

Metro to test electric and hydrogen buses in 3-year program

By Benjamin Seeder
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Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone chief executive officer Susie Bower. File photo

Metro Tasmania will trial three electric buses in Launceston and three hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses in Hobart, under a new \$17 million program designed to test the technology and help the state meet its 2030 emissions targets.

The government will provide \$6 million to Metro to conduct the battery electric buses trial, and as much as \$11.3 million for the hydrogen fuel cell electric bus trial.

Transport Minister Michael Ferguson said three companies - Foton Mobility, Custom Bus Group and H2H Energy - have been appointed as suppliers for the bus trials.

"These clean energy vehicles could be the catalyst for the eventual full transformation of our public bus fleet," he said.

Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Roger Jaensch, said the Zero Emissions Bus Trial was an important part of achieving the state's target of net zero emissions from 2030.



Infrastructure and Transport Minister Michael Ferguson launched Metro's green bus trial this week. File Photo

"Transport accounts for some 21 per cent of our state-wide emissions (excluding land use and forestry) so trialling clean fuel options is an opportunity to reduce Tasmania's emissions and will provide valuable lessons in the transition to zero emissions technology," Mr Jaensch said.

Foton Mobility will supply and maintain the hydrogen fuel cell buses; Custom Bus Group will supply the battery electric buses and associated battery chargers; and H2H Energy will supply and maintain the hydrogen refuelling station at Metro's Mornington depot.

Minister for Energy and Renewables, Guy Barnett, said the trial would help prove the use of hydrogen in the transport sector in Tasmania is viable.

It would also reinforce the government's goal of establishing a green hydrogen hub at Bell Bay, Mr Barnett said.

Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone chief executive officer Susie Bower said the future pathways for a hydrogen economy in the state were now clearer.

"H2H Energy is a global leader in hydrogen refueling technology and have been a strong part of the emerging hydrogen vision for the green hydrogen hub at Bell Bay," she said.

"H2H has its origins in Tasmania, with its founder Cranston Polson from the north-west coast," she said.

The company will supply and maintain the hydrogen refuelling station at Metro's Mornington depot.

The Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre, an independent independent not-for-profit company founded under the auspices of the University of Tasmania, will supply the green hydrogen to be used by the Hobart trial buses.

The company has lodged a planning application for a production site in the Hobart suburb of Lutana, where it will locate a 700 kW electrolyser and other infrastructure.