

Contact: [REDACTED]  
Telephone No: [REDACTED]  
Email: [REDACTED]

Corporate Centre  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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National Relay Service: 133 677  
Residents' Info Line: 1300 555 886  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee  
Inquiry into Electricity Supply for Electric Vehicle

Via e-submission:

<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/electricvehicleinquiry/submissions/>

Dear Economy and Infrastructure Committee

### **Submission to 'Inquiry into Electricity Supply for Electric Vehicles'**

East Gippsland Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into Electricity Supply for Electric Vehicles.

#### **Context**

East Gippsland is a large, rural municipality in eastern Victoria comprising diverse farming, coastal, and tourism-based communities such as Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Metung and Mallacoota. The region has an ageing population (19% aged over 65, compared with 13% regionally) and a SEIFA index of 963, indicating higher levels of disadvantage. Affordable and reliable transport is critical for social and economic participation, with tourism forming a key opportunity of the local economy.

#### **Council Actions and Experience**

Over the past three years, East Gippsland has developed one of the most comprehensive rural EV charging networks in Victoria. With no prior public charging stations, Council allocated \$450,000 through Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding (with \$50,000 being a Council contribution) to install four 50 kW DC fast chargers. A further \$187,500 of matched funding was secured through the Destination Charging Across Victoria (DCAV) program to install three more 50 kW chargers.

Council has also collaborated with private Charge Point Operators (CPOs) – Tesla, Evie Networks and NRMA – to facilitate installation of an additional ten chargers in public or Council-managed car parks. In total, 17 public charging stations are now operating across the municipality and are being used regularly.

These initiatives align with Council's strategic objectives to reduce emissions, mitigate climate impacts, and promote environmental sustainability as outlined in the [Council Plan 2021-2025](#) and [Sustainability Strategy 2022-2032](#).

As provision of charging facilities isn't core business or a funded activity for Council and recognising the increasing investment from the private sector in charging infrastructure, Council does not intend to expand the network further unless a clear market failure is identified that is best addressed through local government (with State government investment).

Future planning would benefit from a state-wide **Victorian EV Charging Strategy** that provides clear guidance on target coverage, site identification, funding mechanisms, and infrastructure standards. (As an example, a NSW local government area currently uses a benchmark of 1 kW charging capacity per seven registered EVs per postcode, to inform their targets).

## Key Issues and Recommendations

### 1. Ensure cost equity and price consistency across Victoria

Regional communities face significantly higher costs for both network connections and public charging, creating inequity and deterring uptake.

- **Network connection fees:**  
AusNet has quoted connection costs ranging from \$2,000 to \$65,000, making planning uncertain and financially unviable for charging providers. Council recommends a statewide cap or standardisation of Distribution Network Service Provider (DNSP) connection fees to ensure affordability and encourage consistent rollout.
- **Public charging prices:**  
Evie Networks currently charges \$0.74/kWh in regional areas versus \$0.60/kWh in Melbourne. Council recommends a uniform pricing framework, regulated through the Essential Services Commission, to ensure regional users are not penalised. We advocate a cost recovery approach to keep prices at a minimum. A “solar soaker” tariff would promote daytime charging using excess solar generation, reducing peak demand and network strain.
- **Ownership structure:**  
Council supports a mixed model of government and third-party providers but cautions against market concentration by a few major CPOs. There is a public car-parking ‘land grab’ underway and local governments are either spending much time facilitating access to third party CPOs or avoiding being involved altogether. There is a need for Statewide guidance in how commercial interest and investment is facilitated equitably and for the greatest community benefit.

It is necessary to avoid concentrated market ownership, where a large share of the public charging network is controlled by a few private operators which could slow the EV transition.

Price regulation and oversight of CPOs and the DNSPs are necessary to maintain fair competition and prevent monopolisation. Further, utilisation of public land should be undertaken in a competitive process, include commercial lease / fee arrangements along with consideration of possible disincentives for utilisation of public land assets for private charging infrastructure.

- **Rebates for homes and small businesses:**  
Integration with the Victorian Energy Upgrades (VEU) scheme could support rebates for smart AC chargers to further incentivise daytime charging for households and businesses.

## **2. Exempt commercial EV charging sites from land tax**

Recent state land tax changes now apply to commercial EV charging sites. Council has had to cover approximately \$1,500 in land tax for three Evie Network sites due to contractual exemptions they added to our license agreements. This presents a financial and administrative burden and discourages further site development. Council requests land tax exemption for commercial EV charging car parks on public land while the industry is established.

## **3. Establish non-competitive grants for slow (AC) chargers**

A coordinated, grant-funded rollout of slow 7 kW AC chargers is required to support both public and fleet charging across Victoria.

- **Local government depots and offices:**  
Consider grant funding of subsidisation being made available to support councils / network providers where significant upgrades to the electricity network are required for energy supply and charging infrastructure necessary for fleet transition. This would assist Government reach its emission reduction targets.
- **Public charging network:**  
A consistent geographic rollout strategy is needed, supported by technical standards, car parking guidelines, and integration within the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM). Local governments lack capacity to deliver these without dedicated funding for design, project management, and maintenance. Chargers should include bi-directional capability for emergency energy supply and be in accessible public places such as halls, community centres, and recreation reserves. Regional equity must be ensured.
- **Small business support:**  
Incentivise small businesses, such as hotels, shopping centres, and workplaces, to install daytime AC chargers that utilise excess solar energy and support tourism.

## **4. Victorian Government to lead installation of AC chargers at key public sites**

To improve accessibility and visibility, the Victorian Government should directly install AC chargers at:

- Hospitals, schools, TAFEs, and administrative offices for staff – and make charging free or low cost during the day.
- Train stations and major public car parks – for the public with low cost-recovery pricing incentivising daytime charging.

## **5. Develop an EV battery recycling and stewardship framework**

With projections of over 30,000 tonnes of EV batteries entering the waste stream annually by 2030 and current recycling rates at only 10%, early intervention is essential.

Council recommends:

- A national recycling and stewardship framework for EV batteries.
- Support for research and second-life applications.
- Establishment of a code of practice and safety standards for transport, handling, and recycling.
- Funding and training for local governments to safely manage end-of-life batteries at transfer stations and landfills.

## Summary

East Gippsland Shire Council has demonstrated strong leadership in facilitating the EV transition across a large and remote region. Continued progress depends on state coordination, cost equity, and targeted funding to ensure regional Victoria benefits equally from the electrification of transport.

Council urges the Committee to:

- Develop a **Victorian EV Charging Strategy** with equitable pricing, clear targets, and consistent standards.
- Introduce **cost-control measures** for DNSP connections and charging tariffs.
- Provide **funding support** for local government and small business **smart AC charger** installations which prioritise daytime use for grid stabilisation.
- **Exempt commercial charging sites from land tax** until the industry is mature.
- **Implement a national EV battery recycling framework.**

East Gippsland Shire Council thanks the Committee for considering this submission and welcomes further discussion on regional implementation challenges and opportunities. I am willing to provide evidence in a public hearing if requested.

Council is of the view that we have progressed making electric vehicle charging infrastructure available to the public as far as we can. Looking at future adoption rates for electric vehicles, we will soon be unable to ensure equitable access to this service. It is the responsibility of the state government to address the concerns outlined in our submission and to provide strategic direction for the state.

Yours sincerely



***FIONA WEIGALL***  
***Chief Executive Officer***