

EV car share programme eyes fleet market

Kate Barker - Tue, 31 May 2016

A new car sharing programme using plug-in hybrid electric vehicles is eyeing potential growth in the fleet market.

Wellington-based Mevo aims to launch a subscription-based service in spring, providing Audi A3 Sportback e-trons to users on an as-required basis.

Mevo chief executive and co-founder Erik Zydervelt says there is potential for businesses to decrease the size of their fleet by using a car sharing service.

If a fleet has about 10 cars, he says some will usually be on the road most of the time, while the rest sit idle except during 'peak times', which can be costly.

"We could offer them a business membership so when they need the car they can use it, but they're not covering the cost when it's not in use."

He says [Mevo](#) is looking to work with businesses that want to downsize their fleet and go electric.

Providing the e-tron helps to allay some of the range anxiety that comes with driving EVs, Zydervelt says. The vehicle has an all-electric range of up to 50 kilometres and a hybrid range of more than 900 kilometres.

"We think about 80 per cent of our trips will be all electric," Zydervelt says.

Start-up

Mevo was part of Wellington City Council's Smart Energy Challenge accelerator programme last year.

The [programme](#), this year renamed the Low Carbon Challenge, provides a pool of \$45,000 in funding to help groups to realise a business idea.

Zydervelt says being involved in the programme gave the company access to funding and a "good network" of knowledge.

After the service launches later this year, Zydervelt says Mevo will look to "scale up" in 2017, likely growing its service to include Auckland and Christchurch.

Wellington's first car sharing policy is set to be approved soon by the council's transport and urban development committee. It will allow providers like Mevo to place cars in public parking spaces.

Zydervelt says the policy reflects an international trend for councils to provide public spaces for car share programmes.

Opportunities

Mevo is taking waiting list sign-ups on its website prior to the launch. Zydervelt says the response already has been "amazing".

"We've already filled our launch capacity. We think initially demand will outstrip supply, but that's a good problem to have."

The first pod of vehicles will be located near Clyde Quay Wharf. Members will be able to use an app to book and unlock the vehicles.

The firm is also keen to investigate business partnerships as it looks to grow. Zydervelt says they have already been in conversations with some energy companies.

He says they are excited to have cemented a partnership with Audi.

"Audi recognise that mobility is a really dynamic place at the moment," he says. "Their approach with the e-tron fits with what we're trying to do so perfectly."

Going electric

Zydervelt says, internationally, car sharing has been shown to remove more than 10 private cars from the road for each shared vehicle available.

It can also be used as an option for people or businesses that need cars but for only a fraction of the time.

Other car share providers have found that one vehicle can be accessed by about 20 people without compromising on availability.

"We see car sharing as the best option for moving the national fleet to electric," Zydervelt says.

Firms are most likely to need the service during business hours, he says. Outside of that, the cars will be available for people needing to do a big grocery shop, pick up a Trade Me purchase, or escape the city for the weekend.

