

Almost 5,000 km across Australia – Pioneering trip by the Wind Explorer

- German extreme sportsmen achieve three records
- First virtually emissions-free trip across a continent in a wind-powered/electric vehicle
- Electricity cost for the entire trip was only €10
- Pioneering spirit and German high-technology make a dream come true
- Success driven by lithium-ion batteries and lightweight construction

Sydney/Essen. "We're incredibly proud. A dream has come true," commented German extreme sportsmen Dirk Gion and Stefan Simmerer yesterday at the end of their two-and-a-half week pioneering trip across Australia. The two piloted the Wind Explorer, a lightweight electric vehicle, from Albany on the Indian Ocean to Sydney in 17 days and set three new records during their roughly 4,900 km trip: The first time a continent had been crossed by a vehicle powered by wind and lithium-ion batteries, the longest overall distance covered by an exclusively wind-powered land vehicle, and the longest distance covered in 36 hours. "What's more it was resource-efficient and had virtually no impact on the climate," said Simmerer. The Wind Explorer was powered by lithium-ion batteries, recharged by a portable wind turbine whenever wind conditions permitted. The 200 kg vehicle therefore only notched up electricity costs of around €10 for the almost 5000 km trip.

Gion and Simmerer came up with the idea for this record-breaking trip last summer. Just weeks later they found the necessary partners in German industry, led by Essen-based Evonik Industries AG. This industrial company provided the materials for the lightweight bodywork and the high-performance lithium-ion batteries. The battery pack with power of 8 kWh enabled the Wind Explorer to run for about 400 km in demanding temperatures of 60° C. Dr. Klaus Engel, Chairman of Evonik's Executive Board, congratulated the team: "This was a tremendous achievement by Dirk Gion and Stefan Simmerer. It shows what pioneering spirit and German high-technology are capable of."

"The Wind Explorer is a vehicle that seems to come from the future. But it is already reality," said Gion. The special feature of the Wind Explorer is that it is an electric vehicle with its own mobile power supply. When the battery is empty, the pilots can

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recharge them via a portable wind turbine, if wind conditions allow, or via the conventional power network. It takes half an hour to erect the turbine and six-meter high telescopic mast made of bamboo. In addition to wind power, the Wind Explorer can be driven by kites. In this way, the lightweight vehicle reached speeds of around 80 kph as it crossed the states of Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

The pilots left Perth on January 21, 2011. Having carried out various tests during the first 500 km, the real trip started in Albany on January 26, 2011. For the first 800 km to Nullarbor Plain the Wind Explorer was driven entirely by electric power. Strong winds then enabled the pilots to use the kites. Finally, on January 30, 2011, the Wind Explorer achieved its best daily performance, covering 493 km. "It's great to see how lightweight construction and lithium-ion technology can provide a response to the problem of global warming," said Simmerer.

The record trip from Albany to Sydney was not the first feat by Gion and Simmerer. Gion made headlines in 2004/2005 with the "Earthflyer" kiteboard project in Australia and in 2006 as a water-skier towed by the "MS-Deutschland" cruise liner. In 1997 Simmerer was the first person to cross Chang Tang, the Tibetan high plateau, and climb Zangser Kangri (6,551 meters). He has since led expeditions in South America, Africa and Kamchatka.

Pioneering projects like the Wind Explorer are a good opportunity for German industrial companies to test their technology under extreme conditions and extend their technical edge. Competition is particularly tough in the automotive sector, which is increasingly turning its attention to electric and hybrid vehicles. New lightweight materials such as ROHACELL®, which was used in the Wind Explorer, and smart tire technologies that reduce rolling resistance are in great demand. However, the race for tomorrow's technology to power electric vehicles will be won principally by expertise in batteries. "Through our subsidiary Li-Tec we aim to become the European market leader in battery cells," said Dr. Engel, Chairman of Evonik's Executive Board.

About Evonik

Evonik Industries is the creative industrial group from Germany. In our core business of specialty chemicals, we are a global leader. In addition, Evonik is an expert in power generation from hard coal and renewable energies, and one of the largest private residential real estate companies in Germany. Our company's performance is shaped by creativity, specialization, continuous self-renewal, and reliability.

Evonik is active in over 100 countries around the world. In its fiscal year 2009 about 39,000 employees generated sales of about €13.1 billion and an operating profit (EBITDA) of about €2.0 billion.

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