

Canberra group wants laws to change for electric vehicles

A CANBERRA group of Electric Vehicle (EV) enthusiasts is proposing a set of policies, in the lead-up to the National Electric Vehicle Festival, to be held on Sunday 4 October 2009, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the grounds of the Old Parliament House Lawns in Canberra.

The location of the festival close to Parliament House reflects the importance of legislation in regard to electric vehicles.

The group, known as Canberra EV, proposes a range of legislative changes to support Electric Vehicles, which covers electric cars, trucks and buses, and also ships, aircraft, bikes and further means of transport.

Proposals include grants for purchases of new EVs and for converting vehicles to EVs, in line with the existing program for LPG conversions and new LPG vehicle purchases.

Canberra EV further calls for recharging points and the introduction of Green Vehicles number plates and Electric Vehicle number plates. These green-coloured plates would give exclusive access to parking spaces with recharging points, free parking at parking meters and in public parking facilities, access to special lanes such as transit lanes and zero stamp duty and registration duties, while getting a rebate for the first year of registration.

The full policy document can be viewed and discussed online, at <http://tinyurl.com/EVpolicy>

Canberra EV co-president, Julia says: "The need to act on climate change makes it imperative for Australia to switch to electric vehicles. Additional benefits are a reduction of emission-related health problems and less dependency on imported oil, while also creating numerous green jobs and investment opportunities in Australia."

Julia encourages people who are interested or have questions about electric vehicles to come along to the National Electric Vehicle Festival, where visitors will be able to see a Tesla Roadster electric supercar take part in demo runs at a designated area blocked off from other traffic. The Tesla can accelerate from zero to 100 km per hour in 4 seconds.

Over 20 hybrid and electric cars from around Australia will be on display at the festival, including conventional cars that have been converted by Canberra residents into electric cars. Electric bicycles and scooters will also be on display.

At the festival, Better Place will demonstrate EV recharging. In July, Better Place announced Canberra to be the site of its first city-wide roll-out of electric vehicle infrastructure in Australia, to be followed by charge spots and battery switching stations throughout Australia.

Also on display at the festival will be a historic Detroit Electric, made in 1917 and used by the Allen family in Sydney for over 30 years until presented to the Powerhouse Museum in 1947. The vintage vehicle illustrates the long history of electric vehicles, batteries and recharging stations.

During World War I, the cost of petrol doubled in Australia and electric cars became popular - in 1916, the Sydney City Council set up a special charging station in Palmer Street, where owners could recharge their vehicles for a reasonable fee. At the time it was expected that the petrol engine would soon become obsolete, says the description at the Powerhouse Museum's website.

The festival is organised jointly by Canberra EV and the Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA). Canberra EV is the Canberra branch of the AEVA, which will come to Canberra for their Annual General Meeting (AGM), on the day preceding the festival. Canberra EV will table the policy proposals at the AGM for formal announcement at the festival.

~ ~ ~

*Canberra EV is a group of Electric Vehicle enthusiasts, and can be visited at CanberraEV.org
Further documents, including photos, are also at ev-i.org
For further details, contact the author, Bernardus Mettes, member of Canberra EV, at:
Bernardus Mettes, PO Box 855 Civic Square, Canberra, ACT 2608
phone 0405 632463 email benmettes@gmail.com*