



The Bullroarer - Tuesday January 8

Posted by [Big Gav](#) on January 8, 2008 - 6:16am in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

SMH - [Higher fuel prices, but car sales hit a record high](#)

CONTRARY to popular belief, rising petrol prices could be one of the reasons for - not against - record new-car sales, as buyers trade gas-guzzlers for fuel-efficient models.

Figures published yesterday by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries showed Australians bought a record 1,049,982 new vehicles last year - the first time the tally has passed the 1 million mark in a calendar year.

The figures also reveal the largest swing yet to economy cars. Hatchbacks have well and truly overtaken big six-cylinder sedans as our favourite cars. Although the Holden Commodore was Australia's biggest selling car for the 12th year in a row (by a diminishing margin ahead of the Toyota Corolla) small cars now account for more than a third of all new vehicles sold.

Rather than depending on public transport, motorists are downsizing to more economical vehicles. "Even where public transport is good, people like to have the freedom to travel on their own terms," said the chief executive of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Andrew McKellar. "One of the challenges for big cities in the future is dealing with the fact people like to have the freedom to travel when it suits them."

He cites the fact that over the past two years petrol prices rose by more than 50 per cent, and yet there were record new-car sales. "Rather than abandoning the car, buyers are embracing more fuel-efficient models," he said.

Last year sales of hybrid cars more than doubled, and sales of diesel-powered cars were up 70 per cent on the previous year.

The Australian - [Bikes outsell cars for eighth straight year](#)

The Australian - [Macquarie Bank signs up for NSW wind farm](#)

MACQUARIE Bank's investment arm has signed on as an equal partner in the development of Australia's biggest wind farm project. Sydney-based renewable energy company Epuron has announced Macquarie Capital, a division of Australia's biggest investment bank, has agreed to join as an equal partner in the development of the project near Broken Hill in far western NSW.

The project will comprise 400 to 500 wind turbines and at full capacity will produce

1000MW or enough power for 400,000 homes, the largest in Australia. Epuron is a subsidiary of Conergy, one of the largest renewable energy companies in the world. ...

The project has had its critics, with some questioning the cost of building transmission lines to the main power grid, which Epuron acknowledged would be substantial, and NSW Energy Minister Ian Macdonald recently questioning whether the area was windy enough. Macquarie has \$1.3 billion invested in renewable energy projects worldwide, much of that in wind generation in countries such as France, the US, Canada and Taiwan. ...

The project is expected to cost \$2.2 billion to \$2.5 billion and take three to five years to build. Epuron hopes to have planning approval by the end of the year, with construction to begin in 2009.

The wind farm, which will cover 450sqkm, could eventually supply 4.5 per cent of the state's energy needs, Epuron said. Mr Durran said the backers had spent five to six years looking for the best places in Australia to build wind farms and were confident it was in the right location. "We are very confident about the wind speeds in the area," he said.

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