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Mr Tony Zappia MP
Chair, Standing Committee on Climate Change,
Energy, Environment and Water
PO Box 6021
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Via email: CCEEW@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Zappia

The Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group (CBD BUG) welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the transition to electric vehicles (EVs).

As background to this submission, the Brisbane CBD BUG is a grass roots volunteer organisation of more than 800 members, representing the interests of the very large number of people riding bicycles to, from and within the Brisbane city centre. We are active in seeking policy decisions at all levels of government supporting people who want to cycle, and in particular relating to improved infrastructure, end-of-trip facilities, integration of cycling needs with other transport modes and a regulatory environment friendly towards people riding bikes. CBD BUG members meet monthly to exchange information and ideas, discuss issues of relevance and determine the direction of policies to benefit CBD cyclists.

We are extremely disappointed the inquiry's terms of make no mention of vehicles other than cars. The first word of the media release "Driving" underlines the biased and flawed starting point of the inquiry.

The Brisbane CBD BUG's October 2022 submission to the Australian Government on the *National Electric Vehicle Strategy* (published at https://consult.dcceew.gov.au/national-electric-vehicle-strategy/submission/view/521) highlighted this bias. With great dismay we see that the terms of reference for this inquiry have a similarly one-eyed view in only focusing on electric cars.

While the term "zero emission vehicles" has been used widely, including by governments in Australia, to greenwash electric vehicles - we are pleased to note that misleading term has not been used in this relation to this inquiry.

We recognise the critical need to transition to a low carbon transport and the potential for shifting to personal transport devices is a massive opportunity to reduce the cost of infrastructure for this transition.

Sales and usage of e-bikes and e-scooters are booming across the country - as Australians are tired of sitting in their cars in traffic congestion while also footing major expenditure for the fixed and variable costs of owning and driving cars.

You should also note the following statistics that point to the need for prioritising government support for wider community take-up of e-bikes and e-scooters over electric cars:

- Nationally two thirds of vehicle km are in passenger cars[1] while more than half the total km travelled is within the capital cities[2].
- Average trip length for motor-vehicle trips within Brisbane is 8.2km with half of trips less than 4.5km (averaging 18km/h). For major centres in SEQ outside the Brisbane LGA, the average distance is 12.1km, with half of trips less than 6.5km (averaging 22km/h)[3]
- More than half of all households have at least one bicycle[3]
- Almost 4% of households have an e-scooter[3]
- Between 2%[3] and 4.5%[4] of households have a e-bike
- E-bikes already comprise 8% of current bicycle sales in Australia[5]
- In the Netherlands, e-bikes form greater than half (57%) of bikes sold[6]
- Average weight of an EV battery is 454kg, with larger models up to 900kg[7]
- Average weight of an electric bicycle battery is about 3kg[8]

KPMG recently modelled the economic impact of EVs out to 2040 and found the number of trips would go up and congestion would be worse. KPMG's analysis revealed that across Australia the resulting increase in road network congestion would cost $80 billion.[9]

We support the rapid electrification of transport. But we disagree completely with the objective of only encouraging rapid uptake of EVs - as this will just condemn Australians, through continued excessive driving, to enduring more traffic congestion, avoidable financial burden, poorer health and disconnected communities.

Accordingly, the Strategy's objective of "encouraging rapid uptake of EVs" should be dumped.

[1] https://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2023/australian-infrastructure-and-transport-statistics-yearbook-2023 (BITRE table 6.3)
[2] BITRE table 6.4, 6.5
[3] https://www.data.qld.gov.au/dataset/queensland-household-travel-survey-series/resource/f10735f3-3d76-47b7-ab17-1b95c4ecbc16
[4] https://www.cwanz.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NWCPS_2023_report_v1.3.
[5] https://www.racv.com.au/royalauto/transport/cycling/bike-sales-trends-victoria.html#:~:text=He%20says%20e%2Dbikes%20currently,appetite%20for%20cycling%20hasn't
[6] https://ebikelovers.com/2023/03/09/pedaling-into-the-future-the-dutch-and-the-europeans-lead-the-way-in-e-bike-sales/#:~:text=Out%20of%20the%20855%2C000%20bicycles,rising%20for%2010%20consecutive%20years
[7] https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/5-things-you-didnt-know-ev-batteries-evbox#:~:text=You%20might%20have%20heard%20that,1%2C800%20kg%20(4%2C000%20pounds
[8] https://www.kalkhoff-bikes.com/en_au/lexicon/e-bike-weight#:~:text=A%20small%20battery%20weighing%202.5,between%202.5%20and%203.5%20kg
[9] https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/au/pdf/2023/decarbonising-transport-impact-ev-uptake-on-networks.pdf

Instead, we call for this inquiry to be refocused on encouraging the rapid uptake of e-bicycles, e-scooters and other forms of personal mobility devices. Compared to electric cars these devices:

1) reduce traffic congestion
2) are far cheaper to own/operate
3) enable people-friendly streets / communities
4) are significantly more environmentally friendly, and
5) are not lethal machines likely to kill hundreds of people across Australia each year.

We recognise that for the foreseeable future there will continue to be some trips/commutes requiring car use, such as for trips of a distance further than what can reasonably be made via an e-bike /PMD e.g. greater that 20km or when a bulky/heavy load needs to be conveyed.

Australia's transition to EVs should therefore address the detriment to road safety caused by the recent proliferation of large sports utility vehicles (SUVs). We expect these vehicles, which are unsafe and, in most cases, unnecessary for daily driving in the urban environment, will be squeezed out over the longer term by improved fuel efficiency standards. However, there will be no safety improvement if people replace their oversized SUVs powered by internal combustion engines with equally monstrous EVs. Accordingly, EVs that are unsafe for pedestrians and bicycle/PMD riders should not be allowed.

Yours faithfully

Paul French

Paul French
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