

Mevo eyes all-electric fleet

Kate Barker – Mon, 12 December 2016

Mevo is eyeing the potential to supply a fully electric fleet for its just-launched car-share service.

The start-up, which allows users to hire plug-in hybrid electric Audi A3 Sportback e-trons, officially launched its Wellington-based service today.

Chief executive and co-founder Erik Zydervelt says feedback from users interested in the service has shown a desire for an all-electric fleet of cars.

"Our community has been very vocal in that regard," he says.

"It's now our job to empower them to start redesigning the way they move."

Zydervelt says the three-car service is already fully subscribed, and the company will move quickly to expand its network in coming months.

Mevo aims to have 50 cars available in Wellington by the end of next year as more parking spaces are secured. The company is also looking at opportunities in Auckland and Christchurch.

Data-driven

In September Mevo signed an electricity supply agreement with Meridian Energy. It has since partnered with Trade Me Insurance to provide cover for the fleet.

Customers can book a car via an app and different pricing is available based on the level of use.

The e-trons have a 50-kilometre all-electric range and can travel up to 900 kilometres in hybrid mode.

Mevo expects about 90 per cent of trips taken by users will be within the cars' all-electric range.

Mevo co-founder Finn Lawrence says the firm is working with Trade Me to develop insurance cover that fits the subscription-based business model.

In-car software provides Mevo with five-second "data dumps" whenever one of the vehicles is being driven. The cars have Hourfleet software built into them by Wellington firm Mindkin.

Lawrence says this data provides a "very accurate" picture of the risk profile for each driver.

Globally the insurance industry needs to change its approach as subscription-based services become more popular, he says.

"They need to create a model where the price is proportional to the use of the asset."

Accessibility

Wellington City Council approved a car sharing policy in late August, making it possible for services like Mevo to operate.

It allows operators of existing and new car share schemes to apply for more on-street car parks where shared vehicles can be parked when not in use. Each operator will initially be allocated three car parks each.

Mayor Justin Lester says the council has allocated 100 car parks across the city for EV chargers and car sharing to encourage more sustainable transport options. Car share companies apply for the spaces they want, which are then assigned by the council.

"We know that car sharing is extremely good for reducing emissions, and using electric hybrid vehicles in a sharing fleet is like the cherry on top," Lester says.

In September Mevo established a board to better utilise support from the industry. Former Meridian head of sales and marketing Jason McDonald and ex-National Energy Research Institute chief executive Paul Atkins are directors, alongside former World of WearableArt chief executive Meg Matthews.

There were 2,250 EVs registered in New Zealand at the end of November, up from 2,036 in October and 922 in November 2015, according to Transport Ministry data.

In October more than 30 organisations, led by Mercury and Air New Zealand, committed to transition at least 30 per cent of their company vehicle fleets to EV by 2019.

Other firms involved in the commitment include ABB, Contact, Powerco, Transpower, Unison and WEL Networks.

