

Hydrogen to propel truck fleet

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Line Hydrogen, which is considering an initial public offering within the next year, is teaming up with Tasmania's Bonney Energy to build hydrogen refuelling stations in the Apple Isle after getting a cash injection in the recent Labor budget.

The privately owned Brisbane-based company plans to open a plant making hydrogen via electrolysis (splitting hydrogen from oxygen) at George Town near the port of Bell Bay in north-eastern Tasmania early next year. It will source solar energy from Climate Capital's Bell Bay solar farm.

Line, which has previously raised money in crowd-funding campaigns, has received government funding for the first time, getting \$5.5 million in the recent Labor budget for the George Town project as part of an \$89.5 million commonwealth commitment over six years from 2022-23 to add hydrogen refuelling stations to trucking routes.

Brendan James, founder and executive chairman of Line, told *The Australian Financial Review* that the company had struck an agreement with Bonney that would put Tasmania's first hydrogen-powered trucks on the roads next year.

Tasmania had big trucking fleets with "progressive" companies, making it a good place to set up new infrastructure, Mr James said.

Line will use Bonney's network of service stations, fuel distribution and storage capabilities in Tasmania to get hydrogen from the George Town plant into trucks.

It is working with Bonney to figure out where to put the hydrogen refuelling stations, aiming for four or five stations across Tasmania.

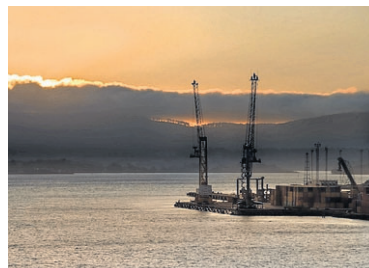
"This is about setting up commercial scale refuelling so that a heavy truck or a car can go in and refuel at the same speed that it would take to refuel a diesel vehicle," Mr James said, adding that the costs of using hydrogen power should be lower than using diesel.

Line is providing its own fleet of trucks by converting about 20 prime movers and 10 smaller rigid trucks to hydrogen power. It is trialling two kinds of hydrogen-powered engines – fuel cell and combustion conversions – and will evaluate their performance over the next 12 months.

Mr James said the costs of producing hydrogen would drop as more trucks switched to hydrogen. "We're starting up at below diesel parity but it will continue to go lower than that as we expand," he said.

Hydrogen is lighter for trucks to carry than battery fuel cells, reducing their weight. Hydrogen-powered trucks can also travel longer distances than battery-powered trucks (because they don't need to recharge), and refuelling with hydrogen is faster than recharging batteries, Mr James said.

Line also signed a deal with Blue Cap Mining in October to provide green hydrogen to power vehicles and mining equipment on the company's Lord Byron gold mine in Western Australia. Blue Cap claims the project will be the first carbon-neutral mine in Australia.



Line Hydrogen will produce hydrogen near Tasmania's Bell Bay port.