

The Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn's Sustainable Vehicle Policy

The Diocesan Commission for the Environment prepared a proposed policy for Bishop-in-Council. This was accepted in principal in December 2006 and parishes invited to comment (though only three have done so). Individuals, as well as parishes, might like to consider the issues raised when making a purchase. The full text can be found on the Commission's web site.

Background

A sustainable vehicle policy is one which takes into consideration and balances the economic, environmental and social implications of vehicle purchasing decisions.

An underlying consideration must be that vehicles 'fit the purpose'. For example, will the vehicle be used mainly for parish business and run about transport (in which case a small car should suffice), to transport passengers (medium sized car), tow heavy loads (larger car), or be used frequently on unsealed roads (medium to large vehicle)? These factors should dictate the general nature of the vehicle.

Within this 'fit for purpose' framework, purchasing a vehicle requires a range of economic, environmental and social considerations to be weighed and balanced.

Economic considerations

Economic considerations should be based on 'whole of life costs' rather than simply the initial purchase price. Minimising the economic cost of diocesan vehicles will depend on a range of factors.

Purchase or lease price

The decision to purchase or lease a vehicle requires consideration of a number of factors including fleet discounts or special deals, tax incentives, expected length of ownership and resale or residual value. In comparing two vehicles, an appropriate interest rate should also be applied to the difference in price to take account of the 'opportunity cost' of the alternative outlays.

Operating costs

According to figures produced by the NRMA the annual operating costs of vehicles is largely a function of size. NRMA's annual operating cost estimates range from:

- **\$5,876–7,904 for light cars**
- **\$7,020–12,428 for small cars**
- **\$8,684–15,652 for medium cars**
- **\$10,244–20,332 for large cars**

Fuel consumption will depend on engine capacity, distance travelled and the type of travel (city or highway). The cost for a vehicle that travels 15 000 km pa can range from \$2300 (for larger vehicles) to \$1500 (for small vehicles) to \$1100 (for hybrid or

diesel vehicles). For every 10c rise in petrol prices the annual operating cost rise by around \$100 for light vehicles and around \$200 for large vehicles.

Minimising fuel consumption

- Minimise your vehicle use for example use public transport when possible and avoid short car trips (walk, cycle or combine trips)
- Keep car properly serviced
- Tyres correctly inflated
- Drive smoothly – accelerate and decelerate smoothly
- Drive at moderate speeds – cars use 25% more fuel at 110 km/h than at 90 km/h
- Remove excess weight from car (50kg equates to 2% extra fuel) and minimise aerodynamic drag like roof racks
- Use air conditioner sparingly (air conditioners can use about 10% extra fuel when operating. However, at speeds of over 80 km/h, use of air conditioning is better for fuel consumption than an open window.)

Environmental considerations

Vehicle type

In general, opting for a smaller, more fuel-efficient vehicle that is fit for the purpose will lower the overall environmental impacts of the purchase.

Fuel type

The type of fuel used influences the environmental impacts of a vehicle. Higher octane fuels tend to provide greater fuel efficiency and therefore better environmental performance.

Diesel vehicles typically outperform their petrol counterparts in greenhouse terms by around 15–20%. However they produce more air pollutants than petrol models which is an issue particularly in urban areas.

Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) has around the same greenhouse emissions as a diesel vehicle and reduced air pollutants.

Greenhouse

Greenhouse emissions from passenger vehicles account for around 60% of all road transport emissions and around 7% of national emissions. Because smaller vehicles use less fuel than larger vehicles they emit around half the greenhouse gas emission of larger vehicles.

Resource use

Between 5–10% of a car's overall consumption of energy and emissions of greenhouse gases happens when the car is manufactured. Obviously large cars consume more of these resources in their manufacture.

Social considerations

Safety

Vehicle safety is a major social consideration when purchasing a vehicle.

Perceptions

The perception created by clergy vehicle use is an important issue for an organisation committed to social justice issues. The use of a large, powerful vehicle can give the wrong impression while a more modest sized car that fits the purpose may change this perception.

Health issues

Urban air pollution which is largely the result of motor vehicle use leads to a range of serious health effects. The health impacts of transport emissions in Australian capital cities have been estimated as costing around \$3.3 billion per year.

Policy

The Bishop in Council requires that all Diocesan organisations adopt a common Diocesan sustainable vehicle policy. This policy seeks a balance between the economic, environmental and social implications of all vehicle purchasing decisions and use. In the medium term the Diocese should aim to have the most economically, environmentally and socially responsible vehicle fleet of any comparable organisation.

When **purchasing** a vehicle, units are to abide by the following process:

1. Determine what is the vehicle's primary use will be.
2. Determine what the typical number of passengers it will transport.
3. In general, the smallest, most fuel-efficient vehicle that matches the primary use and typical number of passengers should be selected taking into account the various environmental, economic and social considerations.
4. If the vehicle' primary use is for passenger transport and the typical number of passengers is two or less, then a fuel efficient, four-cylinder or hybrid vehicle should be selected.

When **using** a vehicle, units are to abide by the following process:

1. Drive in a manner that will minimise fuel consumption, for example drive smoothly and at moderate speeds.
2. Minimise vehicle use by choosing alternatives to private car travel for short trips and car-pooling or teleconference wherever possible.