

On Friday 9th December 2022 ESI Africa interviewed Iain Banner, Chairman and Co-founder of e-Movement Pty Ltd. on the upcoming E-Fest, showcasing e-mobility through the "fastest sustainable motoring event in the world". They discussed the economic benefits of bringing the most environmentally conscious to the mother city and where the best vantage points are to watch all action. See a transcription of the interview below:

ESI Africa: Hello Ian Banner. Welcome to this ESI Africa podcast.

Iain Banner: Thank you for having me on.

ESI: So, let's start with something simple. You are chairman of Race promoter e Movement. What is the link between e movement and the Africa Green Economy Summit?

IB: Well, that's a fabulous question to start with. I'm going to use an analogy to answer that question. 22 years ago, I worked with a gentleman who had an idea to develop an Oscars of world sport and he asked me what I thought and I said to him, I think on its own it won't work. It'll be a single stake in the ground and it'll fall over. However, I concluded after thinking about it for some time, if we have purpose at the centre of what we do, which has manifested into something which today is called the L Sport for Good Foundation. And if we have credibility in the form of an academy of legendary sportsmen and women, then we stand a chance because we have a tripod. That analogy, well LS 22 years later, is a big organization, an impactful organization. We've helped about six and a half million children around the world and we support some 300 projects around the globe, including 35 in South Africa.

In fact, as of yesterday's trustees meeting, it'll be 37 in South Africa. Why do I mention that? Well, fast forward to where we are today, when my partners and I had the chance to look at securing the race Formula E, what I had in my mind was that the race on its own would be that single stake. Very impressive and no doubt successful in itself. But we don't own it. We are promoters promoting a franchise essentially of someone else. We needed to have purpose at the centre of what we are doing. It took two years frankly to conclude what that purpose exactly would be. But these things, good things take time. I'd like to think this is a very good thing because it's a movement for good and it is called Go Green Africa and Go Green Africa is a 365 day year program we have of manifesto, et cetera. We'll be developing that. But we are currently signing up founding partners including our two biggest polluters being Eski and Sassel and others to come and join us to be a part of a movement for good that has a series of activities that showcase what going green is all about. And one of those activities is ages that you asked about. So, it's a long-winded answer to your question, but hopefully it gives your listeners some perspective.

ESI: Now that that does make sense actually. And then the Africa Green Energy Summit happens around the time that the actual race will be taking place.

IB: That is right. We've got in fact three large activations. One is an electric vehicle road trip, which is 10 days before the race, which will see 20 odd electric vehicles, 43 journalists traveling through the country, carrying a green, representing electrical energy, green energy I should say. And that's much like the Olympic torch relay. And

they will travel to, you know, megawatt Park and Berg and other places, impact areas to have notary the board, sign up to the manifesto of Go Green Africa. They will also pick up at each town of township, a city, a hero, and that hero will travel in the lead vehicle carrying the green torch to bring media attention to what we're doing. And over a period of 10 days, we see that creating a lot of interest in our movement. Go Green Africa and ultimately in the race two.

ESI: The other two activities are the E Fest Electric and electric is a festival of all thing's OEMs, cars, one wheeler, scooters, bikes, motorbikes, et cetera that are on display. And then we have Africa's Green Economy summit, which is happening at Century City for two days, which is a serious, I'd like to say workshop rather than talk shop where we have some very powerful participants joining to deliberate on where we are at in our economic transition. And focusing on immobility on green hydrogen and on off grid real estate. So that gives you some perspective on what ages is about. And then when that's all said and done, we roll into the race, which will be dynamite.

ESI: I'm excited about Formula E coming to Cape Town, but you could have chosen any place to actually put it. Why Cape Town?

IB: I think Cape Town answered that question for you. Not me. I mean there's a reason Cape Town is voted by big international organizations, journals, et cetera, to be number 1, 2, 3 most beautiful city in the world. It is naturally our most beautiful city in our country. And if you're going to try and send television pictures to the world, where would you choose to send them from? Table Mountain, Robb Island, the beautiful city of Cape Town, the stadium, the precinct to run the stadium where the track is now prepared frankly answers that question without any difficulty.

ESI: Now Formula e runs on street tracks and the track layout is designed for the cars. And do you think the originally proposed track design is what will be used? Basically, I just want you to describe the route that the cars will be taken.

IB: Oh, no problem. So, the first thing was to, as you say, to look at existing city roads and see how those could be updated and importantly, the city who's been an integral part of what we are doing, they're our partners and without them this could not happen. I'd like to put a shout out for JP Smith and Leonard Nora de Susan in particular for the incredible support. But it's part of an upgrade, a 2030 upgrade in 2010. This precinct, which is a sporting precinct around the stadium, was developed or enhanced for the World Cup Soccer. This is now part of a renewal, so what's going to happen 360 days of the year is that the, the new track is going to be in fact two lanes for traffic of cars and a lane for joggers and a lane for cyclists because there's extra width now. So that's a benefit for throughout the year for visitors to Cape Town, Cape Townians, et cetera. because loads of people are active in that precinct every day. So, the track works are 95% complete, it looks amazing. We start on Flay Road, that's the start and that's adjacent to the athletic stadium. We drive out onto Helen Suzman inbound. So, the opposite side, we turn left running all the way to the circle, the Giovanni Circle, for your listeners inside that circle down Ranger Bay Boulevard, past the big stadium Akane, two-thirds of the way down, a very impactful chicane down to the corner, which is onto then left Beach Road. And then a phenomenal round run down turn eight, turn nine, turn 10, which we'll see the cars really reaching very high speeds and I'll talk to that for in a minute. And then once you can see Robin Island and you can see the ocean et cetera, you get to Fritz Sonenberg, which is the where you turn left off Viro to go to the golf club, the Metropolitan, and you turn left up, Fritz Sonenberg back towards the stadium and then right into Flair Road to complete your lap. If you continue straight on Fritz

Sonenberg, you get taken to the pits because the pits are between Fritz Sonenberg and running onto GRA Bay Boulevard. So that's a track, it's magnificent, it is judged by fear to be the fastest, if not certainly one of the top two or three fastest circuits on their global calendar. And that's exciting because these cars are now running faster than Formula One cars from north to 200 kilometres an hour and 322 cases. The limitation that's put on them, they could go much faster, but it would burn up too much battery power. So, this is proper racing. It's no longer the days of old. We had two cars and limited battery power still got limited battery power because of the speed and the draw. But generation three cars are launching for the first time in the first race in Mexico City in January.

ESI: Aha, okay we're going to come to generation three cars in a second, but I was just wondering, since you're talking about this idea that it is going to be the fastest track, what's the best vantage points though for spectators to be watching the race then? Because you're talking about quite a fast space and I would think that there are going to be spaces where you should be able to stand and watch and not get too close and still allow them to race properly. But where, where would people be able to see?

IB: So, I think it's important for your listeners to know that this is a full day's activity set of activities. We've got the electric E Fest electric Festival, which will be great to visit. We have the alliance's fan villages, which are filled with activities and activations for people to enjoy.

And then we have the qualifications and the qualities in formula e are really cool. It's a shootout where nobody, you have the fastest car against the slowest car, just running five seconds behind each other about to see who could run the fastest lap and whoever does, qualifies for the next and the next and the next. So, there's this knockout to La Vinci, you have a quarter semi and finals to get to the full line up. So, throughout the day you've got qualifications going on, which are most interesting to watch. Terms of how do you watch best? Fair Road, they are grandstand seats 9,700 to be exact that are on Fair Road, which gives you a vision of the start and the finish of the race and of course everything in between terrific view vantage points. There are grandstands on Helen Suzman, which also provide wonderful vantage points. And there are grandstands in hospitality viewing area down Grava Boulevard on the stadium side and then finally, in terms of grandstands, we've got all the way along Beach Road, a grandstand linked to hospitality facility at C P U T that is pretty isolated, but it's going to be magnificent viewing and in fact we're seen people taking that up so you can walk around, et cetera.

There's obviously a red line, which is the external perimeter of our, let's call it infield or in race zone but you can walk within that in dedicated areas and or outside of it, et cetera to access different points. Finally, the track which is at Green Point, the Green Point a track, which is opposite the stadium on the town side is a fan zone as well. It's an alliance fan zone that's a very reasonable 350-rand ticket, limited viewing of live racing. You get some viewing of it, but big screens, et cetera, you'll feel the vibe. So, we've tried to make it accessible. The high-end tickets we sold are very expensive, but this exercise is a very expensive exercise to put out. Just having to build every single grandstand seat and have them manufactured is an expensive exercise. So, we think we are offering South Africans an amazing opportunity to come and experience the fastest sustainable motoring event in the world.

ESI: So other than the joy of watching an open wheeled street circuit racing Cape Town, how does presenting formula e in Cape Town benefit the city and the people of the city?

IB: Well, just one small number, 4,907 people is the average number of people that travel with the Formula E ecosystem. You know, we bid to secure the race successfully, but I'm beginning to understand just how big this is. It's bigger than even I realized that we've got lots of insights. It's a big deal. This, this is a serious global initiative and very good for the city that we have a very large CapEx commitment going into 7.8 kilometres of barriers that are being built at Cape Concrete. We have fencing also for that distance, 7.8 kilometres of fencing that Quebeca are constructing in Black River for us. We have all the tech pro, equipment that comes on and is inside the track. We've got all the manufacturing of grandstand because they weren't adequate grandstand. We have all the infrastructure that's got to be installed, marquees, scaffolding, power supply masses, amount of power required so it goes on and on. This is going to have a very big economic impact on our country and in in the Cape in particular.

ESI: So, seeing you're trying really hard to position Formula E as an environmentally friendly sport, how carbon neutral is it really to be flying the team to all corners of the world? Do you have any idea how Formula E deals with its carbon footprint?

IB: Yeah, sure. Firstly, in the production of every element of what it does, there's a very strong sustainability consideration led by Julia Paley, who's the director of sustainability for Formula E. And they've pioneered some fantastic work in this area to be a global series. You can't just race in one place every day or every week. You have to travel and at this stage travel is by airplanes and moving stuff around, but there's offsets obviously carbon credits is a big part of achieving your ISO standards as well as your carbon neutrality, which they've been able to do. And it's the first race of its kind and its mission is to promote sustainability and going green and hence us creating Go Green Africa to take others with us on this journey. And that's our next and certainly my next major push over the next decade.

ESI: So, let's get back to the cars, back when Formula E first started, the first cars could manage about half a race and the driver would actually switch between two cars. And now with generation three coming in Mexico, you say they can actually complete a full race on in one go.

So, they're lighter, they're faster, they've got better battery power. Let's talk about some of the tech advances, like firstly, how much of a difference is there between version one and version three and do you think there's going to be a version four anytime soon?

IB: Version four's already starting the spec for the cars in discussion right now. Most certainly. And I think it started in the 2014 series and so we've had, this is in fact going into the ninth season, there's been eight seasons to date. So, you've already had, you know, two sets of four years of the one and two running. So obviously the whole battery performance is a significant part of the improvements that are being made. I'm a little bit on soft ground. I think it switched to McLaren, the battery supply, the chassis are all built by crowd called Spark in Austria and everybody asks, oh, why didn't you get hold of Elon Musk and get Tesla involved, et cetera. The answer is quite simple. Tesla is much bigger than all of us put together. He's doing his own thing, when we've got something to add, we'll be in touch with him, but right now the series runs with a common chassis as well as a common battery pack. It's everything on top of that that the manufacturers, the original equipment manufacturers can add.

And that is the development work that carries from racing into, you know, into everyday vehicles, into production vehicles. So that's the reason that apart from the

brand identity, et cetera, but that's the reason the manufacturers are involved. And the same thing used to happen with Formula One and still does happen. A lot of technological seat belts, you know, fuel supply, all sorts of things came from came from Formula One world

ESI: So, do you know what happened to version one, version two of the car? Since you know, sustainability is important, were they recycled or reclaimed in any way? Were they reused? Are they being used for practice?

IB: Very good question that I cannot answer. I would need to ask, I wasn't involved in the Gen one and Gen two cars, but we certainly can look into that.

ESI: Actually, would be quite curious. It could be something cool to actually just display or talk about if it does move about with them. Yes, of course. So, let's check about that and we'll get back to it. Sure. And then do you think, okay, I know this is a bit left field, but you know, you're a fan. Maybe you could actually answer this. Do you think the sector will ever introduce a snow event? Because obviously Formula E is about pushing the limit of the cars and the cars batteries and Cape Town will be hot in Feb, but there doesn't quite count as extreme temperature when there's racing in Saudi Arabia and Jakarta, I mean that is like out there, but what they need is a snow event. I want to see how the batteries, you know, manage?

IB: I think that's something for Formula E Extreme, you know, that's the right question to ask when they take the cars down to the Antarctica, which is planned.

ESI: Okay.

IB: So, Formula E Extreme is all about putting these cars for extreme conditions and that's growing exponentially as well. Alejandro was the founder really of Formula E and he also founded Formula E Extreme and is getting a lot of traction with that.

ESI: Okay. So now.

IB: US Hamilton's team just won by the way this season and so he's excited about that.

ESI: So now for you personally, what part of the race are you looking forward to the most?

IB: I'm looking forward most to seeing the winning car crossing the finish line because that means our job will be done and well, it won't all be done, but we'll have delivered the race and we'll have had an outcome and Cape Town will be on the world stage and that will be the culmination of three years of hard work from the entire team that's involved. So, I think that'll be a time to celebrate, but until then it's heads down and let's get it, let's get the job completed.

ESI: Well, Ian, thank you so much for joining us and it's been fascinating and I think we will talk again.

IB: With pleasure. I look forward to and I'll answer your questions about Gen One and two when we next talk.

ESI: Thanks.

IB: Super.

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