




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (3.07 pm): We know that reducing transport emissions will play a key role in achieving net zero by 2050. There are now more than 28,000 fully electric vehicles on Queensland roads, with numbers increasing considerably in the last 12 months. For instance, there has been an 885 per cent increase in electric vehicle ownership in the state over the last three years.

Since we were elected in 2015, the Palaszczuk Labor government has been committed to supporting more Queenslanders to take up electric vehicles. Queensland was the first state in Australia to release an electric vehicle strategy. At the centre of the strategy was our electric vehicle superhighway. We have already invested over \$8 million in charging stations from Coolangatta to Port Douglas and Brisbane to Toowoomba, including recently Mount Isa. Once finalised, the electric vehicle superhighway will provide a fast-charging infrastructure network of 55 locations across our vast state and will be the longest electric vehicle highway of any single state anywhere in the world.

The Palaszczuk Labor government will partner with Yurika, which is a publicly owned electric vehicle charging company, to deliver the latest phase, which will use 75-kilowatt Tritium fast chargers, manufactured here in Queensland, like our buses and trains. Tritium is a local-based, Brisbane company, which this government financially supported in its early days. It is exciting to see our local manufacturing capabilities grow in our state as Tritium exports to more than 25 nations.

Earlier this year I announced the successful applicants of our \$10 million co-contribution electric vehicle charging fund. The government will partner with Evie Networks, Engie, NRMA, RACQ and Tesla to roll out more than 44 fast charging sites across Queensland, resulting in an overall investment of \$24.5 million. Motorists thinking about making the switch to an electric vehicle need to have confidence that the charging infrastructure they need is easily found across our state, and by doubling the existing network we are doing exactly that.

We know that one of the barriers to the uptake of electric vehicles is the up-front purchase price. To assist in making electric vehicles more affordable for Queenslanders, we announced a \$45 million rebate program. This means you can claim \$3,000 on any eligible electric vehicle with the dutiable value of \$58,000. More recently, we expanded the program, increasing the threshold to \$68,000 to include more models under the threshold. We also doubled the rebate amount to \$6,000 to eligible households earning up to a capped total income of \$180,000.

While new electric vehicle sales are now positive, Australia's uptake has been anaemic compared to the rest of the developed world due to the lost decade of LNP governments in Canberra blocking action on climate change and telling us that electric vehicles would ruin the weekend. Thankfully, we now have the Albanese federal Labor government to work with to drive the uptake of electric vehicles across the country—and what a tremendous amount of progress we have made over the last 12 months!

It does not stop there. We want to see our buses and heavy vehicles moving into lower emissions and to clean energy. All new TransLink buses in South-East Queensland will be zero emission from 2025 and across regional Queensland from 2025 to 2030. There are already 64 zero-emission buses on our roads, with more to come online this year. We are already seeing that plan in action, with electric buses hitting the road in Brisbane, the bayside, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Cairns. There will also be plenty of opportunities to supercharge our local manufacturing capabilities through the Zero Emission Bus Program. Moving towards a more sustainable fleet in Queensland will assist in delivering on one of our key objectives in terms of acting on climate change but also the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, where a strong focus on sustainability is part of the games' ethos.

In terms of electric trucks, I can report that Transport and Main Roads are working closely with Volvo to trial electric heavy vehicles across South-East Queensland. These vehicles will have the latest battery technology, and the information obtained from these trials will assist in promoting the uptake across the industry. Obviously with a country as vast as ours and with such a spread out population as ours, getting heavy vehicles on to clean and zero-emission technology is a high priority for us in this country, and we are working with one of the big manufacturers to do exactly that. That is why, especially with help from growing industry support and through innovation, we are committed to ensuring Queenslanders can travel in a sustainable way increasingly into the future, no matter what their mode of travel.