

Where to put the first electric car charge station in the Sunshine State

July 31 2015, by Craig Froome

If you build them they will come – in this case if you build electric car charging points then you increase the chance of people opting to buy electric cars.

So the Queensland Government's [decision](#) last week to assist in the development of the first service station that will provide for both standard fuel delivery as well as electric vehicle fast charging should be congratulated.

But has it selected the best location for this trial?

Through [Economic Development Queensland](#), supported by [Ergon Energy](#), the government is seeking expressions of interest to build the service station at Oonoonba, just south of Townsville's CBD.

From Ergon Energy's viewpoint the location makes sense: Townsville has long been promoted as a "[solar city](#)", with a number of solar projects undertaken there. To provide electric vehicle charging supported by a 25kW solar photo voltaic (PV) system appears to be a natural extension to previous activity.

Those who have visited Townsville will know that the existing taxi service is almost completely run using hybrid vehicles, but they won't avail themselves of the charging station.

It must also be recognised that the Ergon Energy network represents

regional Queensland, with [Energex grid](#) covering the more populous areas in the south-east of the state. Both are state-owned corporations, so there is no reason the state government support could not be utilised in more densely populated areas.

But one might ask the whether Townsville is the right place in Queensland to start the state's "electric superhighway"?

The busiest place in Queensland

Would it not make more sense to look at the highway between the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast? Has anybody looked at the traffic numbers to see what roads have the highest traffic numbers and where infrastructure will be best utilised?

The traffic from Brisbane both north and south would have to place it as one of the busiest highway locations within Australia.

At present, the lack of charging infrastructure is a well known limitation of electric vehicles, and people are not going to try to set out on a long-distance journey without knowing that they won't be left stranded. While the plans are for a large roll-out, we should undertake studies where there is potential for electric vehicle sales.

One also could question whether co-locating fuel and electric vehicle charging is a viable model for the future, given that the majority of current service stations are owned by the major oil companies.

We should be focusing on the areas closest to the larger cities and building the infrastructure out from those points rather than start in one of the regional areas.

The Townsville solar advantage

In support of Townsville, it has been one of the most proactive areas in the rollout of solar technologies, and Ergon Energy should be supported in bringing new technologies to its network. But shouldn't Queensland look at the customer base and build infrastructure around demand?

As the Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland, Coralee O'Rourke, said when they made the announcement, an expected charge time is 15 to 30 minutes, and two charging stations will be available under the proposal. It could take up to 100 cars a day. Is this the demand in Townsville?

While more questions have been raised than answered, I think the objective of developing infrastructure such as this should focus on where the greatest demand may be. That must be the fringe of large urban developments, such as Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, where traffic numbers will greater utilise the infrastructure.

There are proposals being discussed with the Brisbane City Council area for local rollout of electric vehicle charging stations within the local council region. This would appear to be a better initial roll-out for Queensland within an area where there is a larger number of existing [electric vehicles](#) (with no charging facilities).

We should be supporting the superhighways of the future, but we do need to crawl before we walk and determine what consumers actually need. Then we can determine where [charging stations](#) should go and what related infrastructure we need.

Are people really going to sit in their car for 15 to 30 minutes 3km from the Townsville CBD to pay to charge their car or in that area at present? Or will they do it at home?

This story is published courtesy of [The Conversation](#) (under Creative Commons-Attribution/No derivatives).

Source: The Conversation

Citation: Where to put the first electric car charge station in the Sunshine State (2015, July 31)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2015-07-electric-car-station-sunshine-state.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.