



# KYLEA TINK MP

Independent Federal Member for North Sydney



## MEDIA RELEASE

7 March 2024

### 'FUEL EFFICIENCY IS A COST-OF-LIVING RELIEF MEASURE'

Speech by Kylea Tink MP, Independent Federal Member for North Sydney  
Smart Energy Council Conference and Exhibition 2024

**SYDNEY, 7 MARCH 2024** — It's a privilege to be here today with all of you. I'd like to particularly thank the Smart Energy Council for hosting this event and for the work you do to accelerate the transition to a sustainable future through your bold advocacy and thought leadership.

A quote by Robin Chase, an American transportation entrepreneur, recently struck me as being particularly salient. Robin said:

*"Transportation is the centre of the world. It is the glue of our daily lives. When it goes well, we don't see it. When it goes wrong, it negatively colours our day, makes us feel angry and curtails our possibilities."*

I can't help but think that ultimately, no truer words have been spoken, for while transport connects people: to each other and the things we need to lead fulfilling lives, it also consumes 16 per cent of the average weekly income in Australia and is responsible for a fifth of our greenhouse gas emissions.

Australia's latest greenhouse gas emissions figures show emissions for the year to September 2023 only decreased by a paltry 0.5 per cent. Electricity emissions dropped by 4.9 per cent but this was offset by an increase in transport emission of 4.5 per cent.

This tells me two things. Firstly, Government is not doing enough to reduce emissions and meet our climate targets, particularly in the transport sector.

But secondly, it tells me the actions we take can make a difference as evidenced by the decrease in electricity sector emissions as we transition away from fossil fuels towards renewable energy.

Looking around, there is no lack of transport and energy expertise in this room, which is good because I'm not one.

I am a mechanic's daughter, who grew up around engines in the small town of Coonabarabran. My first car was a 1969 Toyota Corolla Sprinter, which I bought in 1986 for \$500 and rebuilt from the



# KYLEA TINK MP

Independent Federal Member for North Sydney



ground up with my dad. We must have done an okay job as that car is still on the roads around home!

I'm also the Federal Member for North Sydney and so today, reflecting on what I might add to this conversation, I thought it might be useful if I provided some insight into what I observe is happening at the federal level of government: How progress towards a national vehicle efficiency standard is playing out, the changes I believe are necessary to future-proof our transport system, and where I believe the federal government has a role to play.

Starting with the topic that has taken up most of Question Time recently: Fuel efficiency standards.

The last sitting week was ugly.

Question Time, as many may have seen, was consumed with misleading statements thrown about the chamber by the opposition in response to the Government's proposed New Standards.

The Coalition and some carmakers have falsely claimed vehicle efficiency standards will increase the cost of new vehicles. While the tactic feels familiar it has evolved somewhat from a message which proclaimed "the ruination of our much-loved weekends", to now being described as a new "family car and ute tax".

It's hard to listen to and I've been a fierce advocate for calling this out for what it is: The blatant, politically motivated spreading of disinformation.

Worse, this disinformation is designed to prey on those who are being hit the hardest by cost-of-living pressures.

These claims are simply not true.

All developed countries, bar Australia and Russia, already have fuel efficiency standards in place, with many having had them for a decade or more, and there is no international evidence to suggest they increased vehicle purchase costs.

Australia's fuel efficiency standards have been a long time coming and as North Sydney's representative, I've been calling for these standards since before I was elected. In this context I think it's great to see the Government has proposed a strong option which, at a minimum, will catch Australia up to the US before the end of the decade and rules out the use of loopholes like super credits.



# KYLEA TINK MP

Independent Federal Member for North Sydney



**The Government must not weaken their proposed standard or backslide in the face of the disinformation campaign.**

The irony is that the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard is a cost-of-living relief measure.

It's a pragmatic and effective way for Australia to clean up our cars, delivering not just environmental and health benefits, but substantial financial benefits for motorists.

A flexible policy that means a constituent in North Sydney will have more choice when buying an electric car, while my dad in Coonabarabran can upgrade his work Ute to a more efficient model. Everyone wins.

However, decarbonising and future-proofing our transport system is a significantly larger task than getting drivers to swap petrol vehicles for electric or upgrade to more efficient cars. We need a fundamental shift in the way we get around – moving from private cars towards zero emissions public and active transport.

This shift will not be easy and to achieve it I believe we must restore trust in our government, embrace long term thinking, and push for effective intra-government collaboration.

Federal Parliament plays a crucial role in supporting strong climate and transport policy by enacting legislation, debating and approving budgets and holding government to account.

At this level, community independent MPs have brought multiple Bills to Parliament to strengthen integrity in the political processes, including the Restoring Trust Bill, the Real Time Disclosure of Political Donations Bill, the Lobbying (Improving Government Honesty and Trust) Bill, and the End Pork Barrelling Bill.

We've amended numerous pieces of legislation to ensure Government is held to account, including requiring the Minister for Climate Change to table the independent advice from the Climate Change Authority when reporting on Australia's climate change statement made possible via an amendment I added to the Climate Change Bill 2022.

And we have explored new, participatory forms of policy making through avenues such as the deliberative democracy forums I have and will continue to hold.

But what does all this have to do with transport and energy policy?

In a word: Everything.



# KYLEA TINK MP

Independent Federal Member for North Sydney



Restoring trust in our political process and creating a more participatory, transparent and collaborative parliament is the foundation for good policy making.

It gives the public confidence that, when large transport projects are funded (whether they be roads, bike paths, or electric vehicle charging networks) they are funded based on merit and not political expediency.

It allows us to know which lobbyists have met with which Ministers in the lead up to large climate and transport announcements.

It allows us to know which of those groups are donating to which parties.

And it allows the public to play a role in developing the policies that will ultimately affect them.

We must also embrace long-term thinking.

Short-termism is deeply embedded in our political and economic structures. From 3-year political cycles, to the increasingly fast-moving news cycle. To create the big, bold policy ideas needed to address the climate crisis and future-proof our transport system, we need guts, strategy and long-term vision.

Nearly a decade ago, Wales passed the Well-being of future Generations Act, requiring public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions and to work together with communities to prevent persistent problems.

They appointed a Future Generations Commissioner, a 'guardian' of the interests of future generations, and produced the report 'Transport – Fit for Future Generations' to guide their transport decisions based on the interests of current and future generations.

That is the kind of thinking we should be holding our Government to account for doing. Yet it is Senator Pocock – the Independent Senator for Canberra – who is currently pushing this barrow through his Duty of Care Bill – which neither the Government nor the Opposition will support.

We need to find ways of navigating our multi-layered, federated political system. Transport traverses all three levels of Government – Federal, State and Local, and we must work together productively to future-proof our transport systems.

Last year, my team and I worked to convene a regular series of transport roundtables in my electorate, bringing together leaders and transport experts across all levels of government.





# KYLEA TINK MP

Independent Federal Member for North Sydney



It wasn't easy and we didn't agree on everything. That experience showed me that, while for many this would seem nothing more than the bleeding obvious, it is not how our current political system is geared to work.

Territorialism means local councils are routinely competing for funding. State governments compete with local councils and don't like being told what to do by our federal government.

It's messy. But we must be willing to come to the table and work with our counterparts.

I want to finish today by highlighting there is a crucial role for federal parliament in future proofing our transport system.

Whether that's in setting our national emissions reductions targets and negotiating sector plans, or in assessing options for tax reform to drive transport emissions reductions, leadership from the Federal Government is required. To date, too much of the heavy lifting has been left to the States.

In this context the forthcoming fuel efficiency standards should be welcomed as should things like the private members bill I introduced last year to provide a lock-step mechanism to keep Australia's vehicle emissions standards internationally competitive.

I'm also particularly keen to prosecute charging standards and interoperability.

Currently, our electric vehicle charging system is fragmented and I consistently hear from my community that they are frustrated with the number of apps they need to have and the number of chargers that don't fit their vehicle or simply aren't working.

Minimum operating standards are long overdue to ensure drivers have access to a convenient, reliable, affordable and equitable national charging network.

Transportation truly is the center of the world - the glue of our daily lives. I look forward to working with the people in this room to ensure Australia has a transport system fit for the future.

**Media inquiries: [media@kyleatink.com.au](mailto:media@kyleatink.com.au) / 0474 033 059**

## About Kylea Tink MP:

Kylea Tink MP is the independent member for the federal seat of North Sydney. As a community independent, she is dedicated to representing the views of her electorate and advocating for the issues that matter to the community such as greater transparency in government, greater action on climate change, equality and respect, and a forward-focused economy. Find out more about Kylea and what she stands for at <http://www.kyleatink.com.au>