

11 DECEMBER 2020

Free electric vehicle charging network trial in Adelaide

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has today announced \$983,776 in funding to JOLT Charge Pty Ltd (JOLT) to develop and trial its free electric vehicle (EV) charging network in Adelaide.

JOLT will install 21 innovative EV fast charging units that are embedded in roadside advertising panels across Adelaide in car parks, streets and public spaces. The network will be rolled out across several local government areas consisting of Campbelltown City Council, Charles Sturt Council, Marion Council and Port Adelaide Enfield Council.

The \$1.97 million project will provide fast chargers that are capable of charging all types of EVs and will provide free charging for approximately 15 minutes, providing drivers with approximately 45km of range (users can pay to use the JOLT chargers for longer than this period). All of the 21 units will be powered by 100 per cent renewable energy.

The project will test the commercial viability of generating revenue through advertising sales to cover the cost of both the EV charging infrastructure and the provision of charging for EV drivers. If successful this model could help to develop a larger charging network in inner cities and major networks across Australia in advance of the expected increase in EV sales.

ARENA has previously supported the rollout of two ultra-fast charging EV networks across Australia by Chargefox and Evie Networks which have focused mainly on enabling travel on key highways. ARENA has also supported Origin, AGL and ActewAGL to trial different technologies and approaches to accelerate the commercialisation of managed EV charging and V2G services.

Together, these ARENA funded EV projects not only help to address consumer range anxiety for EVs but are also demonstrating and informing the market on how EV charging can be managed at higher levels of uptake, with the lowest cost and greatest benefit to consumers.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said the innovative model would help to test consumer behaviour in using EV charging in metro areas.

“The advertiser funded model for EV charging is untested in Australia and JOLT’s project could lead to a viable business model to address charging availability and range anxiety and therefore lead to increased uptake of EVs.

“This project will test the appetite of customers living in metro areas who use their vehicles for shorter trips to charge their vehicles while they’re out shopping or at public events. The more we can learn about consumer behaviour now, the better prepared we will be for the broader uptake of EVs across Australia,” Mr Miller said.

Doug McNamee, CEO of JOLT Charge said the company was thrilled to see their vision come to life and provide much needed infrastructure for EV drivers.

“Through this ARENA grant, we’re able to make EVs more accessible with the launch of our free charging network. Increasing the availability of charging infrastructure is a key piece of the puzzle for widespread adoption of EVs. We are excited to be partnering with innovative and forward-thinking councils, helping them transition to a zero-emission transport future,” Mr McNamee said.

As outlined in the Australian Government’s first Low Emissions Technology Statement, ARENA will also continue to support consumers choosing new vehicle technologies through the roll-out of the Future Fuels Fund. The Future Fuels Fund will help businesses and regional communities take advantage of opportunities offered by hydrogen, electric, and bio-fuelled vehicles.