

ELECTRIC VEHICLES — CHARGING POINTS

979. Ms L. METTAM to the Minister for Innovation and ICT:

Can the minister explain why there are gaping holes in the government's proposed electric vehicle network, including 1 600 kilometres of the Great Northern Highway, in addition to the fact that the EV network will not even link up with South Australia?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I want to congratulate the new Deputy Leader of the Opposition for asking the dorothy dixer about EVs that I was going to get asked a bit later on.

Ms S. Winton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo, I call you for the second time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I thank the member for Vasse very much for asking me a question about our new electric vehicle strategy. We are very proud of the strategy that we announced earlier this week. Electric vehicles have been around for a while. I remember that in the eight years of the former government, members opposite did nothing to promote this technology. The member probably does not know that—she probably was not paying attention—but during that eight and a half years, her government did nothing. We have consulted with industry on how best to kickstart EVs in WA. The rate of EV take-up in Western Australia is very low. There are fewer than 1 600 EVs on the road in Western Australia, which is less than one per cent. What can government best do to kickstart this industry? We have announced a \$21 million strategy that includes the longest EV charging station network in Australia. People will be able to go from Esperance all the way to Kununurra. It will be the longest network in Australia and, arguably, one of the longest in the world. The member for Vasse is not happy with that. Sure, it will not go everywhere in Western Australia—that is for sure. But it will build the spine, the backbone, of the network, so people will have confidence that they can leave major towns with their electric vehicles and go throughout most parts of the state. Sure, there are parts of the state that they will not be able to go to, but they will be able to drive from Esperance to Kununurra, and they will be able to go to Kalgoorlie.

The response from industry has been overwhelmingly positive.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members on my left!

Mr D.J. KELLY: It sees this as a major step forward. We know that once we do this, other players will come into the market and build out the network. We are the first state government to put significant money into an electric vehicle policy. It will arguably be one of the largest networks in the world and it has overwhelming endorsement from industry, yet the opposition is complaining about it. It is absolutely astonishing.