

Clearing the Air

Australia first adopted European and the equivalent Japanese and USA exhaust emission standards for Heavy Vehicles back in 1995 when ADR70 introduced Euro I regulations. Over the years we have progressively kept pace with these Euro and other equivalent emission standards, typically two to three years after they were enforced in their country of origin. This process last saw the introduction of Euro V, US-EPA07 and Japan NLT by Australia from the 1st January 2011. One might think that the world has not progressed past Euro V emission standards, as Australia has not moved from this mark for a number of years now, but you would be wrong. Europe introduced Euro VI in 2014 while Japan picked up a slightly more stringent version of the Euro standard (pPNLT) in 2015, while the USA led the world with their Euro VI equivalent regulation, US-EPA10, introduced in 2010. Australia now trails these developed nations by a number of years, with no introduction date in sight.

So, if other nations have moved to legislate cleaner vehicle emissions that provide significant health benefits for their populations, why not Australia? If you believe our government, then the reason is because we largely don't suffer the air pollution and air quality issues that exist in other developed nations. While generally that might be true, there are many, well documented, cases of poor air quality in our major cities that are as a direct result of road vehicle exhaust emissions. Just ask any person who commutes daily through the M5 tunnel in Sydney, or the Burnley Tunnel running under the Yarra in Melbourne, or residents that live near these sites, or other major roads. These areas of concentrated poor air quality are only going to increase in number with record government infrastructure spending building more and longer tunnels in many of our East Coast capital cities.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2017 shows that 25.8% of trucks on our roads have no emission controls, having been built before 1996. Even the cleanest Euro V trucks on our roads are twice as dirty as a world standard Euro VI, or equivalent truck, 0.02g/kWhr of particulate matter (PM) emissions, versus 0.01g/kWhr. When compared to a pre-1996 truck, these Euro VI trucks are a staggering 120 times cleaner, with these over 22 year old trucks typically emitting 1.2g/kWhr of PM pollution.

The Federal Government recently approved a timeline for improved petrol fuel standards that will preclude a move to Euro 6 for Light Vehicles until beyond 2025 (likely 2027) and with the Government's intent to move forward with the introduction of Heavy Vehicle emission standards concurrently with those for Light Vehicles, we are looking at Australia moving to Euro VI more than a decade after Europe and Japan and over 15 years after the USA!

The health of all Australian's is not the only concern we face here. With many important safety features such as Electronic Stability Control, Autonomous Emergency Braking Systems, Lane Departure Warning and Lane Keep Assist Systems being introduced in conjunction with Euro VI and equivalent, emission engines. In many cases it is only possible

to have these advanced features on a Euro VI, or equivalent truck. Another important benefit of Euro VI truck's is a reduction in diesel consumption, typically in the order of 5% to 10%, a significant benefit to a truck operator's bottom line and a net CO2 saving for the environment. So as government delays the introduction of this latest emission standard, it is road safety outcomes for all road users, operator savings and the environment that all suffer in the process.

Due to our government's inaction on this issue the health and safety of each and every Australian suffers, as does the environment and operator profitability. As a nation we should not put up with this procrastination. TIC calls upon Government to split the introduction timing of Light and Heavy Vehicle emission standards and move now to introduce Euro VI and equivalent emission standards for trucks by 2024.

Tony McMullan

CEO, Truck Industry Council