

CCCA-UQ-E-Mobility,-The-University-of-QueenslandAustralia is, disappointingly, a world laggard when it comes to many aspects of acting decisively on climate change.

The National Transport Commission in 2022 estimated that 18% of our carbon emissions come from transport. In Norway, a world leader in the uptake of EVs, this is 10%.

In Australia the average emissions intensity in 2022 for passenger cars and light SUVs was 146.5 g/km and for heavy SUVs and light commercial vehicles was 212.5 g/km.

Governments in Europe and the Scandinavian countries, have set stringent fuel efficiency standards to reduce carbon emissions. Even New Zealand has set a high fuel efficiency standard for vehicles. While America has set fuel efficiency standards, these are weak in comparison to what other countries are doing. It would be a disservice to Australia if we were to follow America's lead.

Voluntary vehicle pollution cuts set by the The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) target a 35 per cent reduction for passenger cars in 2030 to less than 100 grams per kilometre. But European rules already require stricter pollution cuts at 95 grams today.

It is unacceptable to set a weak fuel efficiency standard that will continue to allow Australia to be a dumping ground for polluting cars and hinder the move to more EVs being available. A move to EVs also means that Australia will become less reliant on the purchase and import of fuel from overseas. The war in Ukraine has highlighted how heavily dependent the world is on fossil fuels and the risk to supply if global tensions arise. If Australia wants to wean itself from its reliance on fossil fuels for vehicles, a good first step would be the government setting of a high, enforceable, fuel efficiency standard. Voluntary standards set by groups like FCAI are no longer best practice.

This is an opportunity for Australia to set high fuel efficiency standards and for us, as a nation, to move more rapidly to the uptake of EVs for all aspects of transport. Not only will this reduce the cost of running a car but will lead to a reduction in air pollution and a chance that Australia can start meeting its carbon emissions target.