



Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage



Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000

CLEAN FUELS BULLETIN

October 2003

FUEL STANDARDS CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee met on 14 August 2003 in Melbourne for its 6th meeting and its discussions included the following matters.

- The supply of specialist petroleum based unleaded racing fuels post 2004.
- The supply of leaded fuel through the Leaded Fuel Passbook arrangement, and general discussion about the supply of leaded fuel post 30 June 2005.
- An update on the Australian Government's commitment to introduce a fuel labelling framework.
- The interaction of the Australian Government's *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* and the *Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984*.
- An update on petrol and automotive diesel operability standards.
- An update on the development of standards for biodiesel, LPG, CNG and LNG, and future fuels post-2006.
- The Register of Prohibited Fuel Additives and the availability of tetraethyl lead in fuel additives.

PETROL AND AUTOMOTIVE DIESEL OPERABILITY STANDARDS

In the April 2003 Clean Fuels Bulletin, it was reported that the Fuel Standards Consultative Committee (the Committee) would recommend to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that an appearance parameter for automotive diesel be incorporated into the *Fuel Standard (Automotive Diesel) Determination 2001*.

The Committee has decided to put this matter on hold pending clarification of technical issues concerning other operability fuel parameters, notably fuel volatility index and driveability index.

DITR, together with the Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH), are continuing consultations with industry in relation to this.

A full two months notice will be provided to industry of the implementation date of any new operability parameters.

Further updates on petrol and automotive diesel operability standards will be provided through the Clean Fuels Bulletin.

APPROVALS UNDER SECTION 13 OF THE FQS ACT

No new approvals have been granted since April this year, but the Minister has made the following amendments to existing approvals:

- Caltex Australia Petroleum Pty Ltd – variation of the viscosity, density, lubricity and sulfur parameters of the Fuel Standard (Automotive Diesel) Determination 2001 → list of regulated persons extended on 12 July 2003
- Leaded fuel approval granted to race engine builders/tuners (dynotuners) → list of regulated persons extended and more dynotuners included on 21 July 2003
- Leaded fuel approval granted to motor and water sport organisations → list of regulated persons extended and Territory Motor Sports Board, the Australian Street Rod Federation, the NSW Water Ski Association Ltd, the Drag Bike Riders Association Australia, Dry Lakes Racers Australia, Queensland Racing Drivers Association Inc and the Australian Auto-sport Alliance Inc added as approval holders, on 21 July 2003.

LOWER DENSITY DIESEL TRIAL

As advised in the April 2003 Bulletin, DEH has commissioned a vehicle trial to assess the impact lower density diesel will have on certain tailpipe emissions, and on the fuel economy of vehicles using lower density diesel. This vehicle trial will assist the Committee and the Minister in their deliberations in relation to the four approvals that currently permit the supply of automotive diesel that does not meet the required density parameter. The trial, which will also test alternative diesels, is expected to commence in October 2003.

EVALUATION OF THE COMGAS SCHEME

DEH is a member of a working group to advise the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (OATSIH) on an evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of the Comgas Scheme. The evaluation will also assess the potential supply of alternative fuels under the Scheme.

The Comgas Scheme administers the supply of Avgas to remote Aboriginal communities as part of a long-term approach to reducing the incidence of petrol sniffing. Avgas is currently supplied to 33 listed Indigenous communities under the Scheme, and is administered through the

Commonwealth Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Substance Use Program of the Department of Health and Ageing (Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health).

Avgas, when used in place of regular petrol (ie. unleaded, premium unleaded or lead replacement petrol) has been shown anecdotally to reduce the incidence of petrol sniffing, particularly when restrictions on regular petrol supplies have been combined with other harm reduction strategies.

In conjunction with OATSIH's evaluation, DEH commissioned a technical evaluation in relation to the use of Avgas as a motor vehicle fuel and the availability of potential alternative fuels. Together, these final documents will inform any future OATSIH application to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, via the Fuel Standards Consultative Committee, for a further exemption under the *Fuel Standards Quality Act 2000*. The current exemption expires in early 2004.

GUIDELINES FOR PROHIBITED FUEL ADDITIVES

The Minister has developed written guidelines to assist in making a decision with respect to entering or removing a fuel additive or class of fuel additives from the Register of Prohibited Fuel Additives (the Register).

The purpose of the guidelines is to provide the Minister with a framework to ensure that a consistent, objective process is followed in determining whether a fuel additive should be added or removed from the Register. It is also intended that they provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to make submissions relating to the entering or removal of an additive on the Register.

A copy of the Guidelines are at www.deh.gov.au/atmosphere/transport/fuel/register.html. For further details on the Register and the Minister's responsibilities in administering the Register see Division 8, Sections 32 to 36 of the *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* (scaleplus.law.gov.au/cgi-bin/download.pl?/scale/data/pasteact/3/3418).

MMT (METHYLCYCLOPENTADIENYL MANGANESE TRICARBONYL)

In November 2000, DEH identified MMT as an octane enhancer that raised particular concerns for the automobile industry ('Setting National Fuel Quality Standards, Paper 2A, Proposed Management of Petrol Octane Enhancing Additives/Products'). At that stage, in the absence of clear evidence of adverse impacts arising from the use of MMT in petrol, DEH undertook to review the use of MMT in Australia when either the USEPA's evaluation of the health effects of MMT was completed, or a 'Priority Existing Chemical' assessment on MMT had been completed by NICNAS (the Australian Government's industrial chemicals regulator).

NICNAS has completed an assessment of MMT as an anti-valve seat recession additive. The full report is available on their website <http://www.nicnas.gov.au>. As this assessment did not cover MMT as a bulk fuel additive, NICNAS has imposed a 'secondary notification' on MMT as follows:

'Under Section 64 of the *Industrial Chemicals (Notification and Assessment) Act 1989*, the secondary notification of a chemical that has been assessed under the Act may be required where

an introducer (manufacturer or importer of a chemical) becomes aware of any circumstances that may warrant a reassessment of its hazards and risks. In the case of MMT, specific circumstances include:

- Use of MMT in bulk transport fuels other than LRP;
- The manufacture of MMT has begun in Australia;
- Additional information has become available to the introducers as to adverse health and/or environmental effects of MMT.

The Director (Chemicals Notification and Assessment) must be notified within 28 days of the introducer becoming aware of any of the above or other circumstances prescribed under Section 64(2) of the Act.'

[NICNAS, Priority Existing Chemical Assessment Report Number 24, MMT, p121]

A failure to comply with this requirement to notify may constitute an offence under the Act.

At this stage, DEH does not propose to regulate MMT content under the *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* - the secondary notification effectively excludes fuels containing MMT (other than lead replacement fuels). The Department of the Environment and Heritage will continue to monitor the situation. Ideally, any future reevaluation of the impacts of MMT use in unleaded fuels will be able to take into account the results of the US EPA's evaluation of the health effects of MMT (this evaluation is due to be completed in 2004).

EXAMINING THE OPTIONS FOR SETTING A DIESOHOL STANDARD

The Department of the Environment and Heritage has begun to look at the need for a standard for Diesohol (defined as a blend of diesel and an alcohol). A discussion paper will be developed to canvass the relevant issues and to seek comment from stakeholders.

If you have any specific issues in relation to a diesohol standard or would like to be placed on a stakeholder list for regular updates - please send an email to Mr Peter Hemphill, Clean Fuels and Vehicles Section - peter.hemphill@deh.gov.au.

DEVELOPING AN ETHANOL FUEL QUALITY STANDARD

The Australian Government announced its intention to develop a fuel quality standard for ethanol in May 2003. The Department of the Environment and Heritage is seeking to commission a technical paper on the properties of fuel ethanol, its impact on vehicle emissions (including greenhouse gases) and engine operability, and advertised an invitation to tender on the weekend of 11/12 October 2003.

A copy of the tender documentation is available on DEH's web site at - <http://www.deh.gov.au/atmosphere/transport/fuel/tender48-2003.html>, or can be obtained from Ms Susan Levett, Clean Fuels and Vehicles Section on (02) 6274 1903 or facsimile (02) 6274 1172. Tenders close at 2.00pm on Thursday 30 October 2003.



ADVANCE NOTICE - REVIEW OF THE FQS ACT

The *Fuel Quality Standards Act 2000* includes a requirement that the operation of the Act be reviewed two years after commencement. The review team will be appointed by the Minister and must include at least one independent (non-Australian public service) member. The review is expected to commence in January 2004, the second anniversary of the date the first standards commenced.

Details of how the review will be conducted, including opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the review, will be included in later editions of the Clean Fuels Bulletin and will be posted on the DEH website.

CONTACT DETAILS

For more information about any of the information in this Bulletin, please contact:

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