



Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan

Transport is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia, including in Melbourne's north. The transition to sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling, buses and electric vehicles (EVs), provides a significant opportunity to decarbonise transport across the region and improve liveability.

Seven Councils in Melbourne's north have joined together to develop an evidence-based, detailed plan for supporting lower-emissions transport options for the community, businesses and Councils.

The *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan* includes recommendations that will improve the sustainability of the region's transport system and support the transition to EV vehicles.

The findings

Community sentiment on EVs is evolving rapidly, and residents are increasingly asking Councils to provide public EV charging. This project delivers the necessary research to provide a coherent, planned response that enables the community to transition to lower-emission forms of transport. In addition to the emission reduction benefit that comes from shifting towards EVs, there is a potential economic benefit to businesses to transition to EVs.

Importance of being powered by renewable energy

It should be noted that, if powered by standard Victorian grid electricity, EVs provide very marginal reductions in transport emissions. It is important to create a charging network that is powered by renewable energy.

Barriers to uptake of EVs

While around half of consumers say they are considering an EV for their next vehicle purchase according to a survey by the Australian Vehicle Council, there are still significant barriers that will impact their decision.

According to the survey, following are the most significant barriers:

- purchase cost of an EV compared to a petrol/diesel vehicle (87%)
- current accessibility to charging infrastructure (85%)
- range of EV models to choose from (77%)
- driving range per charge compared to a tank of petrol/diesel (69%)
- convenience of recharging an EV (66%).

Impact of EVs on sustainability goals

The report highlights that simply fuel switching cars is not going to meet overall transport emissions reduction goals.



New vehicles sold today have higher emissions than those sold in 2016. The average lifespan of vehicles is 20 years. Even if all new vehicles purchased from 2023 onwards were zero emission, Australia would not reach the 43% target in the transport sector.

A key opportunity the plan identifies is the role that delivery of a comprehensive active transport network – including walking, cycling and micro mobility e-bikes and e-scooters – must play a part in creating a sustainable transport future. Active transport must be promoted and infrastructure provided that will encourage people to choose to walk and cycle rather than drive.

There is also a need for Councils to begin embedding emissions reductions into municipal transport strategies.

Councils as early EV adopters

Local government can lead the way in terms of EV adoption in the community by moving Council fleets to EVs. Currently it is still more affordable for Councils to purchase internal combustion or hybrid vehicles, particularly for heavy fleet. Government funding would support rapid Council fleet transition and reduce Council reliance on carbon offsetting to achieve climate goals.

Also, Councils transitioning to an EV fleet now will mean more second-hand EV cars on the market over the next three to four years, supporting affordable community-wide transition in the future.

Coordinated response to the need for public charging

With the introduction of EV charging stations many parts of Melbourne's north, especially the peri-urban/regional areas, are likely to need upgrades to the electricity network to accommodate this forecast growth, not just in EV stations but electricity demand more broadly.

Working with distribution network service providers was highlighted as one of the biggest barriers to rolling out a public EV charging network. The report cited high application fees (solely on a site-by-site basis), no ability to discuss plans outside the application process, no public knowledge of an area's electricity charging capacity and no public plans to consider public EV charging holistically as key barriers. There is an opportunity to work constructively and strategically with the Victorian Government and distribution network service providers to drive innovation in public charging, improve processes and deliver a public charging EV network.

Role of public and private sector in charging delivery

All levels of government and the private sector must plan a response to the need for public charging. To meet community requirements a charging network must be developed in the north, with a focus on equality of coverage and availability. The *Community Electric Vehicle Transition Plan* indicates that 570 charging points need to be established across the 64 activity centres in the region by 2030.

Role of private providers: The public EV charging market has grown substantially in the last 12 months. Several private operators have national networks of public chargers and provide charging services for government EV fleets and private home installations. Through the stakeholder engagement conducted in development of the plan, EV charging operators expressed a willingness to invest in a charging network provided there is long-term financial viability.



Role of local government: The role of local government in charging will primarily be one of facilitation. Councils often own or manage sites that have car parking, and these locations can be focal points for the community (libraries, commercial areas, town halls, leisure centres), often in the heart of activity centres. This means that Councils can engage with the EV charging industry to negotiate outcomes where charging is provided by the private sector at little or no cost to the Council. In addition, some sites may be able to attract rental payments from commercial EV charging providers. The EV charging industry advises that local government identifying areas rather than specific sites will lead to better outcomes. The report recommends areas and not specific sites.

Recommendations

The NCA notes that the EV transition space is consistently evolving and new technology, problems and solutions will emerge in the future. The cross-Council EV working group will continue to track these trends and, where required, respond with suitable advocacy and re-prioritisation.

Overall recommendations

- All governments need to work together with industry to support the rollout of the medium and fast public charging network.
- Councils require significant funding to support the implementation of the EV transition plan.

Specific recommendations

Recommended actions for the Australian Government:

- develop a Green Car Guide tool for businesses to support EV transition
- provide increased investment to Councils, business and not-for-profit sectors for charging ports across 64 activity centres in Melbourne's north
- implement for mandatory EV sound generation at speeds below 30km/h
- encourage importation of electric heavy fleet vehicles that support Council and community needs
- work with distribution network service providers to drive innovation in public charging, improve processes and deliver a public charging EV network in conjunction with the Victorian Government
- plan for upgrading the power networks to deal with increased load and demands created by EV transition.

Recommended actions for the Victorian Government:

- ensure all police reports involving crashes on Victorian roads note if a crash involved an EV
- provide specific support and reduce barriers for renters who want to install EV chargers
- develop a project to retrofit buildings (particularly multi-dwelling units and multi-level buildings) with offsite street parking to effect EV transition
- support Councils to develop collaborative procurement arrangements for installation of public place and fleet charging
- support the elevating targets planning scheme amendment that Councils have commenced
- undertake a review of all planning schemes to ensure new developments, including areas inside precinct structure plans, have sufficient charging opportunities
- deliver a commercial fleet EV expo for Victorian businesses to encourage them to switch



- support the development of EV chargers at key employment hubs
- work with distribution network service providers to drive innovation in public charging
- fund initiatives to increase uptake of active transport (such as Northern Regional Trails Strategy)
- support delivery of charging stations across Council depots and offices by 2025
- support purchase of EV vehicles for Council light fleet by 2025
- facilitate trialling of heavy fleet replacement vehicles to support Council fleet transition
- assist Councils to rapidly transition their fleet to net zero
- plan to upgrade power networks to deal with increased demands created by EV transition
- encourage importation of heavy fleet vehicles that support Council and community needs.

Recommended actions for Councils:

- form a cross-Council EV working group to advance outcomes and share learnings
- draft local EV policy when and where different charging approaches are considered suitable
- incorporate EV charging bay design into engineering manuals
- trial street EV charging for residential areas without resident access to off-street parking
- advocate for EV planning scheme amendments for new developments
- advocate to improve processes for assessment/approval of new chargers into the grid
- train and develop staff who intersect with EVs
- develop up-to-date green travel plans for each Council site
- review salary sacrificing options to ensure low and zero-emissions options are available
- support the development of e-bike and e-scooter fleets for staff
- deliver EV fleet transition
- change procurement processes to reduce Council contractors' transport emissions
- increase community awareness of sustainable transport options
- promote and advocate for investment in walking and cycling networks
- encourage the car share industry to include EVs in their fleets
- initiate and support public awareness campaigns of e-bikes and e-scooters
- facilitate economies of scale in terms of EV purchasing (e.g. bulk buys)
- support business to transition to EVs, in particular charging infrastructure and solar panels
- embed emissions reductions in municipal transport strategies
- seek opportunities for Council-branded EV vehicles to increase community confidence
- review existing Council buildings and lands to earmark locations where future charging stations need to be delivered.