



Better Place - Bringing Electric Vehicles Powered by Renewable Energy

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on November 4, 2008 - 9:35am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Alternative energy](#)

Tags: [agl energy](#), [australia](#), [better place](#), [electric vehicles](#), [lithium ion batteries](#), [macquarie capital group](#), [original](#), [renewable energy](#), [shai agassi](#) [[list all tags](#)]

[Project Better Place](#) founder [Shai Agassi](#) was in town last week [announcing](#) that Australia will become the third country, following Denmark and Israel, to implement the group's vision of electric vehicles powered by renewable energy.

Better Place and Macquarie Capital Group will raise \$1 billion to build a network of 250,000 charging stations and battery exchange stations in key locations along the east coast by 2012. The network will be powered by wind turbines owned by AGL Energy.

Agassi has been promoting the plan as a way to reduce our dependence on oil (the starting premise for the project was "how do you run an entire country without oil") while creating jobs and boosting the local economy (see [this interview](#) on the Today Show for his explanation). Operating in Australia will also help the group prove it can work in large countries as well as the much smaller geographical areas covered in the first 2 rollouts. Agassi also noted that the Federal Government's \$500 million Green Car Innovation Fund played a part in encouraging them to set up in Australia.



[Green Car Congress](#) describes the Better Place network as consisting of three primary components:

- Charge points. These are to recharge car batteries. Better Place is planning a 2.5:1 ratio of charge spots to cars.
- Battery switching stations. For trips longer than 160 km, Better Place plans to build roadside battery switching stations. Stations are to be completely automated, and the driver's subscription takes care of everything. The driver pulls in, and the depleted battery is replaced with a fresh one, without anyone having to leave the vehicle. The process takes less time than it does to fill a tank of liquid fuel, according to the plan.
- Software to automate the charging and exchange process.

Better Place has a partnership with the Renault-Nissan Alliance to provide electric cars. The prototype electric eMegane sedan features a 160+ kilometre range for highway driving.



Better Place says it is committed to open network access and using industry standards, with the goal being to allow customers to have a choice of make and model of car.

Automotive Energy Supply Corporation (AESC, a joint venture between Nissan Motor, NEC Corporation, and NEC TOKIN Corporation) and A123Systems have been identified as lithium-ion battery providers to the system.

Better Place plans to own and operate the [batteries](#) and power generation (via AGL Energy, in Australia's case), and to sell kilometres travelled to drivers on a subscription basis, in similar fashion to the [mobile phone](#) industry.

Better Place in Australia plans to start by setting up charging stations in the Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, and then connect them with "electric highways," with stations set up every 25 miles.

Overall I'm quite excited by this project - though obviously executing the plan, in terms of setting up all the infrastructure and getting a significant volume of electric cars on the market at a competitive price, will be challenging. If the 3 countries piloting the idea can demonstrate it can work successfully, it will provide a blueprint for personal transport in a post-oil world.

Cross-posted from [Our Clean Energy Future](#).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 United States License](#).