such as supermarkets, shopping centers, etc. Put in the infrastructure (Electrical conduit, concrete/bitumen works) to install a further 4 chargers. It's only an extra 5 -10% to the cost of the project, but allows faster and cheaper implementation, of EV chargers in the future.

- Don't get hypnotized by Ultrafast 350kW chargers, they are expensive and readily break down (checkout the various broken Ultrafast chargers on the Hume highway and in Sydney on Plugshare app). 50 -75KW fast chargers work OK , You can install two fast chargers (50-75kW), for the same cost, when compared to every ultrafast chargers (350kW). More bang for your buck!

- Install 50-75kW chargers at tourist spots such as Questacon, National Zoo and Aquarium, War Memorial and National Museum of Australia. This is what we call "EV Tourism", punters from Sydney, travel down the road, visit Canberra for a couple of days, get a full charge, then go home.

- Supermarkets and Shopping centers don't necessarily need Fast Chargers (50-75kW), slow 7kW Type 2 chargers are OK. They are cheaper and faster to roll out. Checkout Ikea Canberra Airport, they have 4 x Type2 chargers in their carpark. Type 1 (J1772) people like us, will just have to grab an adaptor to plug in (BYOC-Bring your own cable)

- Put clear signage and road marking at new charging sites "EV charging only", then fine people for parking in these spots (EV or ICE), and not charging. Clamp down on this hard! Nothing is more frustrating than getting a vehicle, parking in a charging spot and not charging, when you are desperate for a charge yourself. It is a big problem in other countries. Also put a phone number on the sign, so we can DOB in these selfish people!

- Do a quick video on "how to use local EV chargers", link to a QR code, put that QR code on a sticker and attach to charging station. Education campaign! Myself and Shane have already made video's about how to use fast chargers around Canberra, something like that?

- I have not seen the map for the installation of these additional EV chargers over the next 12 months, but don't forget to put a few chargers, in low/middle income shopping centres like Kippax, Charwood (Charney Shops), Jamison (Jamo Shops), etc. Be inclusive of low to middle income earners in these suburbs.

- Get these chargers rolled out quickly, we really should have been doing this back in 2018! The more chargers, the better. The first time a lot of people, interact with an EV, is at a charging station, chatting to the owner of an EV charging. And the new EV's purchased today, will be the second hand EV's that low to middle income people will purchase in 2030 and onwards. Putting it simply the more EV's we get early, will benefit "Ken behrans" in the secondhand market, at the end of the decade, giving us a huge jump in ten years.

Conclusion

That's it. Thank you for reading our story and dot points. But we are going to ask one final big favour.

Please can we have a co-operative spirit from all parties and stakeholders, referring to the shaping and implementation of EV policy. No more arguing or fear uncertainty doubt (FUD). We all need to get on with the job. Do not misuse this opportunity.

In 20 years it's too late to have regrets, on what could have been done, and was not. This is your legacy, be remembered for shaping and implementing EV policy in the ACT.

We are available for further discussion. We will be in New Zealand in [redacted]. Test driving EV's like the Nissan Ariya and BYD Atto3. Not yet available for test driving in Australia.