

## First Batch of Abu Dhabi-built buses rolls off manufacturing line

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Abu Dhabi-based Hafilat Industries has commenced shipping its first export batch of European buses to Australia from their 15,000m<sup>2</sup> factory in ICAD-1, Mussafah, which opened earlier this year.



The shipment to Australia will be part of the company's contract to supply the City of Melbourne with 'Low Floor' city-buses on Mercedes Benz chassis.

This contract reverses the usual paradigm in the UAE of importing vehicles to manufacturing and exporting vehicles. The establishment of Hafilat's factory is a ground-breaking move to establish a local manufacturing industry that serves the region and other global markets, supporting the UAE's move toward economic diversification.

Hafilat Director, Mr Obaid Sughair Khalaf Al Qubaisi, comments: "The UAE is the first country in the GCC to build European quality buses. With the fast-developing nature of the region, and increasing environmental awareness, demand for high quality, safe public transport vehicles is set to grow exponentially. Accordingly, there are major business opportunities for a local bus manufacturer in this region."

Mr Qubaisi continues: "One of the advantages of building buses in the UAE for both the local and export market is the boost it provides to the UAE economy. For example, we are sourcing some of the aluminium needed from a factory in Abu Dhabi. Our policy of 'buying local' wherever possible will support home-grown companies and reduce our carbon footprint in the long-run."

Hafilat's General Manager, Bob McCulloch, adds: "Aluminium buses are stronger and lighter than the current imported steel buses imported and used in the UAE. Aluminium buses do not rust, thus reducing customers' operational and maintenance costs. The technology we are using combined with European best practices as our quality standard, also means that Hafilat-produced buses are amongst the safest and most environmentally-friendly in the world today."

Apart from the City Buses, Hafilat can manufacture a full range of public transport buses, including articulated city, double deck, compressed natural gas (CNG), hybrid (electric) and trolley buses. All of Hafilat's buses enable full access to people with special needs, and can be customised as per client requests.

The order is for a fleet of New Generation Low Floor City buses for use in the City of Melbourne, which feature disabled access, kneeling function, multiplexed electrics, sophisticated video surveillance, electronic signage and full aluminium body. The chassis will be Euro IV Mercedes Benz.