



RACV heading down the wrong road

Posted by [Phil Hart](#) on June 12, 2008 - 10:05pm in [The Oil Drum: Australia/New Zealand](#)

Topic: [Policy/Politics](#)



The [Royal Automobile Club of Victoria \(RACV\)](#) is a motoring club and mutual organisation, providing services such as roadside assistance, insurance, loans, driving instruction and tourism services. It's 1.9 million members comprise a sizeable fraction of the State population of 5 million.

I take a small amount of credit for helping Elliot with the inspiration behind this story:

The Age: [RACV heading down the wrong road](#) (Elliot Fishman, June 13 2008)

The Government has declared that the forthcoming tax review will assess whether the GST on the fuel excise should stay. The RACV has been campaigning on this issue for several years.

The time this particular issue has consumed, in the media and Parliament, encouraged in large part by the RACV, is troubling. Focusing on this issue, rather than the factors that have led oil to double in price in the past year is a dangerous distraction that will only make the pain at the pump much worse in the long run.

The RACV has deceived its members by constantly claiming that petrol will not rise very much higher than whatever it happened to be at the time.

The RACV is in a difficult position. It came into being when car ownership was low and good-quality roads were few and far between. In its 100-year-plus history, there has

been an astronomical rise in car ownership, length of paved roads, fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Now governments around the world are trying to fight climate change and scrape the bottom of the oil barrel.

The RACV needs to accept this reality and either step aside, so real solutions can be brought to the table, or adapt and advocate practical, sustainable solutions.

Smaller NGOs cannot hope to have much influence over Government policy while large bodies like the RACV, NRMA and other 'motoring' organisations keep pandering to their members by saying that Big Oil is ripping them off, or that the Government should shave a few cents off the price of petrol.

This stance is extremely counter-productive from motoring clubs which are powerful in shaping public opinion amongst drivers. We cannot expect courageous new approaches from middle of the road politicians while the RACV battles on with such backward thinking.

If you're a member of a 'happy motoring' organisation, write to them and say you want them to adopt a more progressive stance. Liberal/Labor 'leaders' have no hope of finding their own way while the RACV is heading us all down the wrong road.



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