

Electrifying first for Waiheke drivers

Waiheke’s electric ambitions continue to gain momentum with Vector announcing the installation of 80 electric vehicles smart chargers in homes across the island, along with 10 public EV chargers and one mobile charger.

“We are really pleased to have received this grant from Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA),” says Vector’s product, technology and innovation general manager Cristiano Marantes.

“The funding will support us to put in place the technology needed to support Waiheke’s goal of becoming the world’s first fully electric island.”

The process around determining charging locations and access will be led and facilitated by the Electric Island Waiheke Trust, which is formally endorsed by the Waiheke Local Board. The group is currently running a scoping process to understand specific requirements to make those decisions. They will also determine where the public chargers will be located.

There are several options available for the mobile charger, including a roadside

assistance-type service and a portable charger on wheels that could be used without an allocated parking space. These technologies are available overseas, but this would be the first implementation in New Zealand according to Vector.

Auckland Mayor Phil Goff says the initiative will make owning or using electric vehicles on Waiheke more viable for more people, including visitors from the mainland and will increase the resilience of the network as adoption increases.

According to the NZTA, there are currently 101 registered electric vehicles on Waiheke, although Vern believes this number is likely to be higher as some are registered off-island.

“Our own Nissan Leaf is registered off-island as part of our company fleet. It is thought that the true number of EVs based on Waiheke is well over 100.”

Light vehicles are responsible for 13 percent of New Zealand’s total greenhouse gas emissions, making the EV sector “the biggest opportunity to reduce energy-related emissions,” according to EECA’s chief executive Andrew Caseley.

“New Zealand’s light vehicle imports are among the most emissions-intensive and least fuel-efficient in the OECD, as most other countries already have efficiency standards.

“The lowest-emission vehicles available are EVs, but so far only 0.4 percent of the vehicle fleet is electric, with about 14,500 EVs currently registered in New Zealand.”

With petrol prices at \$2.65 per litre this week, it’s not surprising that Waiheke’s EV uptake is snowballing.

“The board backed local advocacy group Electric Island to lead on achieving the infrastructure the island needs for EVs,” says chairperson Cath Handley.

Ms Handley is aiming to bring AT, Vector and Electric Island together to ensure charging ports are available in public areas on public land such as outside the Waiheke Sustainability Centre on Mako Street.

“The results of this collaboration are breathtaking! This is such great news for our community.” • Sophie Boladeras

“The fact that [Vector] sees Waiheke as a test location for not only these chargers but many things that will come out in the future is brilliant.”

- Vern Whitehead



“We anticipate that installation of the first residential charger will occur before the end of the year, with the others consecutively rolled out in 2020,” says Vector communications specialist Rachel Reynolds.

“We were over the moon to hear this is going ahead,” says Vern Whitehead of Electric Island Waiheke and publisher of EVtalk magazine.

“The fact that they see Waiheke as a test location for not only these chargers but many things that will come out in the future is brilliant.

“The initiative will also be the first stage in bringing smart charging to homes on Waiheke, which will defer any need to upgrade the cable supplying power. It also brings closer Electric Island Waiheke’s aim of having an electric-only community - possibly the first residential island in the world to do so - by 2030.”



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Ph 372 1115 or 021 811 451
aaron@landdevelopers.org.nz



P 09 372 2954
F @daisychainfloristwaiheke
E flowers@daisychainfloristwaiheke.com
W www.daisychainfloristwaiheke.com
8a Miami Avenue, Surfdale, Waiheke Island

Daphne Mitten NZILA Landscape architect

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0274 084 116

372 9272
daphnemitten@icloud.com