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AEVA calls on Feds to plug hole in plug-in hybrid efficiency figures.

The Australian Electric Vehicle Association (AEVA) is calling on the Federal Government to address erroneous fuel consumption figures for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). The current vehicle testing methodology – New European Driving Cycle (NEDC) – is dramatically underestimating the real-world fuel consumption of PHEVs.

The association warns this discrepancy will undermine the effectiveness of the proposed New Vehicle Efficiency Standard due to start next year.

“PHEVs advertised with unrealistically low fuel consumption figures won’t meet consumer expectations and certainly won’t achieve the desired outcomes for public health and greenhouse gas emissions”, said Dr Chris Jones, AEVA National President.

Due to their design, the fuel consumption of a PHEV is highly dependent on the behaviour of the driver, and substantially more than for a regular petrol vehicle.

Studies in Europe have found the real-world average fuel consumption for PHEVs was a staggering 3.5 times higher than quoted figures. This is can mostly be attributed to PHEVs not being charged frequently enough to keep them running in electric-only mode.

“It’s possible for a diligent PHEV owner to achieve low fuel consumption, but the experience of our members is that it’s very difficult to achieve this in practice”, said Dr Jones. “In fact, if importers of PHEVs reported official fuel consumption figures anywhere near what drivers might actually experience, buyers would rightfully skip the PHEV and buy a battery EV instead.”

AEVA is calling on the Federal Government to amend the test procedure for PHEVs before the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard commences next year. The globally recognised Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP) is a better methodology, but still significantly underestimates PHEV efficiency.

The AEVA insists if PHEVs are to play any role in decarbonising the light vehicle sector, it is critical that official figures are accurately reflected through rigorous testing.

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