

SHORT ANALYSIS

Oh, what a feeling: The 'Filthy Five' car companies polluting as much as coal mines



Transport is one of Australia's fastest growing sources of climate pollution with cars, vans and utes making up almost two-thirds of transport emissions in Australia. Car manufacturers have a crucial role to play in offering a range of lower and zero emissions vehicles which are cheaper and cleaner to run.

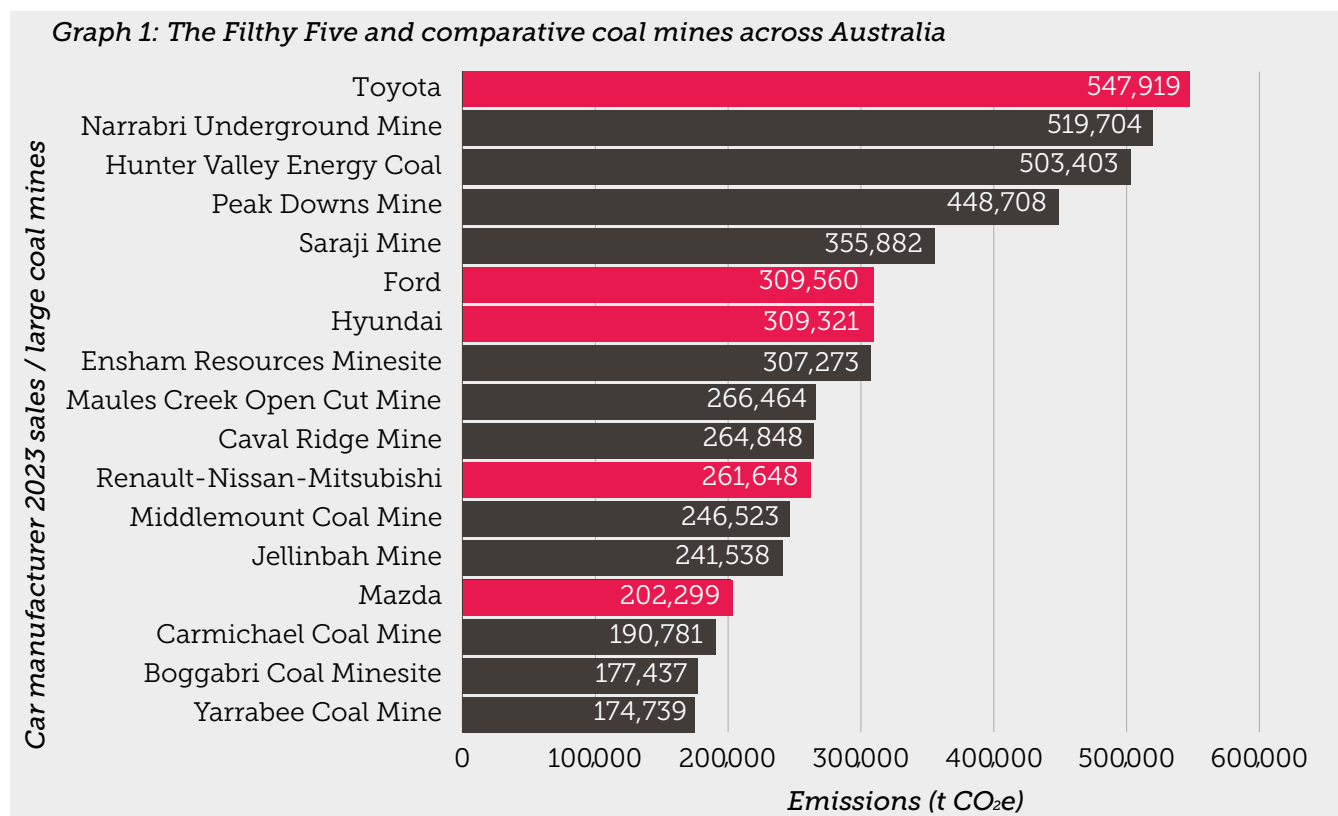
That's not happening right now in Australia. Climate Council has examined 2023 Australian car sales and identified five filthy car companies whose fleets are estimated to be responsible for as much domestic climate pollution as some of Australia's biggest coal mines. The Filthy Five are Toyota, Ford, Hyundai, Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi and Mazda.¹ It's no coincidence that these brands are also some of the loudest opponents of Australia's proposed New Vehicle Efficiency Standard.

The Filthy Five: up there with Australia's coal mines fuelling climate change

Each of the Filthy Five ranks alongside some of Australia's dirtiest coal mines in the amount of climate pollution their cars are estimated to produce in a year. Toyota leads the Filthy Five with its 2023 Australian sales estimated to account for up to 547,919 tonnes of carbon dioxide (t CO₂) emissions - more than 46 big coal mines. Ford and Hyundai are runners up, with their 2023 Aussie sales estimated to be responsible for more climate pollution than 32 coal mines. Renault-Nissan Mitsubishi and Mazda close out the filthy five with estimated climate pollution greater than 26 dirty coal mines and 20 of these climate wrecking facilities, respectively.

Every year these companies are allowed to keep selling the same dirty and inefficient cars, their new fleets will keep pumping out this high level of pollution. Their cars also stay on the road year after year, cumulatively adding to our climate pollution burden over time.

Graph 1: The Filthy Five and comparative coal mines across Australia



Each of the Filthy Five's emissions reflect the actual mix of cars, vans and utes the brand sold in Australia in 2023. The tailpipe emissions for each vehicle a given company sold were used to calculate emissions over the span of a year, using the average distance travelled. Tailpipe emissions differ by model variant and emissions are calculated as if the most emissions intensive variant was purchased (more detailed method and data below). Coal mine emissions are sourced from the [Safeguard Facility Reported Emissions 2021-22](#), which covers facilities greater than 100,000 tonnes of CO₂e (for Scope 1 emissions). The graph above includes a select few as examples.

¹ Car companies listed refer to the overarching company and their subsidiaries. Toyota encompasses both Toyota and Lexus; Hyundai includes Hyundai, Kia and Genesis; Ford, Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi and Mazda have no other subsidiaries.

Being in league with the most polluting fossil fuel - coal - is nothing to be proud of. The Australian Government has laws regulating pollution from coal mines, but at the moment the Filthy Five and other car manufacturers are getting off scot free for their climate-wrecking impacts.

An effective New Vehicle Efficiency Standard can make these car companies clean up their act, so that Australians get access to cleaner cars that are cheaper to run. The transport sector must pull its weight in tackling the climate crisis, starting with these high-polluting multinational brands.

The 'Filthy 'Five' car companies like Toyota and Mazda have been some of the most vocal critics of the proposed New Vehicle Efficiency Standard, but they're the worst offenders when it comes to the climate pollution this policy can help fix.

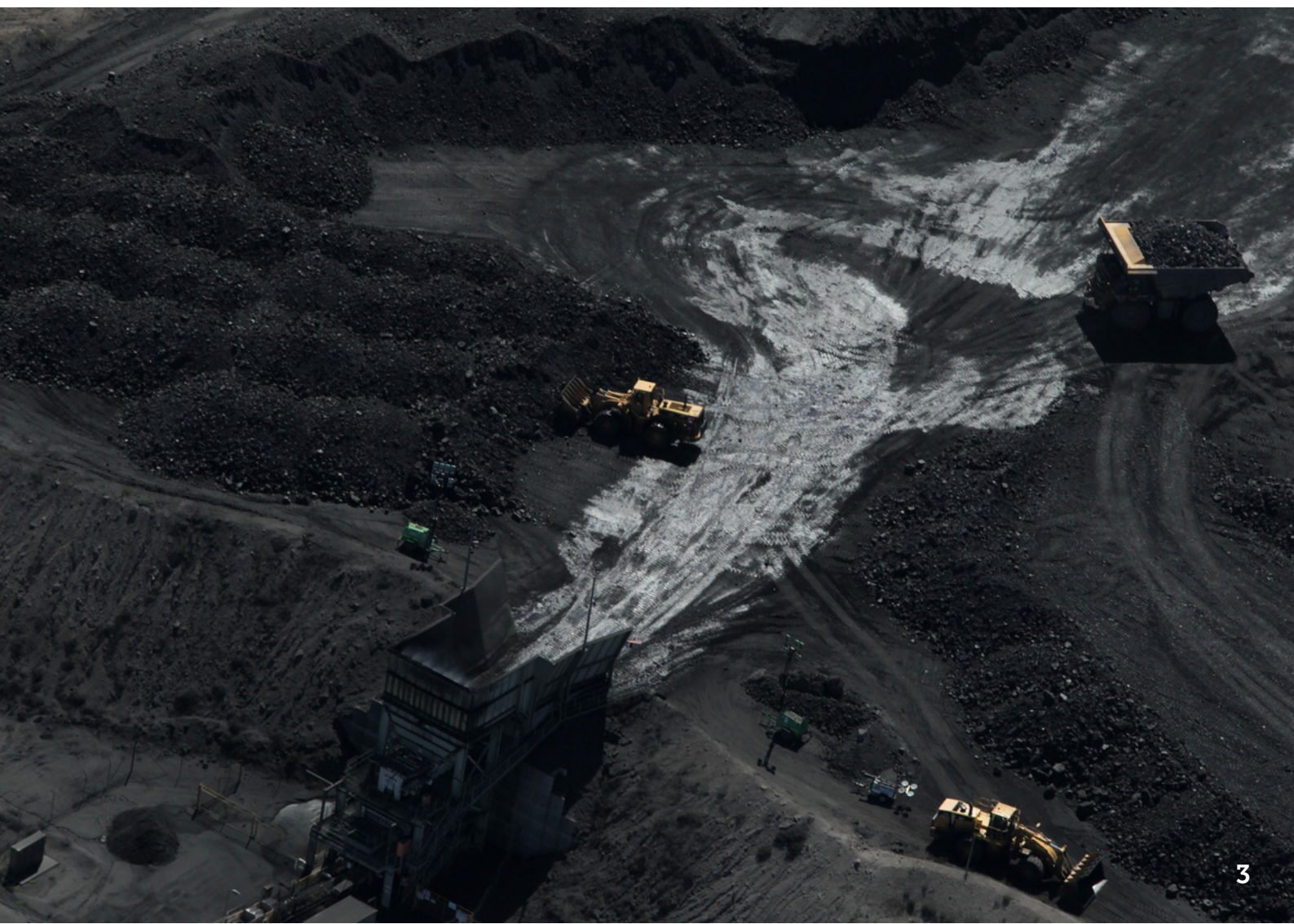


Table 1: Car companies' estimated annual emissions from 2023 vehicle sales

Car company	2023 sales	% of 2023 light duty vehicle sales	Minimum annual estimated emissions (t CO ₂)	Maximum annual estimated emissions (t CO ₂)	% of maximum annual estimated emissions of 2023 light duty vehicle sales
Toyota (owns Toyota and Lexus)	230,074	20	475,321	547,919	23
Ford	87,483	8	230,472	309,560	13
Hyundai (owns Hyundai, Kia, and Genesis)	153,208	13	222,037	309,321	13
Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi	109,560	10	201,350	261,648	11
Mazda	100,008	9	185,167	202,299	8
TOTAL (All sales of light duty vehicles)	1,137,582		1,952,351	2,430,005	

Method

Sales data for 2023 passenger vehicles and light commercial vehicles (LCVs) was sourced from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries' VFACTs database. This data is categorised by marque (car brand) and vehicle model. A vehicle model refers to and encompasses all possible model variations under a particular model (e.g. Toyota Hilux). Parent companies were then attributed to all the marques. A parent company is the owner of multiple marques (i.e. Toyota is the parent company of Toyota and Lexus). The focus of this analysis is these parent companies.

The Green Vehicle Guide was used to determine the combined CO₂ tailpipe emissions for each vehicle model (in CO₂g /km) for model years 2020-2024. VFACTS does not differentiate between model variants. Model variants refer to one specific model variation e.g. model year, wheels driven, engine type etc. This is an important distinction as tailpipe emissions can differ depending on the model variant. Therefore, the lowest and highest CO₂ g /km values were taken between the model years 2020-2024. If there was no data for this date range, the most recent vehicle in the Green Vehicle Guide was used; and in the absence of this data was obtained from manufacturers' websites or other online sources. Parent companies were filtered by maximum emissions and the top five included in this analysis. Five vehicles were excluded due to difficulty in obtaining data, RAM 2500, RAM 3500, Toyota Coaster, Toyota Tundra and Porsche Cayenne coupe.

Annual emissions for each vehicle model were calculated by multiplying tailpipe emissions by the average distance travelled in a year (11,100 km for passenger vehicles or 15,300 for LCVs), multiplied by total sales for 2023, and divided by 1,000,000 to convert from grams to tonnes of CO₂. This resulted in two annual emissions figures, one based on the variant with the lowest tailpipe emissions, and one based on the variant with the highest tailpipe emissions. Estimated company emissions included in this analysis only cover emissions from vehicles sold and driven for a year, and do not include the company's Scope 1 and 2 emissions associated with manufacturing and shipping, or any other downstream Scope 3 emissions. The total annual emissions each company is responsible for would be significantly higher if these direct company emissions were also included. Percentages of sales and emissions are based on the total light duty vehicle sales in 2023.