



Record price

POOR POLICY

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



I love classic cars but, I'm afraid, some of them are getting way beyond my reach.

Here's a case in point.

Recently, Mercedes-Benz in Germany set a new price record of A\$204 million for a 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupe, one of only two cars built.

This massively moves the bar from the previous record of 'only' \$70 million paid for a Ferrari 250 GTO.

But what's really interesting about this 'racing car for the road' is that it's 66 years old and has had only one owner – Mercedes-Benz.

Now, if this car lived in Victoria, having never changed hands, it's possible the Uhlenhaut Coupe would never have had a roadworthy inspection post its original sale in 1956.

I don't have a problem with people owning and enjoying older cars, but this highlights a ridiculous piece of legislation currently enacted in Victoria that adds to the cost of all new vehicles.

When manufacturers build vehicles for sale in Australia, they're required to meet Australian Design Rules and be certified for road use. However, when that vehicle is sold in Victoria it must be submitted for a roadworthy inspection, even if it has travelled zero kilometres. That's ludicrous.

On the other hand, a vehicle that has been in one individual's ownership for decades may fly under the radar. It's strange the Victorian State Government allows this anomaly to occur.

New vehicles shouldn't require a roadworthy, but a roadworthy inspection on all vehicles over eight years of age, or that have driven more than 160,000km, is a good idea.

We have a state election looming and so if we want change, particularly when it comes to road safety, now is the time to call for it.

What do you think?

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FITS LIKE A GLOVE

We're resigned to a long waiting list for a new car so want to make sure we get the right one we can keep for 10 years. We're two adults with a four-year-old and want an all-wheel-drive SUV that can handle gravel roads and a bit of mud. It must be reliable, fuel efficient, safe and cost under \$50,000.

Carly Stott, email

Look at a Toyota RAV4 Cruiser Hybrid AWD – yours for a smidgen over \$50,000 drive-away – or the next model down, the XSE, which you can have on the road for less than \$50k. Fuel economy's 4.7L/100km, services are a few hundred bucks annually and it'll handle rough roads. There's space enough should another offspring arrive too. The wait time is a downside (it's more than a year), but there's no other SUV challenging it for your needs.

WEARING THIN

I've had to replace pads and rotors on my 36,000km Volvo XC40, costing \$1400. One third of this mileage was on highway trips, so I consider these rotors not fit for purpose. Online Volvo owner groups report full brake replacement even earlier. This is my third and last Volvo. I've owned numerous vehicles over the past 60 years, consider myself a light braker and never had this issue on Australian or Japanese cars.

Geoff S, email

I've had letters from other XC40 owners reporting similar. I spoke to a European car specialist and he suggested Volvo's smart safety systems are likely to blame. "Stability control is finely tuned to apply



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the rear brakes without you even realising it and if the Volvo has lane keep assist it can also use the brakes to pull you back into line," he explained. Extra weight also means more work for the brakes – an XC40 is 1600-1700kg depending on grade, potentially quite a bit heavier than your previous cars. Cold comfort for you, but at least it could explain the early wear.

BAR BRAWL

Twice in a year I've had the front of my BMW 320i damaged by 4WDs. On both occasions their drivers moronically reversed into me to avoid being stuck in traffic at the lights. Their tow bars caused \$5000 and \$2700 damage respectively – both did runners to avoid liability and payment. How do these clowns get a licence to drive these tanks if they can't see anyone around them? And shouldn't tow bars be removed unless they're being used?

Stephen Michaels, email
As long as the licence plate isn't obscured, it's legal to keep an unused tow bar on your car. But it's not legal to drive off after causing damage to the front of your BMW. I'd suggest a dashcam (less than \$100) to record the licence plate and evidence should it happen again. There is something to be said for an additional driving test for new drivers if they're getting behind the wheel of a large SUV or dual-cab ute: they demand different driving skill sets to smaller cars. I'm always concerned when I see an L or P plate on a Toyota LandCruiser or Ford Ranger.

THE OILY RAG

Re: cleaning alloy wheels, I find prevention the best approach. Post-cleaning, I dry them off with a mildly oily rag and then properly with an old towel. The oil creates a barrier between brake disc dust and the alloy. Next time I clean the wheels, the normally difficult-to-remove fine black dust lifts off easily.

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER



My mother-in-law has a 2013 Hyundai Elantra with front end noise. The dealership said the top strut mounts are worn and require replacement – at \$700 very expensive for a widowed pensioner. I asked Hyundai customer service if they'd pay parts as a goodwill gesture but they declined. It may be out of warranty but the car's not yet done 60,000km and never been driven off the bitumen. My wife and I owned the same model Elantra and never had this problem, so I believe the parts may have been faulty from new.

Mike Horan, email

It'd be incredibly hard to prove the worn mounts were faulty from new when the problem has only become apparent after nine years of driving. A top strut mount connects a shock absorber to a car's chassis, and while unsealed roads would wear them out sooner, so will the likes of potholes and speed bumps. I'd not expect any car company to offer goodwill on such a wear and tear item, but you could lower the replacement quote by using a good independent workshop instead.

Ian Pegram, email

I've heard similar but using WD-40 in place of oil on a rag. There are also numerous products on the market to clean off stubborn brake dust, as well as protective ceramic coating.

BEYOND BLUE

My Isuzu MU-X LS-T is due to arrive in October 2022. I ordered it in October 2021. I've been advised it doesn't need AdBlue additive for its diesel engine. Is this true?

Greg Dever, email

Your MU-X SUV and D-Max ute share a 3.0-litre diesel engine and no, they don't need AdBlue – a fluid that's injected into the exhaust system to reduce nitrous oxide emissions. Some diesel SUVs do demand it, but not Isuzus.

POOR SHOW

I've recently bought a 2022 Genesis GV70 and inexplicably it doesn't have dynamic rear indicators built into its split tail lights. A major disappointment as it's aesthetically retrograde and a misstep safety-wise. A truck behind can far better see indicators built into tail lights. North American market GV70s have them (in red) and the larger GV80 sold here has dynamic indicators.

Tony Simson, email

These "staggered LED" dynamic indicators will be familiar to those following late model Audis and Volkswagens. The indicators gradually but rapidly illuminate from one end to the other. Your truck visibility point aside, it's other road users who benefit from this cool light show, not the driver, so I wouldn't lose sleep over this omission.

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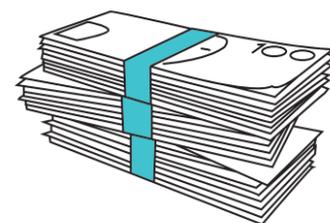
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