



Australian Electric Vehicle Association

**Submission to the Senate Economics References
Committee Inquiry into Residential Electrification**

29 September 2023

To whom it may concern,

The Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) is a not-for-profit, volunteer-run organisation dedicated to promoting electric mobility for Australia. Formed in 1973, we represent the interests of electric vehicle (EV) owners and enthusiasts as well as many of the industries which support and by extension, prosper from electrified transport.

On behalf of our 1100+ members, we make the following submission to the Australian Senate Standing Committee on Economics: Inquiry into Residential Electrification.

A recent survey of our members highlighted the issue of financial support for Strata / Owners' Corporations, and was voted in the top 4 of issues for members. Our members also speak to hundreds of Australians at community sustainability fairs, and how to charge an EV if you live in strata is an increasingly common question to our volunteers. Charging at home for a single detached family home is fairly straightforward. On the other hand, living in strata where car spaces may or may not offer exclusive use, be close to an existing power outlet, or have the capacity to bill electricity consumption to individual lots, presents obvious challenges. These are just some of the issues encountered by EV owners (and prospective owners) living in strata.

Two major trends are compounding the need for government to coordinate:

- 1) EV uptake is rapidly increasing: Many vehicle manufacturers have given dates between 2025 and 2035 for full electrification of their products and many national governments have put similar end dates on the registration of new fossil fuel vehicles, as is necessary to comply with Paris emission reduction commitments. It is therefore likely that most vehicles housed in Class 2 buildings will be plug-ins within two decades or less.
- 2) The number of people living in strata is growing: Over 2.5 million people live in strata households in Australia. Owing to their relative affordability and changing workplace arrangements, it is the fastest growing type of dwelling with over a thousand new schemes being registered each year. The national ownership profile averages 60:40 resident owners to investors.^[1]

[1] <https://cityfutures.ada.unsw.edu.au/2022-australasian-strata-insights/>

As the recent report “Delivering sustainable apartment housing: new build and retrofit” (8 June 2023) states:

The sustainability of apartment developments (and retrofits) needs to be considered separately from other residential building typologies because the production, consumption, management and exchange of apartments differs in three important ways: i) apartments in Australia are typically provided as speculative strata titled developments; ii) the apartments themselves are physically interdependent; and iii) they are usually jointly owned and managed. Each of these differences has important implications for the transition towards more sustainable apartment living.¹

This same report went on to state:

Our industry participants stressed the need for governments to lead with a clear whole-of-government commitment and vision for sustainability and a circular economy approach to housing.

To ensure communities living in strata are enabled to participate in the decarbonisation of transport via EVs and other e-mobility modes it is essential that government policy target this sector specifically and not be ‘strata blind’ when developing policies for households. One way to do this would be to provide subsidies on a per-lot basis to owner’s corporations in addition to any subsidies for households in single family houses.

Further we would encourage the federal government to promote the NSW EV Ready Program nationally. This program commits \$10M to co-fund with owners’ corporations the EV charging backbone into buildings with 100 or more car spaces. Lot owners then only have to pay for the final charge point individually, thus putting Lot owners in a similar position to owners of detached dwellings.

The majority of strata schemes however, are small to medium in scale and have fewer than 100 car spaces. Government-backed education campaigns and support for these schemes - often in less-affluent owner’s corporations - is critical if the more vulnerable in our community are not to be left behind in the EV transition.

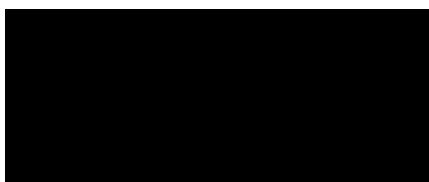
The NSW Government has made recent announcements around the “Right to charge” for strata. These reforms will limit an owners’ corporation from preventing a lot owner who is willing to pay the cost to install charging from being unreasonably refused, so long as it meets specific requirements, e.g. not exceeding the electrical infrastructure of the building. We support the federal government working to promote these changes nationally.

¹ Easthope, H., Palmer, J., Sharam, A., Nethercote, M., Pignatta, G. and Crommelin, L. (2023) Delivering sustainable apartment housing: new build and retrofit, AHURI Final Report No. 400, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/400>, doi: 10.18408/ahuri7128201.

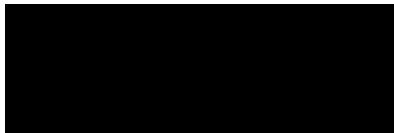
We would encourage the Senate committee to promote the changes made to the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 (NSW) which allows a simple majority (51%) to pass special levies for “Sustainability infrastructure”, rather than the normal 75%. “Sustainable Infrastructure” definition specifically includes EV charging infrastructure. Further comment from the AEVA on changes to the National Construction Code so as to improve EV charging facilities in multi-dwelling properties [may be found here](#).

AEVA thanks the committee for the opportunity to make recommendations on this crucially important piece of the transport decarbonisation puzzle. We look forward to further engagement and participation in the shaping of this essential policy.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Neil-Smith (author, AEVA NSW branch treasurer)



Dr Chris Jones (AEVA National President)