

MEDIA RELEASE

9 May 2022

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging in Apartment Buildings - The Solution

The world is turning away from Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) toward electric vehicles (EV)s as a response to climate change and environmental concerns around air quality. Transport is the second highest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and its emissions are still growing¹. Most vehicle manufacturers have EV plans, and many are making announcements they will stop ICE vehicle production within the coming decade.

One of the biggest concerns for potential EV owners is a lack of EV charging infrastructure² and there is an overwhelming preference to charge at home overnight.

This is fine in a standalone household, where you can simply plug into a suitable power point or even have a higher capacity purpose-built EV charger installed in your garage. But what do you do if you are one of the 1.2 million people in NSW who live in an apartment building?

Apartment buildings come in all shapes and sizes from just two apartments to hundreds of apartments with commercial areas and each has their challenges when it comes to installing EV chargers. These include structural considerations, like common property, common electrical supply, and frequently electricity meters that are remote from the garage area. And these are just the infrastructure considerations after facilitating any governance arrangements including owners corporations and strata committees. How do you as a prospective EV owner navigate all this to have your EV charger installed?

The good news is that, as part of Minister Kean's sustainability initiatives, Owners Corporation Network (OCN) has been working with the NSW Government to establish a comprehensive website that addresses all the aspects involved in resolving this question. This new website is available and will be launched this week on 12 May 22 via the "*Drive Electric – EV ready Buildings*" webinar.

The website steps owners corporations and EV owners through who is responsible for the for what, a simple five step process to help guide the decision making process and offers five options that owners corporations might consider in determining which is the right way to introduce EV charging is their building, according to these size and structural considerations.

Each of the steps and options is supported with cost estimates, resources like helpful forms, fact sheets and case studies.

¹ <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/FactSheet-Transport.pdf>

² <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/future-of-mobility/electric-vehicle-trends-2030.html>

Much has been written about the issues with installing EV charges in apartment buildings and many opinions expressed and with these opinions comes a set of myths. To set the record straight we have busted those myths and, in doing so, made it easier to get on with getting more EVs on the road and play our part to reduce emissions and therefore global warming.

Myth 1 - You need to do expensive building energy supply upgrades to charge electric vehicles.

Fact: Buildings are designed for peak energy capacity, which is typically a very hot summer afternoon with all the air conditioners on and everyone cooking dinner. This is not the time to charge an EV. Our study of over 100 apartment buildings has shown there is more than enough energy available outside of these peak demand times to charge any number of EV in the foreseeable future. It is simply matter of using load or energy usage control, like a simple timer to tap into the off-peak capacity or use a demand management system to switch off the EV charger if the pre-set building demand is exceeded.

Myth 2: You need fast charging in apartments for EVs.

Fact: With EVs you can simply keep the 'tank' full with top-ups of electricity, just like your mobile phone. The data says the majority owners slow charge EVs overnight using a power point or EV specific medium capacity charger in their garage. Sure, there are some applications in strata buildings where owners corporations may choose to share resources on common property, and in these instances a higher capacity charger may be of benefit.

Myth 3: You can't bill owners for energy usage.

Fact: The AER (Australian Energy Regulator) has exempt energy selling guidelines, which include owners corporations as 'deemed' exemptions, which means there is no requirement for owners corporations to register or have a licence to on-sell energy. So you can pass costs on to residents. This is done all the time, like excessive cleaning costs.

Myth 4: You can't charge from a normal power point.

Fact: EVs consume kilowatts of power, just like an ICE vehicle consumes litres of fuel. To fill the tank or charge an EV you need to replace those kilowatts, again just like replacing fuel in the fuel tank. A normal power point can deliver up to 2.4 kilowatts, so you can use it to charge an EV, it just takes time, which is why most people use power points over night. However, there are real limits to how many EVs can plug in to a normal power circuit though, which is where energy assessments and load control are used to identify, add to and protect those circuits.

About OCN - Owners Corporation Network (ocn.org.au) is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to help strata owners navigate the complexities of strata living, from social and organisational challenges to financial and legal issues.

About OCN

The Owners Corporation Network of Australia Limited (OCN) is the peak consumer body representing residential strata and community title owners and residents. Strata is the fastest growing form of residential property ownership in Australia, and the growth of this sector raises increasingly important questions over property ownership and governance.

Media Enquiries

Karen Stiles
M: 0418 232 476
E: media@ocn.org.au