



P.O. Box 7318, Sydenham, Christchurch 8036, New Zealand.  
email: [info@noiseoff.co.nz](mailto:info@noiseoff.co.nz) website: [www.noiseoff.org.nz](http://www.noiseoff.org.nz)

10 September 2008

[Letter to political parties]

Dear

Noise Off is a Charitable Trust established in 2006 for the purpose of reducing motor vehicle noise emissions for the improvement of the health and well being of our communities and the quality of our environment. Noise Off has close to 1,000 registered members and many thousands more supporters.

Noise Off has been seeking a reduction in noise emissions for in-service vehicles to a level which meets its objectives, is acceptable to the community at large, readily and inexpensively achievable and consistent with best practice in Australia and Europe.

All new vehicles entering New Zealand are compliant with Australian or European noise standards. The average maximum noise level of a new vehicle entering New Zealand is about 82 decibels.<sup>1</sup> However, once registered in New Zealand vehicles can be legally modified to substantially increase the noise output of their exhausts.

From June 2008 the Labour Government changed the Vehicle Equipment Rules (the "Rules") so that any vehicle registered in New Zealand from 1 June 2008 could not be modified to exceed a maximum level of 90 decibels but any vehicle registered in New Zealand before June 2008 could be increased a further 50% to 95 decibels. 95 decibels is the level of noise that you would experience standing half a metre away from a four stroke motor mower operating at full speed. This is not recommended without ear muffs.

Noise Off believes that a level of 95 decibels for the existing passenger vehicle fleet is unacceptable for the following reasons:

1. The noise level at 95 decibels is grossly excessive.
2. 95 decibels is 50% louder than the maximum permitted level that Australia has had in force since 1983.

---

<sup>1</sup> All references to noise levels are stationary exhaust test levels.

3. There is no logical or compelling reason for permitting the same model of vehicle to be 50% louder if it was registered on 31 May 2008 rather than 1 June 2008.

The reason given by the Government for allowing all of the existing fleet of passenger vehicles to legally increase their noise levels to 95 decibels is that there may have been up to 50,000 vehicles which had already had their exhaust modified and emitted a noise level between 90 and 95 decibels. Therefore to accommodate those vehicles the Government is permitting the other 2,500,000 vehicles in the fleet as at 31 May 2008 to also legally increase their noise level to 95 decibels.

Noise Off believes that this is entirely unnecessary and that if there was genuine concern about the 50,000 vehicles which had already had modified exhausts those vehicles could have been dealt with by delaying the commencement of the Rules for them by a further 2 or 3 years to enable them to become compliant. Allowing all vehicles as at 31 May 2008 to legally increase their noise emissions to 95 decibels will legitimise and further entrench a culture of excessively noisy vehicles for the next 20 years.

Noise Off is seeking a commitment from all political parties to change the current Rules so that the maximum permitted noise level for in-service passenger vehicles manufactured since 1985 is 90 decibels (subject to the exceptions already contained in the Rules for older cars, high performance cars and motor sport vehicles). The issue of the approximately 50,000 vehicles which have already been modified to increase their noise above 90 decibels and less than 95 decibels can easily be accommodated by deferment of the Rules for those vehicles or a grand-parenting provision in the Rules.

Would you please advise whether your party supports a maximum noise level for the existing passenger motor vehicle fleet registered since 1985 of:

- (a) 90 decibels as Australia has had since 1983 (subject to the existing exceptions); or
- (b) 95 decibels (equivalent to the noise of a four stroke motor mower engine at full speed) with only those vehicles registered after 1 June 2008 having to comply with the 90 decibel level as is the Labour Government's current policy.

We would appreciate your early reply so that we may advise our members, supporters and the public of your policy preference prior to the 2008 election.

Yours faithfully

JONATHAN GILLARD  
TRUSTEE - NOISE OFF TRUST