

7 MARCH 2024

Boost for electric vehicle rentals and second-hand car market

On behalf of the Australian Government, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) has today announced \$4.76 million in funding from the Driving the Nation Program to Europcar Mobility Group for the 'Electric Rental Vehicle and Charging Infrastructure Rollout' project.

Europcar Mobility Group, one of the largest vehicle rental companies in Australia, will install 256 chargers across at least 41 sites around Australia, including airports, metropolitan hubs and regional locations, to support the deployment of around 3,100 passenger electric rental vehicles over the next three years.

The project will make electric vehicles more accessible to thousands of individual and business customers for rent at price points comparable to fossil fuel equivalent vehicles, introducing more Australians to EVs who may be reluctant to give them a go.

ARENA CEO Darren Miller said vehicle rental businesses are in a unique position to assist with the uptake of electric vehicles in Australia.

"It's promising to see that Australian EV sales hit record numbers in 2023, but it's clear that much more needs to be done to see EV sales overtake the sales of traditional internal combustion vehicles. This includes providing Australians with access to more affordable makes and models of electric vehicles, which this project does."

Europcar Mobility Group intends to operate the EVs for up to two years across a range of rental service offerings, before reselling the vehicles in the second-hand car market through an established dealer network.

By increasing the amount of EVs and the variety of models available to the public, it is expected that this will lead to lower costs and reduce current barriers to entry for Australians looking to purchase an EV.

Europcar Mobility Group will also be integrating EVs and charging infrastructure into its broader service offering, assisting its business customers to meet their carbon emissions reduction targets.

"Europcar Mobility Group's project, while helping to reduce emissions in the fleet and rental car market, will also help to get a wider range of EVs into the second-hand market and that's a win-win for both the company and Australians looking to purchase. I hope to see this replicated by other rental car companies." Mr Miller said.

Airport sites include major city airports - Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth, and will be prioritised in the rollout as critical short-term rental locations. More airport sites are expected to be added to the footprint over the course of the project.

The \$110.6 million project will also encourage airports to consider integration of EVs into parking, grid connections and operations.

Europcar Mobility Group Managing Director for Australia and New Zealand, Benoit Garel, said:

"Europcar Mobility Group is a leader in sustainability and the decarbonisation of transport globally and we are excited to be working with ARENA on ways to support and accelerate the take up of EVs."

"Europcar is proud to be leading the charge in the transformation of Australia's rental car industry toward a sustainable, electric future by educating drivers, making it easier and more affordable to make the switch to EVs and providing a premium customer experience along the way," Mr Garel said.

Europcar Mobility Group is partnering with Ampol to procure, install and operate the 256 electric vehicle

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chargers with smart charging capabilities across 41 Europcar-operated sites Australia-wide.

Ampol Executive General Manager, International and New Business, Brent Merrick said: “Our partnership with Europcar Mobility Group is a key example of how Ampol is looking to support our customers with charging solutions including where they invest in their own infrastructure to electrify their fleets.

Since 2015, ARENA has invested over \$150 million to zero emissions vehicles, including public charging, vehicle to grid trials, innovation in charging, hydrogen refuelling and fleet decarbonisation.

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