Watt a leap forward for the automotive industry

By Gabriella Payne

We may not have hoverboards yet, but the future sure is looking bright for the Australian automotive industry after Injectronics announced the launch of it's latest project recently - the nation's first ever scalable hybrid battery remanufacturing exchange program.

This innovative new program is set to create a "circular economy", by repairing and reusing hybrid-electric vehicle batteries across Australia, which are currently seen as single use parts that often end up in landfill and cost car owners thousands of dollars to replace.

In 2021, it is predicted that over 16,000 hybrid batteries will need to be replaced in cars across the country, with that number expected to rise to more than 23,000 in the year 2024, as more and more people turn to hybrid-electric vehicles.

Not only will consumers and the economy benefit from this game-changing battery remanufacturing program, which is set to be made accessible and implemented around the country, but the environment will also reap the rewards, as toxic batteries are fixed rather than thrown away.

Realising the potential of this new program, the Federal Government have awarded Injectronics a $103,000 grant to support the hybrid battery remanufacturing program, as part of it's own Automotive Innovation Lab Access Grants program - a key element of the $100 million Advanced Manufacturing Fund.

Injectronics, a part of Innovative Mechatronics Group (IM Group), has been a leading supplier of new and remanufactured automotive electronic parts for almost 40 years now and are a reputable organisation in the automotive industry.



Senator David Van and Executive General Manager of IM Group, Gino Ricciuti overlooking a hybrid battery. 228136 Pictures: GARY SISSONS

Gino Ricciuti, the executive general manager of IM Group, addressed the press at the company's Hallam innovation hub on Wednesday 10 February, and said it was an "exciting" and "special day" for one and all.

"We are extremely excited to announce Injectronics' hybrid battery remanufacturing exchange program," Mr Ricciuti said.

"This is the first of its type in Australia, the country's only scalable battery replacement initiative, and one that has Federal Government support.

A project of this type creates a circular economy, putting to an end the single use nature of hybrid batteries, is environmentally friendly in its approach and will save hybrid vehicle owners a considerable sum when their battery fails to work as expected," he said.

Senator David Van was in attendance at the launch and congratulated Mr Ricciuti and the entire Injectronics team for their ingenuity and "incredible initiative", stating that they were worthy recipients of the Government's funding program and that this project "is about as exciting as it gets".

"This is such a smart solution, one you would think is long overdue and should have been thought of before, so I'm amazed this doesn't exist in places already," Senator Van said.

"To hear that a Victorian company is going to be the first to market on this is absolutely the greatest thing.

The innovation and the technology that goes behind these things - it needs some help and it deserves to be supported by the Government at all levels," he said.

Senator Van said that "the Morrison Government believes that technology is the solution to fixing our emissions problem" and by investing in companies such as Injectronics, Australia was well on the road to a greener, more sustainable future.

As well as promoting the positive environmental impacts of this new project, Senator Van applauded Injectronics for persevering through the pandemic and for the new jobs that this project would create across the country.

"As businesses are still reeling from the impacts of Covid, there hasn't been a more critical time than now to invest," he said.

"These grants will help the businesses get their products to market sooner, which will grow the economy and create new Australian jobs."

Mr Ricciuti anticipated that this new project would "increase our employment by 25 percent" over the next 18 months, with potential for even more job prospects in the future if hybrid and electric car popularity continued to grow.

While other people have launched similar schemes before, Mr Ricciuti said that the scale of this project set Injectronics apart from other companies.

"There are some very innovative people already out there providing a second-life of a battery. The difference is you take your vehicle to them, they will manipulate it as much as they can, and it's still a good service - but they're very scarce, there's probably only two in Victoria," he said.

"This program is about expanding and creating opportunity for the whole aftermarket, for the thousands of automotive repairers out there."



Gino Ricciuti, MP Julian Hill and Senator David Van are excited to see the remanufacturing program begin. 228136

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IM = INNOVATIVE MECHATRONICS