

ELECTRIC VEHICLE STRATEGY

58. Mr G. BAKER to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to reduce carbon emissions while safeguarding our electricity system.

- (1) Can the minister advise the house of the measures being implemented to make it easier to own an electric vehicle?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how these measures will provide additional reinforcements for WA's electricity system?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge that he drives an electric vehicle. I appreciated the fact that he was prepared to let us use his electric vehicle on Thursday last week when we announced another step forward in our electricity rollout.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Does he have to pay for it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is an interesting question because it has nothing to do with the government. As the member knows, Parliament House is operated completely independent of government. If the member wants to find out information about the operations of Parliament House, he should ask Parliament House because it has nothing to do with the Minister for Energy.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I hope no-one is reflecting on the Speaker.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not.

The SPEAKER: Not you!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Absolutely not. I am just making the point that as a minister, I cannot answer any questions about the operation of Parliament House.

Last week, we added to our incentives for electric vehicle rollout in Western Australia. We have already provided \$3 000 grants to people who buy an EV, and last week we announced the Charge Up Workplace Grants Program, which is a \$15 million program to help workplaces install DC chargers. The first round is open and \$3.75 million of grants are available now. People can apply to Energy Policy WA for those grants. They can get up to \$50 000 in total in the metropolitan area or \$75 000 in regional Western Australia, reflecting the fact that it can often be more expensive to install this infrastructure in regional Western Australia. The organisations that can apply for the grants include not-for-profits, small businesses, medium-sized businesses and local governments. People can do destination charging; perhaps a hospitality business in regional Western Australia could put in a DC charger so that more people come to its business as opposed to a different business. A local government could electrify its vehicle fleet, or a small business or a medium-sized business that might have back-to-base operations such as a courier service could electrify its vehicles and have them come back to base. The good news is that we are going to require software in these installations so that they can communicate with the grid. One challenge that has been noticed around the world—research has been done on this in various parts of the world—is that if governments do not have smart technology in their chargers, they can end up with challenges in managing the grid. We are looking at the experiences elsewhere in the world and getting ahead of those challenges, which means that these DC chargers will actually help us to manage the grid.

I know that there are some dinosaurs in the Liberal Party and elsewhere that oppose the transition to fight climate change, but I am fully embracing it. I understand that means the electricity system is more complex than it was 20 years ago, when certain people were involved in the system, but this more dynamic system can get a benefit out of EVs charging when the grid has additional load and discharging when the grid needs an additional injection of energy. This is really good news. It is a step along the pathway for a decarbonised future. Given that so many global manufacturers are going to stop making internal combustion engines within seven or 15 years from today, we have to be ready for the high volume of electric vehicles that are coming, and this is the first step along that pathway.