

Tesla rival BYD to expand to the Eastern Cape

On 1 December, Chinese EV automaker BYD (Build Your Dreams) will expand its footprint in South Africa to the Eastern Cape. BYD [launched locally in June this year](#).



BYD Atto 3 | image supplied



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The manufacturer is said to be the world's biggest manufacturer of EVs, surpassing one million sales last year. It enjoys a presence in 70 countries and 400 cities globally.

These vehicles will be sold by the Kelston Motor Group, starting at premises off Buffelsfontein Road in Gqeberha before branching out to other parts of the province.

The agreement was concluded after a series of physical and online meetings between the directors of the two firms in recent months.

The vehicles are capable of powering portions of the home thanks to vehicle-to-load (VTOL) charging.

Kelston has experience in selling hybrids from the likes of Toyota and Haval but BYD is its first foray into all-EV models.

Group operations director Peter McNaughton said it was clear that new-energy vehicles were part of the future of the automotive sector and the business aimed to be at the forefront of this evolution.

However, he said, being the first in this sector in the region meant that the company would have to make a substantial investment in guiding the public in understanding the benefits of EVs.

Atto 3

The first model to be offered by Kelston is the Atto 3 crossover, which is powered by BYD's Blade Battery.

The cell offers a driving range of 340 to 420km per charge, which can power up from 30 to 80% in 40 minutes.

It also offers a minimum of 4,000 charging cycles, which BYD says equates to around 60 years of usage.

The crossover's external aesthetics are noted for the "dragon eyes" LED head and taillights, with the hatchback styling and power liftgate configuration giving the vehicle a distinctive sporty feel.



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The interior features a 12.8-inch rotating touchscreen infotainment system while seating material offers motorists a sense of modern luxury.

The National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa has also recommended incentives of up to R80,000 for EVs like the Atto 3.

Longer range vehicles were in the pipeline, said McNaughton, who added that Kelston's BYD operations would include a workshop and aftersales support.

"It's a feather in our cap that BYD reached out to offer its vehicles to the province's motoring public," McNaughton said.

"We are incredibly excited about the future now that BYD is in the province."

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