

28/11/2025

Mr Michael Baker
Committee Manager
Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Inquiry into Electric Vehicle Charging

Bass Coast Shire Council welcomes the Inquiry into Electric Vehicle Charging, and the opportunity to provide this submission.

The Bass Coast Climate Action Plan 2020-2030 details 30 actions that Council is taking to support our community to reduce emissions and build climate resilience, including *Action 29: Support local electric vehicle charging infrastructure and usage*. This action recognises that Australia has an opportunity to be a global renewable energy superpower. With our abundant solar and wind resources, we are well placed to electrify our transport sector and eliminate reliance on imported fossil fuels. This transition will not only reduce emissions but also cost of living pressures for everyday motorists, as EVs are demonstrably cheaper to fuel and maintain.

Bass Coast Shire Council secured funding under the Victorian Government's *Destination Charging Across Victoria (DCAV)* program and welcomed the opportunity to partner with state government towards a network of high-speed chargers spanning Victoria. Our experience of delivering 4 public EV Charging Stations in Grantville, Newhaven, Wonthaggi and Inverloch has highlighted significant barriers to the timely and cost-effective deployment of medium-speed (60kW) public charging infrastructure.

Whether public charging infrastructure is being installed at a sufficient rate in different parts of Victoria

The rate at which public charging infrastructure is being installed in regional Victoria falls well short of demand and threatens to undermine the transition to sustainable transport as well as the viability of regional economies reliant on tourism.

Regional areas like Bass Coast must not be overlooked in this transition. As private car owners increasing transition to EVs, access to sufficient public EV chargers is essential to the

ongoing viability of regional tourism. As one of Victoria's most tourism dependent regions, Bass Coast is at the frontline of the growing shortfall.

The best role for electricity distribution businesses in rolling out EV charging infrastructure

Distribution businesses play a crucial role in advancing or hindering the roll out of EV charging infrastructure. Bass Coast Shire's experience has highlighted that regional areas are often subject to network capacity constraints, which in turn complicate or completely preclude EV charger installation at sites that would otherwise be ideal from the perspective of customers and the broader community. These constraints are only known to the network operator and only divulged to project proponents "on application".

Despite Council's attempts to engage our local network operator (Ausnet Services) from the outset, AusNet would not provide information to inform site feasibility or cost of network connection until site-specific electrical designs had been completed. Only on submission of these designs was Council informed by Ausnet that contributions in excess of \$200,000 would be required at some sites, to upgrade the local network capacity. Several rounds of site selection ensued, each requiring detailed electrical designs to be completed at Council's expense, before feasible sites could be identified.

This lack of transparency has resulted in significant delays, cost escalations, and an erosion of public confidence in the capacity of local authorities and service providers to deliver essential infrastructure.

Council has come to the view that, as regulated private entities responsible for essential public services, electricity network providers should be compelled to collaborate constructively and transparently with local government, private operators and households to facilitate the roll out of EV charging infrastructure. They should be required to proactively invest in network upgrades to ensure there is capacity for the combined demand that charging infrastructure of all types (from high-speed public chargers to home-based units) will place on the network over coming years.

Council would welcome the opportunity to provide further information via the public hearings for this inquiry, or via any other means you require. Please contact Simon Woodland, Manager Sustainable Environment [REDACTED]

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Simon Woodland

Manager Sustainable Environment