



MEDIA RELEASE

2 October 2008

Deakin Green Car Showcased in Ford Global Challenge Aussie Design 'T-Squared' Unveiled at Detroit

In a spectacular win against international competitors, Deakin University's answer to the Ford Global Challenge to design a Model-T for the 21st Century has been chosen as one of two designs showcased by Ford in Detroit last night. The vehicle, designed by a team led by Deakin Engineering students, is labelled 'T²' (T-Squared).

T² was described by Ford as "pushing the boundaries and delivering an alternative transportation concept for tomorrow." The win earned Deakin's School of Engineering and Information Technology \$30,000 (US\$25,000) in scholarship funds from Ford.

Deakin University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sally Walker, congratulated the Deakin students and said that the win demonstrated how Deakin's research is both innovative and relevant to the real world. "This is a fantastic example of the capabilities and talents of Deakin's students and the staff who support them; their collaborative efforts, under deadline pressure, produced a wonderful outcome that may influence the design of future vehicles. Our team more than met the Ford challenge to create an innovative vehicle concept for the future," she said.

Dr Bernard Rolfe, the Deakin Project Leader, said that T²'s use of the latest research and technology has re-defined the idea of an inexpensive, innovative and sustainable car. "Our design, developed by a cross-disciplinary team effort from across the University, has 'plenty of bang for the buck'. As well, T² is a very green machine," Dr Rolfe said. Ford called the design "simple, lightweight, practical, compelling and low cost."

Deakin University's T² runs on compressed air (with some compressed natural gas support for longer distance travel). It incorporates safety proven lightweight materials in which Deakin is an acknowledged world leader. With three wheels, it can turn 360° on itself, making inner city parking easy. The simplicity of the design means that it can be assembled at accredited Ford dealers, which was the original business model used by Ford Australia back in the early 1920s when the Model T was first launched in Australia. The key design points include:

- High torque compressed air wheel hub motors to reduce vehicle emissions to zero, depending on the distance option chosen
- Differential wheel speeds to steer the car via hub motors – so the car doesn't need a conventional gearbox, driveline and steering rack-pinion systems
- Utilizing the wheel hub motor concept with only three wheels to increase agility and reduce costs and weight
- Use of Ultra High Strength Steels and novel manufacturing methods to increase strength, while reducing costs and weight
- A flexible, easily adaptable human-machine interface to keep the vehicle competitive for at least a decade of advances in software technology

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Dr Rolfe said that there were many infrastructure related advantages of using compressed air. "Compressed air requires less change to current infrastructure than other alternate sources," he said. "For example, hydrogen would require a large change to petrol stations and existing infrastructure to accommodate this new power source."

Deakin University was the only Australian university and one of only six worldwide invited to participate in the Challenge, part of the celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the fabled Model T, the car that changed the 20th Century. In Australia the Model T was launched in 1927 and was manufactured in Geelong. The new Model T design aims to be universally affordable and could, if produced, retail for under A\$9,000. Ford has registered several patents around the concept vehicles.

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Note: The other design showcased in Detroit was from Aachen University of Cologne, Germany.

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