



INTRODUCING THE **REAL-WORLD TESTING PROGRAM**





Introduction

The Australian Automobile Association (AAA) will soon begin the nation's first independent Real-World Testing Program.

The Real-World Testing Program is funded by the Australian Government to provide improved information to consumers and policy makers on the fuel consumption and emissions of vehicles by testing in real-world operating conditions.

In the wake of the Volkswagen AG emissions-cheating scandal, the program will examine the fuel consumption and emissions of vehicles in real-world driving conditions, providing clear information on how much a particular vehicle will cost to run and its environmental performance.

Results will be available to consumers, governments, researchers and policy makers to inform new vehicle purchasing decisions, new policy measures and new regulation.

The Real-World Testing Program will examine 200 cars, utes and vans over the next four years. Testing will commence in the second half of 2023.

The AAA and its member motoring clubs around the nation will use the resulting data to inform club members, industry representatives, the media and the public about the running costs and environmental impact of vehicles in Australian conditions.

Why do we need real world testing?

Currently, information about a vehicle's fuel consumption and emissions is based on laboratory tests required by regulation and conducted for car makers overseas.

But consumers have no way to assess how that information translates to actual performance of vehicles in Australian road conditions.

In 2015, Volkswagen AG was found to have fitted 'defeat' software to vehicles to cheat emissions testing. The scandal affected 11 million vehicles globally.

Following the scandal, the AAA conducted a pilot study evaluating the difference between laboratory results being achieved by car makers and the on-road performance of popular cars.

The AAA study showed:

- 30 vehicles tested used up to 59% more fuel on-road than as advertised (23% average)
- 11 of the 12 diesel vehicles tested exceeded laboratory noxious emissions limits.

The pilot study also showed that the gap between laboratory and real-world performance widened each year, as car makers optimised performance to meet increasingly stringent emissions standards.

In response to the Volkswagen scandal, real-world testing is now used in the European Union as a legislative mechanism and the processes regulating its use are clear and well understood.

The Australian Government has committed \$14 million (over four years) to the AAA to conduct an Australian Real-World Testing Program.

The new national program will inform consumers, assist purchase decisions, improve motoring affordability, and reduce Australian vehicle emissions.



How will it work?

The AAA has developed a testing protocol for Australian vehicles, based on the test protocol developed in Europe for use in Euro 6 regulation, with some adaptation for local conditions.

Real-world emissions tests are conducted using portable emissions measurement equipment fitted in the vehicle, recording fuel consumption and emissions while the vehicle is driven on road.

Data integrity will be maintained by tight controls on how the vehicle must be driven throughout the test.

Results for each vehicle will include:

- Real-world fuel consumption
- Real-world CO2 emissions impacting global warming
- Real-world noxious tailpipe emissions impacting air quality.

The results will be published on the AAA website, providing consumers with information to better understand fuel and energy efficiency, emissions, and running costs of vehicles in real Australian driving conditions.

The AAA will promote the testing results through our member motoring clubs, which have nearly nine million members across the nation.



Benefits

Transparency and affordability

Real-world testing will provide Australian consumers with the accurate information they deserve to inform their decisions when buying cars.

It will make choosing a more efficient car easier and drive down fuel costs for motorists.

The testing will help individuals and fleet managers to better plan and manage fuel budgets and reduce the likelihood of consumers buying vehicles that do not, in the real world, achieve the outcomes promised by lab tests.

It will also allow policy makers to ensure emissions regulations are having a real-world impact.

Health and air quality

Debate about the effect of noxious emissions on the health of Australians is highly contested and constrained by a lack of reliable data.

Real-world testing will help fill the gaps, providing a firm evidence base for researchers and health experts.

Under current arrangements, car manufacturers are not required to release the noxious emissions lab results, but they must be under a certain laboratory limit. While cars may be meeting these limits in the lab, testing through the Program will report on whether the anticipated benefits of regulation are being delivered in the real world.

Environment

By testing tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases, such as Carbon Dioxide (CO₂); as well as pollutants affecting air quality such as Carbon Monoxide, oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and solid particles, the program aims to empower consumers with information to make more informed decisions when choosing cleaner models.

In the same way that vehicle safety star ratings encourage car makers to promote their safest models, real-world testing will build consumer demand for cleaner vehicles by stimulating awareness of relative vehicle performance.

As manufacturers respond, the program will create competition for technologies that deliver real-world benefits, rather than benefits in the lab.



Real-World Testing Timeline

March - June 2023

Program methodology testing, stakeholder consultation and input.

July 2023

Technical program design is finalised and real-world testing begins.

Late 2023

First results published with regular publication of results to follow.

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