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Cleaner vehicle policy focus is welcome, but details will be crucial

Australia's peak motoring body says it looks forward to understanding the detail underpinning today's emissions-related policy announcements from the Labor Party and encourages both sides of politics to ensure voters understand the costs and benefits associated with their respective policy positions, ahead of next month's election.

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) is a strong supporter of policies that can support the development of a cleaner fleet, via the introduction of a CO2 standard; stronger noxious emissions standards, and improved Fuel Quality standards.

The inter-relationship of these policy issues, as well as the need to sustainably integrate cleaner vehicles into the tax system via transport market reform, are important issues which must be address in a considered and comprehensive manner.

Australia's light vehicle fleet contributes around 10 per cent of Australia's CO2 emissions and the AAA supports the introduction of an emissions standard that recognises the unique needs and preferences of Australian motorists, and the fuel quality available to them.

However, a poorly-designed standard will drive up the cost of cars, the cost of petrol, and significantly curtail the availability of popular vehicle makes and classes, which is why the AAA expects both sides of politics to clearly articulate their vehicle emissions targets and timelines ahead of the election.

Regarding electric vehicles, the AAA welcomes the ALP's acknowledgement of the global technological transition that is occurring and agrees the Federal Government should support the transition towards ultra-low fuel consumption vehicles, given the potential environmental, health and fuel security benefits of a cleaner light vehicle fleet.

The AAA believes that Government support should be aimed at reducing regulatory barriers to uptake and use of low-cost measures to stimulate initial market demand and looks forward to additional details of respective plans from both parties.

The AAA also believes any incentives should support any vehicle technology that delivers ultra-low fuel consumption (below 2 litres per 100km), as a technology-neutral approach is required if industry is to efficiently bring the most affordable or effective technology to our small market.

The AAA hopes all parties will commit to a balanced policy, with full details made public, that curbs emissions without dramatically removing vehicle choice or imposing significant cost burdens on consumers.

Media contact: Jake Smith jake.smith@aaa.asn.au 0403 466 153

The Australian Automobile Association is the nation's peak motoring body, representing Australia's state-based motoring clubs and their 8 million members. The AAA is an apolitical and technology-neutral advocate for federal policy that improves safety, affordability, and mobility in land transport.