



Submission – Supporting a Statewide Electric Vehicle Charging Network Consultation Paper



Introduction and Summary

Break O'Day Council has been monitoring the development of the issue of electric vehicles, noting that there has been no perceived demand for charging stations from visitors or the community but also noting that this is a “chicken and egg” situation. Without stations, there is a significant impediment to residents changing to electric vehicles and visitation by electric vehicle owners.

Council's Strategic Plan strongly supports initiatives that enhance reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in use of electric vehicles clearly is such an initiative. Although Break O'Day Council promotes the Bay of Fires and MTB tourism sites, generally visitors are state-wide or regional tourists rather than specific to our destinations. Without demand from our resident or business community, it is difficult for Council to justify allocating limited resources. On that basis, Council supports a coordinated state government led project assisting specific, identified nodes that fill in gaps in a state-wide network.

1. Should the Tasmanian Government support the installation of both destination (slower charge) and Inter-regional DC fast chargers?

Council notes that destination chargers are relatively lower cost and may eventually be seen as a “must have” to be provided by accommodation places. Although this is already happening without incentive in higher population/competition locations, some incentives may act as a catalyst for this in lower population areas such as townships in the Break O'Day area.

Fast chargers are much more expensive and relatively few investors would be prepared or able to fund them where there is little or no revenue available in the foreseeable future. However, relatively few sites are required to provide a minimum viable network of chargers. On that basis it is strongly recommended that Tasmanian Government support should focus on DC fast chargers in specific network gap locations.

2. What factors should be considered in determining what type of charger should be installed where?

Council believes the priority should be an initial network of fast chargers spaced to permit EVs with a minimum (real) range of about 200 km to move freely around the state. The project should therefore support filling in gaps in the network of these chargers. Similarly but to a lesser extent, some support could be offered to instigate destination chargers where there are identified gaps in the network.

3. Which locations (for example high-population areas or less-populated regional areas) should the Tasmanian Government consider as the highest priority for installing electric vehicle charging stations?

As identified above, it seems that higher population areas (which also have higher concentrations of federal and state government employees and larger and better resourced local governments) are initiating charging stations with limited incentives whereas lower population areas are not. However, the primary priority decision point should be filling in identified gaps in the network.

4. Which amenities are important to have nearby electric vehicle charging stations to facilitate a positive and convenient user-experience?

Council agrees with the amenity and security issues identified in the discussion paper. Generally, Council would see that the station would be within easy walking distance of food and beverage outlets and/or other points of interest and toilet facilities. Security generally is not a very significant issue in the Break O'Day area but very good lighting would enhance the perception of security.

5 - 9. Operations and Maintenance

Break O'Day Council has no particular expertise or experience with charging station equipment or operating models and therefore believes limited comment with respect to this aspect of the consultation is appropriate.

Clearly reliability will be a vital consideration. Given the very limited use of these facilities in the initial stages in regional areas, provided that realistic expectations of service levels are communicated, a booking system would not seem necessary.

Ideally, a standardised approach to payment systems, state-wide, would be advantageous. If this is not possible, flexibility to meet the various needs/desires of customers would be necessary.

10 - 13. Cost and funding delivery

As identified previously, Break O'Day Council has no particular expertise or experience with charging station equipment or operating models and therefore a detailed response to funding delivery is inappropriate.

Also, as identified previously, the primary consideration should be filling in identified gaps in the network and providing the necessary initial funding support for the infrastructure installation and an ongoing funding arrangement that will provide certainty that the operation will not "fall over" before achieving an ongoing financially sustainable operating position.

With technical assistance, it should be possible to attract expressions of interest from potential providers in identified network gap areas for a competitive funding support program with specified criteria for amenity, security and reliability which would provide both capital and ongoing support on a matching basis. Council does not have the technical knowledge to comment on the appropriate level of the matching funds.

14. What should the Tasmanian Government consider in raising community awareness of the statewide electric vehicle charging network?

Council considers that the Tasmanian Government should partner with local governments to raise community awareness of the network for use by residents and with Regional Tourism Organisations and the Visitor Information Network for use by visitors.