

Queensland
Government

Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich

Our ref: MC44305

Minister for Transport

Your ref: Petitions

12 NOV 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Neil

I refer to a petition number 1296-09 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Ms Fiona Simpson MP, Member for Maroochydore on 3 September 2009, about safety aspects of four wheel drives and excessive amounts of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from the use of four wheel drive vehicles.

The Queensland Government recognises that a combination of measures is needed to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector. This includes strategies to encourage increased public transport patronage, the introduction of low emission vehicle technologies and sustainable urban planning.

In 2008, the Queensland Government commenced a review of Queensland's climate change strategies in response to national and international developments in climate change science and policy. *ClimateQ: toward a greener Queensland* will present the next phase in Queensland's response to the challenge of climate change. This strategy will build on the suite of greenhouse gas reduction measures contained in the ClimateSmart2050 strategy, with reducing emissions from the transport sector being a key element. *ClimateQ* presents investments and policies to ensure Queensland remains at the forefront of the national climate change response. The government announced a \$56 million package for transport and roads initiatives to reduce emissions, including the introduction of low-emission buses and an initiative to 'green' the Queensland taxi fleet. More information about proposed initiatives and transport related strategies is available on the Office of Climate Change website: www.climatechange.qld.gov.au.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has responsibility for leading emission reduction strategies for transport. Departmental officers have met previously with Mr Craft and have noted his emissions-based vehicle registration charging scheme. However, the department feels the current basis for charging vehicle registration fees already favours smaller and more environmentally friendly vehicles.

Registration fee increase is based on the size of a vehicle's engine, using the number of cylinders. This method broadly aligns with environmental objectives of the petition as usually the greater the number of cylinders in an engine, the greater the amount of emissions it generates.

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In January 2008, Queensland restructured its motor vehicle stamp duty arrangements to favour fuel efficient vehicles. Previously, all motor vehicle registration duty was 2%. This rate continues to apply to hybrid and electric vehicles. For all other vehicles, the new scheme has introduced a graduated level of duty based on the vehicle's number of cylinders. The duty for a vehicle with four cylinders or less increased to 3%. For vehicles with five or six cylinders the levy increased to 3.5% and for vehicles with seven cylinders or more the levy increased to 4%.

The department has worked with other environment and transport agencies in Australia to develop recommended measures to improve vehicle fuel efficiency in the Australian vehicle fleet. In July 2009, the Environment and Transport Ministerial councils provided the Vehicle Fuel Efficiency Working Group report (http://www.atcouncil.gov.au/documents/vfe_finalreport_09.aspx) to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) for its consideration.

COAG endorsed a range of measures in the report that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector. However, COAG has deferred any decision on some initiatives including emissions based registration until the current national review into Australia's tax system is completed.

Improving fuel economy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the road transport fleet is a high priority for the Queensland Government. The department's AirCare campaign has a range of information and helpful tips to enable the Queensland motoring public to take a proactive approach in reducing their fuel consumption and transport related emissions. The AirCare website (http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/Home/General_information/Environment/Aircare/) is a useful source of information.

The Queensland Government has set a positive example through its reforms of the government fleet. QFleet, the government's vehicle fleet manager, uses the Commonwealth's Green Vehicle Guide greenhouse ratings as criteria to select government vehicles, which then leads to a greener second hand vehicle fleet. The government fleet is now a mix of hybrid, petrol, diesel and LPG vehicles. QFleet's three year goal of a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from its fleet by 2010 has already been met, 17 months ahead of schedule.


With regard to the petition's call to ban four wheel drives from school pick up zones and intercity/shopping areas, the government does not support restricting the sale or access of any type of approved vehicle, including four wheel drives, but rather encourages owners to choose the safest vehicle within a category for their use. Newer and more modern passenger cars, irrespective of size, are meeting increasingly stringent safety standards. As a result, modern cars (including small cars) provide better protection than previously possible.

Australian Design Rules are national standards for motor vehicle design and construction in Australia and specify minimum standards for vehicle safety and emissions. The Queensland Government is working with other jurisdictions through the Australian Transport Council to consider the benefits of amending *Vehicle Standard (Australian Design Rule 42/00 – General Safety Requirements) 2006* to include a rearward visibility standard. This amended standard would seek to provide greater levels of protection for vulnerable road users around larger vehicles, including four wheel drives. The benefits of rear visibility technologies, such as proximity sensors and reversing cameras, would be considered as part of the review.

Finally, I note that in response to media pressure, the Member for Maroochydore has indicated she does not support the petition she tabled.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized capital letter 'R' that loops around and extends to the right.

RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport