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A Long Time Coming

For those with a long memory, back in late 2015, the then Abbott Coalition government announced, with much fanfare, “a whole of government approach” to the introduction of new vehicle emission standards. For heavy vehicles, that was to be ADR80/04, Euro VI and equivalent alternative standards from Japan and the USA. A year later, in late 2016, a draft Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) was released that outlined the health benefits of moving to cleaner vehicles in Australia. Unfortunately, nothing eventuated from that process.

The Truck Industry Council (TIC) and its members, continued to lobby government for heavy vehicle noxious emission reform, something that would benefit the health of all Australians. Finally in October 2020, the federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications released a revised RIS for public information and comment, restarting the process for the adoption of better exhaust emission standards. In my December 2020 Prime Mover column, I called on the Australian government to act on the recommendations in the RIS and implement ADR80/04. As I explained in that column, the Australian federal government has a mandate to align with international regulations where ever practical. This is part of an overarching global harmonisation strategy that is aimed at enabling trade to be accomplished between our country and international markets, whilst reducing the time, effort and expense of developing Australian specific laws and rules. This is a two-way street, allowing products from Australia to be exported more efficiently and allowing us to import goods that have been developed to international regulations, rather than to Australian specific laws. The end result is the ability for our exporters to play on the world stage and more choice here for Australian consumers. I also pointed out in that 2020 piece, the environmental, health and safety benefits that would be gained from the implementation of ADR80/04.

The very compelling case detailed in that 2020 ADR80/04 RIS was supported by financial analysis by Bureau of Infrastructure and Transport Research Economics in Canberra, showing that there would be a direct benefit, to the health and wellbeing of the Australian community, of \$6,672 million by 2050 if ADR80/04 was adopted by the mid-2020's. The majority of health benefits will accrue in metropolitan areas, where the number of people and average level of exposure to noxious emissions from road vehicles is greater. This would have an indirect benefit to governments by reducing pressure on the public health system. Yet even with these findings, the

coalition government chose not to act on the Department's RIS recommendations and cleaner engine emission regulations were not introduced.

Roll on May 2022 a new Labor government was elected and in just five short months, they did what the previous coalition government did not do in their nine years of office. In mid-October 2022 Transport Minister, the Honourable Catherine King, announced that the Albanese government would mandate ADR80/04, with implementation starting in 2024. This announcement was welcomed by TIC and its members.

The benefits for Australia and our population, do not stop with the cleaner air health outcomes, the implementation of ADR80/04 will bring a reduction in new truck CO₂ emissions of approximately five percent over current aging regulations. This will be the first of many steps that truck and engine manufacturers as well as their customers in the road freight industry will take on our transition to a net zero emission future. These CO₂ reductions also amount to operator fuel savings that will be had with these new cleaner engine technologies. Most importantly, Australia would see the introduction of the latest truck safety technologies from leading global markets. Safety systems that are largely unavailable on our current regulation ADR80/03 trucks, these models being tied to electrical and systems architecture that is over a decade old now.

In 2015 the Truck Industry Council strongly supported the introduction of Euro VI and alternative emission standards from Japan and the USA, for Australia. That TIC position did not waiver over the ensuing seven years. TIC and our members continued to call upon our federal government to introduce ADR80/04 and finally that persistence has brought change for the good. This regulatory announcement has been a long time coming.....

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