



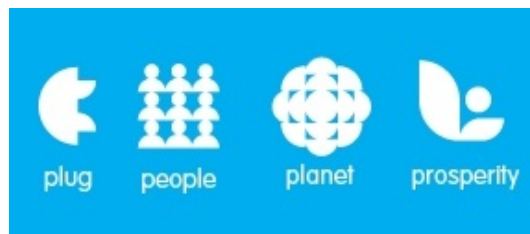
Better Place Australia Appoints Evan Thornley As CEO

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on January 21, 2009 - 8:00am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Alternative energy](#)

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Shai Agassi's "[Better Place](#)" (also discussed at [TOD ANZ](#)) organisation announced it was setting up in Australia last year and is back in the news after signing up ex-Looksmart founder and, more recently, Victorian Labor MP [Evan Thornley as the CEO](#).



In the corporate [press release](#) Evan noted he was delighted to contribute to the company's mission of ending oil dependence.

"I'm delighted to be joining Better Place Australia to continue the company's mission of ending oil dependence," said Thornley. "This is a significant global undertaking that will fundamentally change the lives of Australians and produce large scale environmental and economic benefits."

"This is a significant national project that will demonstrate the goals of environmental gain and economic benefit are not in conflict, as well as deliver a reliable and affordable electric vehicle to motorists."

In October 2008, Better Place announced agreements with AGL Energy and Macquarie Capital Group to raise an initial funding round of \$1 billion (AUD) and begin deploying an electric vehicle network in Australia. Macquarie will raise the capital for network deployment, and AGL will provide electricity from renewable sources to power the electric vehicles as well as network and grid expertise.

Better Place has continued announcing regions that are buying into the electric vehicle vision, with [San Francisco](#), [Hawaii](#), [Ontario](#) and [Japan](#) getting on board in recent months.

Shai Agassi had an [interview with the LA Times](#) recently in which he made some interesting points about what the Obama administration will need to do to escape the vicious circle of the oil price <-> oil demand feedback loop :

Q: Aren't you relying on a lot of government support?

A: What we're trying to say is that we don't need government assistance. It's the government that needs assistance. The government cannot afford not to go off oil. Every time the price of oil goes up, the trade deficit goes north of \$1 trillion. Every time the economy starts picking up, it will crash because the price of oil will go up again. So the only way to get the economy picking up is to get off oil.

Q: President-elect Barack Obama has called for a \$7,000-per-car tax credit for plug-in vehicles. Does that raise your hopes for his support?

A: You cannot put electric cars on the road without the infrastructure, just as you can't drive cars without gas stations. President-elect Obama has to say that every parking spot in America [needs] to have electric power. . . .

There's no conduit to put [electricity] into cars. We're still [eating off a] menu with one item, and it comes through gas stations fed through pipes and trucks. Until we change that, we're stuck with the biggest monopoly on Earth: 12 countries [of OPEC].

That's our moonshot: not to find another planet but to save the one we've got. This is the battle for the next century.

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