

9<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Hon Chris Bishop  
Minister of Transport  
Private Bag 18041  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON 6160

Email: [chris.bishop@parliament.govt.nz](mailto:chris.bishop@parliament.govt.nz); [c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz](mailto:c.bishop@ministers.govt.nz)

Dear Minister Bishop

## CLEAN CAR STANDARD

I am writing on behalf of the ITE-ANZ to urge you to retain the New Zealand Clean Car Standard.

### Who we are

The ITE-ANZ is part of an international organisation representing a community of transport professionals including transport engineers, transport planners, urban planners, consultants, educators and researchers. Globally, ITE works to improve mobility and safety for all transport system users and helps build smart and liveable communities. Founded in 1930, the ITE community has over 18,000 members working in more than 75 countries. Our activities cover all transport modes, transport advocacy and professional development. ITE-ANZ has very strong links with the North American transport profession.

We have no vested interest, except a desire to see the transport system be as safe, efficient and sustainable as possible for the sake of future generations.

### Rationale

Electrification of the transport sector is an imperative. After scrapping the **Clean Car Discount** in December 2023, the **Clean Car Standard** is the only effective intervention to enable New Zealand to make its contribution to lowering vehicle-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions on the planet.

While the **Clean Car Discount** was a government subsidy, the **Clean Car Standard** provides government revenue if the Standard is not met, or it will be cost neutral if the Standard is successful in encouraging the purchase of low or zero emission vehicles.

While there may have been some antagonism towards EVs in the past, with some sections of the community displaying their preference for petrol and diesel vehicles, the current oil crisis stemming from the conflict in the Middle East has brought home the reality that reliance on fossil fuels is not in the country's best interest. Even if the oil crisis abates within a year or two, New Zealand still needs a stable, consistent policy structure for the vehicle importing industry, so that the uptake of low emission vehicles is encouraged over the long term.

If the effect of the scheme is for importers to raise the price of petrol and diesel vehicles and reduce the price of EVs and hybrids, then so be it. This is the economic incentive needed in the market to accelerate electrification.

The reduction in the penalties for not meeting the Standard has already reduced its effectiveness. Scrapping the Standard completely now would signal that the government has no commitment to lower the country's dependence on fossil fuels. Vehicle importers would take the opportunity to dump polluting vehicles into the New Zealand market. The scheme has a global implication, not just an effect on the ground in New Zealand.

There is a long lead time to reduce emissions due to the time it takes for the vehicle fleet to turn over especially given the average age of the New Zealand fleet - currently sitting at around 15 years. Most petrol or diesel vehicles sold this year will still be on the road in 2040.

As well as reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the transition to low or zero emission vehicles has the following important benefits:

- It will lead to a decrease in vehicle operating costs which will create savings to industry as well as individual households.
- Low emission vehicles provide public health benefits by reducing particulate pollutants and noxious gases in the air that we breathe, and reducing noise pollution.
- A reduction in overall fuel consumption will improve New Zealand's fuel security and ability to survive supply disruptions - clearly a pressing issue for the current Government in the current global fuel situation. It will also create a large economic benefit in reducing one of the country's largest balance of payments liabilities: the purchase of imported oil. With the closure of Marsden Point in 2022, all of New Zealand's fuel is refined offshore, representing a significant strategic risk in the current international climate.

Leaving vehicle emission improvements to market forces or to a voluntary scheme, is clearly not enough. There needs to be both "sticks" and "carrots" to achieve the changes to a more fuel-efficient vehicle fleet. Although the number of EV and hybrid vehicles is increasing, evidence from other countries and all international studies show that technology-neutral, mandatory measures are necessary to achieve an embedded and long-term accelerated reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions required to achieve NZ's contribution to global CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets.

The **Clean Car Standard** must be retained and, if anything, strengthened to achieve a faster transition away from polluting vehicles.

Yours sincerely



David Nash  
Secretary