



Press release

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“Our energy storage systems are at the heart of the intelligent household“

Gordon Clements General Manager of VARTA Storage talks about his expectations for 2019, in which markets he expects growth and what the company plans worldwide.

2018 was a year of further growth for VARTA Storage, consolidating the position as market leader in Switzerland, with the element system, and a top 3 position among storage manufacturers across Europe for all storage products. Gordon Clements, General Manager of VARTA Storage GmbH, has been accompanying this growth story since 2016. The company has strong growth plans for this year. In this interview, Gordon Clements talks about current developments and trends in the energy storage market and gives an outlook of upcoming products of VARTA Storage for residential energy storage.

With what prerequisites does VARTA start this year?

Gordon Clements: In the DACH region we grew strongly last year establishing a consolidated market position with an overall share of 15%, but significantly higher in Switzerland. Across Europe we have now trained and qualified around 4,500 installers, who are the most important element in our supply chain. Now is the time to harvest from our network and to continue to grow our sales.

And how does it look internationally? How would you rate 2018?

Gordon Clements: Internationally we focus on Italy, Australia and the UK. In Italy we are growing steadily and are well positioned. We aim for at least 20% market share this year and the initial signs show that we are already well on the way to achieve our goal. Despite being slow to gain traction, the market in the UK is now number three in Europe behind DACH and Italy. Here our exclusive partnership with Waxman Energy, the introduction of our pulse storage system which has grid charging included and the well accepted VARTA brand will facilitate our market growth.

Particularly exciting was our Australian market entry in 2018 with our single-phase VARTA pulse energy storage system. Entering a market which has around 2 million residential solar installations, comparable to Germany, with our AC-coupled system which is ideal for retrofit installations gives VARTA a great opportunity for growth. Proximity to China brings different competitors than we see in Europe but VARTA's commitment to safety, reliability and German quality together with reasonable brand acceptance appeals to the Australian consumer. Advancements in demand response and virtual power plant (VPP) applications in Australia, incentives from state and federal governments and a VARTA team of more than 500 installers will generate success Down Under in 2019.



What is the focus of VARTA Storage in 2019?

Gordon Clements: Product news and updates will centre on Intersolar Europe in Munich in May 2019. Our focus will be on connectivity as we believe strongly that the energy storage system will be at the heart of the future smart home. By developing systems that are as open as possible both in software and hardware we “future proof” our customers: we allow them to add features and functions from 3rd parties as and when their requirements change such as with EV Charging, hot water systems, weather forecasting or as new applications are developed. VARTA has a long history as a battery company. We strongly focus on our strengths and develop a growing partner network to provide additional options as they become available.

What do you expect from 2019, which trends dominate domestically and internationally?

Gordon Clements: Utilities are at the heart of energy provision and we believe this situation will not change in future. Although, in some cases, these are large organisations that take longer to adjust to new market conditions they will continue to play a major role in shaping and revitalizing energy markets. Their relationships with end customers are well established over many years. At VARTA since we believe strongly in cooperation and partnerships we have been working hard to develop strong connections with these established players in every market where we have a presence. Especially in markets like Germany, the UK and Australia, where demand response and VPP programs are taking shape the energy providers will play a very significant role.

2019 will be a strong year of growth in Europe with Germany leading the way but we expect significant upswing in the UK where feed-in tariffs will be withdrawn in April 2019 and Italy where our market position will continue to grow.

In Australia we have already seen significant investments in storage incentives for consumers by the state governments of South Australia and to a lesser extent in Queensland. These will be followed by programs in Victoria and hopefully in New South Wales. The removal of feed-in tariffs in Tasmania will also have a positive impact on demand. VARTA has established a strong distribution market across all these states and together with our training and investment in installer programs will see us well placed for future growth. As in all territories the installer is the key to success and their trust in VARTA will be key to our success.

About VARTA AG

As the parent company of the Group, VARTA AG is active in the business segments Microbatteries and Power & Energy through its operating subsidiaries VARTA Microbattery GmbH and VARTA Storage GmbH. Already an innovation leader in the microbattery sector and a market leader for hearing-aid microbatteries, VARTA Microbattery GmbH also aspires to market leadership for lithium-ion batteries. VARTA Storage GmbH focuses on the design, system integration and assembly of stationary lithium-ion energy storage systems for households and commercial applications as well as customized battery storage systems for OEM customers. The Group’s operating subsidiaries are currently active in more than 75 countries around the world, with five production and assembly facilities in Europe and Asia as well as distribution centers in Asia, Europe and the United States.

Media contact:

VARTA AG
Nicole Selle
Pressesprecherin

Daimlerstraße 1
73479 Ellwangen
Deutschland
Tel.: +49 7961 921-221
E-Mail: nicole.selle@varta-ag.com

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Gordon Clements, General Manager of VARTA Storage GmbH



VARTA pulse