

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Health and Environment Groups Slam Campaign Against Tougher Emissions Standards

The Public Health Association, the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation, and the Sustainable Energy Forum are condemning the campaign by the Independent Motor Vehicle Dealers' Association (IMVDA) against the Government's move to lower vehicle emissions.

As part of a range of initiatives to clean up the environment, battle global warming and improve the health of New Zealanders, Cabinet is to sign off on a new minimum emissions standard which will prevent polluting used vehicles being imported into the country.

The IMVDA is opposing the introduction of the new standard, but their stand is being challenged by health and environment groups.

"New Zealand has the second highest incidence of asthma in the world," says the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation executive director, Jane Patterson. "Studies show a link between asthma and vehicle emissions so anything that can be done to lower those emissions will be welcome by the one in six New Zealanders who have asthma, and by the taxpayer who contributes hundreds of million dollars a year in medical costs and covering days off work."

The Director of the Public Health Association, Dr Gay Keating, says that air pollution in New Zealand often exceeds safe levels.

"Contamination of the air can cause hospitalisation and premature death. Vehicle emissions are thought to be responsible for around 500 premature deaths a year and the health costs to this country of vehicle emissions are about \$442 million a year."

The convenor of the Sustainable Energy Forum, Tim Jones, says it is imperative the Government gets serious about vehicle emissions.

"Between 1990 and 2005, greenhouse gas emissions from domestic transport in New Zealand increased by 62 percent," says Mr Jones.

"Placing a minimum emissions standard on imported cars is urgently needed to help turn around our appalling greenhouse gas emissions record."

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