

*A delay in taking action may lead to a situation where the costs of abatement will be significant.*



## Lowering Emissions from Urban Traffic: An Integrated National Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

In May 2000, the Australian Transport Council (ATC) directed the National Transport Secretariat (NTS) to work with Commonwealth, State and Territory transport agencies to develop a long term strategy for reducing greenhouse emissions across the transport sector.

The ATC provides a forum for Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Transport Ministers to maximise the contribution of effective transport to Australia's productivity, quality of life and equity.

Ministers requested that particular attention be paid to the impact of urban traffic on greenhouse emissions and to develop an integrated national approach. This Strategy responds to that request.

The transport sector needs to make significant changes in order to implement a strategic and coordinated program that will result in lowered emissions across the sector. The ATC, as a group that provides leadership and coordination of the transport system, is well placed to facilitate these changes.



NATIONAL TRANSPORT SECRETARIAT

## WHY LOWER GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS?

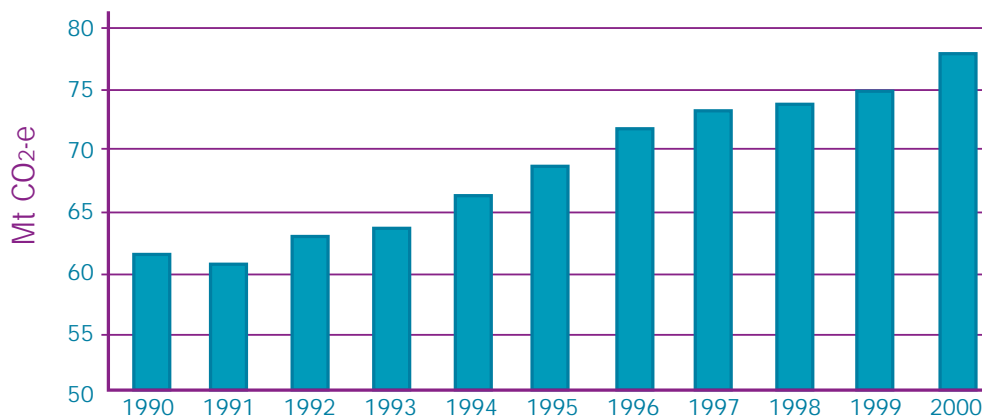
A series of increasingly stringent regulations already in place controlling emissions from motor vehicles has largely maintained and in some cases improved the air quality in many Australian cities, despite major increases in the volume of traffic. However, greenhouse emissions present a new challenge.

In 2000, transport accounted for around 14% of net national greenhouse gas emissions. Over the period 1990-2000, transport emissions increased by about 2.2% annually (see Figure 1) making it one of the fastest growing sectors. Within the Australian transport sector, road based transport (passenger and freight) is responsible for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions.

This Strategy focuses on action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from passenger transport in urban areas. This is the sector where, in the first instance, the greatest gains in emissions reductions can be made. The ATC has started work on developing a Strategy to reduce emissions from freight vehicles to complement this Strategy.

Australia's attempts to reduce greenhouse gas reductions will continue to be part of a much wider international effort. Under the Kyoto Protocol targets, Australia agreed that emissions can only increase by 8% between 1990 and the period 2008-2012. If no emission reduction activities had been undertaken after 1990, forecasts suggest that Australia's greenhouse gas emission level would have been at 38% above 1990 levels by the 2008-2012 period. Therefore, since 1990, all levels of government have been actively pursuing programs to reduce greenhouse gas producing activities. The Commonwealth government is committed to meeting these targets. All greenhouse gas producing sectors are required to take significant action.

Figure 1 – Total Transport Emissions, 1990-2000



Source: National Greenhouse Inventory, 2000

## ROLE OF THE ATC IN LOWERING EMISSIONS

To date, the ATC's environmental responsibilities have fallen under the National Greenhouse Strategy (NGS) Module 5 - Efficient Transport and Sustainable Urban Planning. The activities undertaken in Module 5 explored and established major priority areas that require additional policies and measures to reduce transport emissions.

Now that the ATC has completed the first stage of the NGS Module 5, it is ready to move into a new phase of action for lowering transport emissions.

The ATC has the potential to:

- set a national policy direction for the lowering of transport emissions;
- establish a new reform agenda to complement the National Road Safety Reform Agenda and the Heavy Vehicle Reform Package;
- create a leadership role in promoting the interests of the transport sector to other government sectors where policies impact on transport emissions; and
- reduce the energy intensity of the transport sector by providing the same transport outcomes with less damage to the environment.



## INTEGRATED NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR LOWERING EMISSIONS FROM URBAN TRAFFIC

This Strategy is a significant achievement for both the ATC and the transport sector. It represents the first national consensus approach to the issue and is a step towards achieving lower emissions within the transport sector. It is designed to assist in breaking the link between economic growth and growth in transport emissions.

The Strategy aims to achieve six key Outcomes that Ministers agreed would reduce emissions from urban traffic.

Ministers have established a National Strategic Position in relation to each Outcome.

The National Strategic Positions set directions for reforms of broad strategic significance for the transport sector.

### OUTCOME 1 – MORE CHOICES FOR URBAN TRAVELLERS

National Strategic Position:

A fully integrated transport system that allows for timely, reliable, accessible and safe travel will be operational.

### OUTCOME 2 – SMARTER DECISIONS ABOUT AVAILABLE CHOICES

National Strategic Position:

Programs that encourage people to take fewer trips by car will be operational in each jurisdiction and a nationally cooperative approach between jurisdictions will be developed.

### OUTCOME 3 – GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE FULL IMPACT OF TRANSPORT CHOICES

National Strategic Position:

Transport costs will move from predominantly fixed to predominantly variable costs. This outcome will address cost variations in transport modes and ensure that transport users experience more of the true cost of their travel choices.

### OUTCOME 4 – CLEANER PERFORMANCE BY URBAN VEHICLES

National Strategic Position:

A significant improvement in the emissions efficiency of urban vehicles will be achieved.

### OUTCOME 5 – GREATER ACCESS IN URBAN AREAS WITH LESS MOVEMENT

National Strategic Position:

A nationally developed policy and benchmarking tools for the integration of transport and land use planning will be implemented.

### OUTCOME 6 – NATIONAL FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORTIVE OF INTEGRATED URBAN TRAVEL SYSTEMS

National Strategic Position:

A nationally developed transport investment framework for investment decisions across all modes of travel will be trialled and implemented.

## HOW WILL THE NATIONAL STRATEGY BE IMPLEMENTED?

The Strategy presented in this document will be implemented in the following ways:

### **a. States, Territories and the Commonwealth government are already committed to activities that are lowering emissions.**

A significant number of activities are already occurring in all States and Territories to reduce greenhouse gases generated by motor vehicles. The Commonwealth government also has a number of programs in place. The National Strategy recognises the importance of the activities that are already underway and provides jurisdictions with flexibility to target their own needs and priorities.

### **b. Over time, States, Territories and the Commonwealth will nominate new areas of activity under each Outcome.**

The Outcomes establish a framework from which to drive a mixed policy approach to the lowering of emissions. Single measure policies are unlikely to work or be accepted. Developing a mixed policy approach will assist in making the greatest gains in greenhouse gas reductions. It will also assist in building partnerships across portfolios and achieving whole-of-government support. The Outcomes are designed to complement each other. By committing to undertake activities that aim to achieve each Outcome, jurisdictions will increase their potential for greenhouse gas reductions.

### **c. Greenhouse gas reductions will be strategically achieved at a national level through the establishment of National Strategic Positions for each Outcome.**

The National Strategic Positions for greenhouse gas reductions represent a progressive agenda for the transport sector. They will require a series of steps to be taken over time. These steps will include influencing travel behaviour, decreasing travel demand, using economic instruments where appropriate, and incorporating voluntary and regulatory measures.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy will be an integral part of achieving long term reform of the transport sector. Over time, progress will be achieved and the Strategy will respond to meet the changing needs and conditions of the transport sector.

Major activities involved in monitoring the Strategy include:

- Implementing a Communication Plan to raise awareness of the purpose and actions of the Strategy;
- Seeking whole-of-government and national approval for actions across portfolios, where appropriate;
- Implementing national actions by the appropriate agency;
- Providing input into the comprehensive review of the National Greenhouse Strategy in 2002.

Performance indicators have been identified for each National Strategic Position. These performance indicators will be used as the basis for reviewing the Strategy. An implementation update will also be sought by the NTS from each jurisdiction/agency on their actions on a regular basis and reported to the ATC.

As part of each review, the actions completed will be identified and possible new actions suggested.

A comprehensive review of the Strategy will be appropriate in 2003-2004.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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