



# SolarTuk Expedition

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**MEDIA RELEASE – for immediate release**

## **SolarTuk Expedition Embarks on Epic Adventure to Promote Sustainable Transport**

The humble tuk tuk, also known as an auto-rickshaw, is used by millions of people around the world for their daily commute. They're loud, dirty, small and fun. But what they're not known for is being part of a sustainable transport future, or as the vehicle of choice for a long-distance expedition.

Until now.

This year, a team of young Australians has re-engineered a Thai-made tuk-tuk into a three-wheeled, solar-powered, long-range electric vehicle as part of an epic project to promote sustainable transport and a low-carbon future.

Kicking off from Melbourne on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November, our team will drive this unlikely green vehicle up the length of Australia to Cairns on a world-first journey over three weeks. Our mission is to engage and inspire communities, businesses and individuals to take action for positive change and accelerate the move towards a sustainable, electric and low-carbon future.

Along our journey, we will travel through the major cities of Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and Townsville, as well through the Australian outback, along stunning seaside road, through mountain forests, and more. On the way we will meet with schools, politicians, innovators, educators, media and the wider community to share how transport can be more sustainable.

We have sourced our vehicle from the Tuk Tuk Factory - a company manufacturing vehicles to Australia's design codes from their factory in Bangkok, Thailand. Our team of engineers, education professionals and RMIT students has converted the vehicle to run on solar power, taking out the RMIT student engineering *Best Engineering Project 2018* at Engenius in the process. Our vehicle is now fitted with photovoltaic solar panels, lithium-ion batteries, and has been upgraded to handle Australian conditions. Licenced to carry four adults plus the driver, we have an average maximum range of ~ 300 km per charge!

The SolarTuk Expedition is the brainchild of *Westpac Social Change Fellow* Julian O'Shea and Arup renewable energy engineer Jack Clarke as a way to highlight the impact of GHG emissions from transport, a sector that has largely flown under the radar in Australian media and politics compared to electricity. But as the third largest (and growing) source of emissions in Australia, we can't afford to ignore it any longer. Transitioning to an electric transport system powered by renewable energy sources is a critical part of Australia reducing its greenhouse gas emissions, and we hope the SolarTuk Expedition will help inspire our businesses, communities and government to start making the change.

The SolarTuk Expedition will take place across Australia over three weeks, commencing on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November in Melbourne and arriving in Cairns on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. We are now actively seeking community projects, schools, councils and businesses to visit and engage with along the way and invite anyone interested to visit the SolarTuk website for details on our schedule and how to get in touch. The trip's itinerary already includes visits to solar farms, permaculture projects, an electric vehicle motorcade, a visit to Parliament house, workshops with primary and high-school students, a journey to the top of Australia and lots of cups of tea with the everyday people doing inspiring things in the name of sustainable development. We encourage anyone along the route to reach out with idea, event or contact and we'll do our best to make build it into the Expedition.

With engagement and collaboration at its core, the SolarTuk Expedition offers a unique opportunity to be involved with an exciting, memorable and attention-grabbing sustainability initiative, helping us spread the idea of an electric-powered, low carbon future as far as we can.

Is it possible? Can we make it? We don't know for sure - but it'll be a heck of a ride trying to find out.

For more information and to follow the Expedition, visit:

[www.solartuk.org](http://www.solartuk.org)

[www.facebook.com/solartukexpedition/](https://www.facebook.com/solartukexpedition/)

[www.instagram.com/solartukexpedition/](https://www.instagram.com/solartukexpedition/)

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