



**Submission for the Inquiry into Electric  
Vehicles**

**December 2017**

# 1. Introduction

RACV welcomes the Inquiry into Electric Vehicles and is grateful for the opportunity to provide comment.

The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) represents over 2.1 million members, which means that on average, three out of four Victorian households contain an RACV member. RACV advocates for improved outcomes for all Victorians in the areas of mobility, safety, affordability and sustainability.

RACV has had a long and diverse involvement with electric vehicles in our advocacy for an integrated approach to mobility to meet Victoria's transport needs. A snapshot of the suite of electric vehicle programs and activities undertaken by RACV includes:

- premier partner in the Victorian Electric Vehicle Trial run by the Victorian Government (2010-2014);
- community partnership with the Royal District Nursing Service in 2013 centered on an Australian-first trial of electric vehicles to test their suitability as part of a metropolitan fleet;
- Introduction of electric vehicles into our Resorts for guests and members to use as part of their leisure experience and to become more accustomed and informed about this emerging vehicle technology;
- Progressive expansion of a public and free to use EV charging network across all RACV sites in Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania as well as additional tourist sites in collaboration with regional partners at Phillip Island Nature Park, Lorne Visitors Centre, Sovereign Hill and Australia Zoo (in total 26 Level 2 intermediate chargers + additional 12 dedicated Tesla chargers);
- Member of The Electric Vehicle Council, a national body representing companies and organisations involved in the provision, powering and support of electric vehicles and aiming to accelerate the electrification of road transport in Australia in a sustainable manner;
- Member of the Charging Infrastructure Working Group (as part of the EV Council) focusing on a coordinated and standardized approach in the rollout of EV charging infrastructure in Australia;
- Undertaken an electric vehicle consumer attitudes survey in June 2017;
- Collaborated and contributed to The State of Electric Vehicles in Australia Report produced by Electric Vehicle Council and ClimateWorks (June 2017);
- Major sponsor of the annual Melbourne Electric Vehicle Expo run by the Alternative Technology Association; and

- Since 1991, have led the RACV Energy Breakthrough in partnership with the Country Education Board and Central Goldfields Shire - the country's leading school-based technical, science and environmental program whereby students design, build, and race a vehicle that represents an 'energy breakthrough' including the categories of hybrid and electric technology.

## **2. Response to Terms of Reference**

RACV believes that electric vehicles will form a major component of a future integrated, sustainable transport mix for Victoria. Amongst their many benefits, electric vehicles can play an important role in reducing emissions in the transport sector and enabling Australia to meet its Paris Agreement emission reduction goals (as well as future vehicle emission standards likely to be introduced as per the current Federal Ministerial Forum on Vehicle Emission Standards).

Electric vehicles can also offer benefits to public health through reduced air pollution in urban areas, save motorists money (reduced fuel, maintenance and servicing costs), and could help to generate Australian jobs in sales, infrastructure deployment, and potentially the manufacture of batteries and electric vehicle components.

RACV's earlier consumer research showed that:

- More than 8 in 10 Victorian motorists have strong concerns about cars & the environment;
- Motorists have faith in the development of alternative energy cars as a major solution to reducing the environmental impacts of motoring;
- Motorists see technology and design as the answer to reducing the impact of car use rather than curtailing their driving behaviour.

Further, RACV's Electric Vehicle Attitudes Survey (2017) has revealed the following findings that RACV believes should inform the Government Inquiry on Electric Vehicles:

- More than 50% of respondents would consider buying an electric vehicle if in the market for a car;
- 33.5% would be willing to buy an electric vehicle if it was the same price as other petrol or diesel options;
- More than a quarter of respondents would be willing to pay more for an electric vehicle than a petrol or diesel vehicle only if there were more support, incentives and infrastructure in place;
- Respondents would be encouraged to buy an electric vehicle based on the following features: environmentally friendly (72%); cost to run and maintain (67%); confidence in electric vehicles as a reliable and proven technology (63%); on board technological features (63%); convenience of recharging (62%); purchase cost compared to petrol and diesel vehicles (59%); range of models to choose from (59%); distance able to be travelled per charge (58%); and vehicle size, performance or aesthetics (58%)

- On the flipside, respondents would be discouraged by: distance able to be travelled per charge (23%); convenience of recharging (20%); and purchase cost compared to petrol or diesel vehicles (18%)
- More than 55% respondents think subsidies to reduce the cost to purchase electric vehicles should be implemented by government and a similar percentage (53%) believe government should implement subsidies to reduce the cost of installing home charging, and provide public charging infrastructure.
- 80% respondents consider the availability of public fast charging (i.e. 15 minutes to full charge) to be an important factor in influencing their decision to buy/own an electric vehicle

Based on what our members have told us, and what we have found through the varied electric vehicle activities we have undertaken, RACV supports measures and incentives by government to encourage the uptake of electric and ultra-low emissions vehicles (such as plug-in hybrid), on the proviso that consumer choice and affordability is not detrimentally affected. In doing so, it is critically important that adequate recharging infrastructure and appropriate standards are in place to support the uptake of electric vehicles (e.g. plug consistency and charger interoperability).

Further, RACV believes that an increased uptake of electric vehicles in Victoria, will only make sense from a sustainability context, if coupled with supportive measures to decarbonize Victoria's electricity grid. It is a challenge for Government to ensure Victoria has a sustainable supply of electricity, with reduced emissions and a system that enables people to make a choice about their mode of travel.

A comprehensive outline of RACV's policy positions, and the advocacy, education and information programs developed to address issues pertinent to Victorians in the areas of sustainable mobility, safety, and affordability (including electric vehicles) can be found in RACV Directions.