



**National Council of
Women of New Zealand**

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Wahine O Aotearoa

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26 January 2005

S05.03

**Submission to the Ministry of Transport on
New Zealand Vehicle Emissions Screening Programme**

The National Council of Women of New Zealand (NCWNZ) is an umbrella organisation representing 42 nationally organised societies. It has 33 branches throughout the country attended by representatives of those societies and some 150 other societies. NCWNZ also represents a number of individual women. The Council's function is to serve women, the family and the community at local, national and international levels through research, study, discussion and action.

This discussion paper has been issued just prior to the summer holiday period and this makes it difficult to obtain a good response from our membership. As a voluntary organisation no meetings are arranged by our Branches during December and January. NCWNZ is not the only non-governmental organisation that would like to make strong comments on a topic of much interest in the public arena, but is hampered by the publication time frame. This submission is based on comments from members of the Public Issues Standing Committee, 2 Nelson branch members, the Convener of the Environment Standing Committee, and earlier submissions made by NCWNZ on related topics and NCWNZ policy.

In 2003 NCWNZ endorsed the following policy statement: "That NCWNZ urge the government to ensure (a) the availability of clean motor vehicle fuels for use in New Zealand, and (b) that the warrant of fitness procedure includes testing of emissions to a standard to be determined by government taking into account the best of international standards." This followed many submissions during the 1990s which also supported reducing pollution from car exhaust emissions as well as other means of improving air quality.

There are 27 questions posed in the discussion paper. NCWNZ agrees that this is an appropriate way to get specific responses. However, this submission makes no attempt to reply to those questions as we were unable to obtain replies from the membership at large. We offer the following general comments but in no particular order of priority.

- We see the main outcome of a vehicle emission screening as the improvement in air quality which will impact positively on the health of New Zealanders.
- We understand the significance of the pollution from car emissions, and that it is only part of the overall Air Quality problem. Unless action is taken there will be a continued increase in pollution from the continued rise in fleet numbers.
- Most members felt that all vehicles need to be brought to the same standard. One member suggested exemption for registered vintage, veteran and classic cars. This would involve a small number of cars which are of historical importance and whose motors may not be able to be adjusted. Another member thought that it might not be possible to bring older vehicles to the same standard as later models.





- We recognise that most owners would like to think that they drove cars that had good emission standards and would pass testing. If not, such owners would rapidly have the necessary repair work done. However there are a percentage of owners of older, cheaper less reliable cars with a limited income who would find such remedial work prohibitively expensive. The government has the ability to provide some financial support for such people - especially as we perceive that improved air quality would alleviate some health care costs.
- We suggest screening of vehicle emissions be part of the Warrant of Fitness procedure, which should be carried out annually for all cars to prevent any confusion for owners and testers. We note that there appears to be many cars on the road without a current Warrant of Fitness certificates and support random road side checking.
- The smoky car regime in Auckland, which involved the public reporting cars with smoky emissions, worked well. Advice was offered to owners whose cars were “dobbed in” and the number of offending cars was reduced. We see this scheme working as the public is ready to action improving the quality of air they breathe. With mandatory screening such policies would not be necessary.
- Local Councils have no way of controlling car emissions within their boundaries in areas of poor air quality, and therefore are relying on the Ministry of Transport to bring about some of this needed improvement by vehicle emission screening.
- We see education programmes being vital to get community support for vehicle emission screening. Many people are confused and it needs to be made clear that vehicle emission screening is to remove pollutants that impact adversely on air quality. Carbon dioxide will continue to be produced at the rate of 2.8 kilograms per litre of petrol and 3 kilograms per litre of Diesel burnt. Lowering that figure is not possible.

Conclusion

NCWNZ members believe that it is important to the health and well being of New Zealanders that vehicle emission screening is implemented sooner rather than later, and standards set must be as high as is practicable. Overseas visitors from developed countries where strict emission testing is already well established notice the poorer air quality, especially in the urban centres and will soon question our 'clean, green image'.

This could impact on our economy when overseas markets perceive inferior standards.

It is clear that in order to limit emissions of carbon monoxide, unburnt hydrocarbons, burnt oil and particulate matter there will be some hardship created for some low income families. However it is obvious it has to happen at some time, and New Zealand has procrastinated long enough.

We thank the Ministry for the opportunity to comment on this important topic, but regret the timing of the exercise.

Christine Low
National President

Mary Gavin
Convener, Public Issues Standing Committee