

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Round we go

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING BETWEEN YOUR VEHICLE AND THE ROAD

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



get it. Tyres aren't the most interesting things in the world. They're a grudge purchase. They're big rubber donuts.

But those few inches of tyre tread you don't spend much time thinking about is the only thing keeping you on the road. Tyres are incredibly important to your vehicle's performance and to you and your passengers' safety.

Ever since the wheel was invented people have been 'dressing' them to improve comfort, longevity and performance. This is where the word 'tyre' originates. A contraction of attire, a tire (American spelling) is a 'dressed' wheel.

Original 'dressings' included wood, then steel — like on trains — and later, simple rubber strips.

Scotsman Robert Thomson patented the first pneumatic tyre (one that can be inflated), although it is fellow Scot, John Dunlop's cycle tyre, made from 1888, that's considered by many to be the first practical tyre.

Early automobiles appeared around this time. This incentivised manufacturers to produce better tyres. Many of these pioneering companies — like Dunlop, Goodyear, Pirelli, and Michelin — exist today.

Manufacturers spend millions of dollars and countless hours designing, testing and validating tyres for cars, commercials, motorcycles, trucks, mining equipment, farm machinery and plant, and bicycles.

Tyres are being developed specifically for electric vehicles, along with ones that heal themselves when punctured. Tyres that absorb pollution and produce electricity also exist, in prototype form at least.

I don't expect you to get excited about tyres. But they are crucial to your mobility. Consider that next time you're out on the road.

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce in the interest of better motoring.

Share your thoughts ceo@vacc.com.au



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTING AT CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

I've owned a Toyota Kluger for 10 years — great car — but am thinking about changing to the new hybrid model for better fuel economy. Do you think it'll be a good buy or should I wait for some Australian reviews when it arrives before committing?

Tracey Locke, email

I always recommend people see, sit in and drive a car before buying. The Kluger Hybrid is due in June, priced from \$54,150 plus on-roads. Overseas reports suggest it's a good thing and if the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid waiting list has taught us anything it's to get your name down early. As you love your current Kluger, I reckon in your case it's worth the minor risk. Get on the dealer's list ASAP.

CALL WAITING

My 2015 Jeep Grand Cherokee is out of warranty and needs a new sump and timing cover gasket. I contacted FCA Australia (Jeep's importer) via email over a week ago and have not received a reply. Poor customer service.

Darren Pitkin, email

If you're requesting some kind of goodwill repair, be more direct and call Jeep. I tried its number — 1300 133 079 — and was speaking to a consultant in less than a minute. Jeep is on a mission to rebuild trust in Australia after admitting not effectively dealing with customer complaints.

SMART THINKING

When I go mountain biking I don't like taking my car's smart key with me — it's bulky and could get damaged or lost. Instead, I remove



the metal key part and lock the driver's door with that. I've just bought a 2021 Hyundai Santa Fe Highlander and can't find a slot for the metal key; there's just a sensor pad on the door handle linked to the smart key. Any answers?

Adam Hodgkinson, email

Lots of cars have done away with external slots for mechanical keys to keep design cleaner. There's still a lock slot on your Santa Fe, it's just hidden. Pull the outside door handle gently — don't use enough force to open the door — and the key slot is exposed under the handle cover. Your trick is a good one to protect expensive smart keys.

UGLY SPLIT

My 2010 Honda Civic's driver-side sun visor has split open. There was a class action in America for this problem resulting in reimbursement for visor replacement. There's no record of this happening in Australia and my Honda dealer said Honda Australia won't cover this part for me as it's more than 10 years old and has travelled 160,000km. Is there anything I can do?

Chen Anderson, email

The American class action saw Honda extend the Civic sun visor warranty to seven years or 100,000 miles (160,000km). I think you're asking a lot for a goodwill replacement here, but it's worth a shot — make sure you contact Honda Australia directly yourself. I've found a used sun visor for your car on eBay. It's \$70 including postage from NSW. Sounds reasonable.

SIZE MATTERS

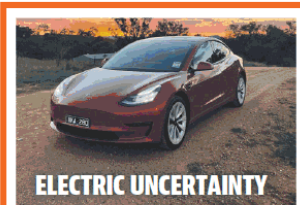
I was pleased by Gai Smith's letter asking for car recommendations but only if they had a full-size spare tyre. Try returning home on a Sunday from a country drive when a tyre suffers a side-wall split. Nothing's open; run flats or repair kits are useless, and who wants a long trip home at 80km/h on a space saver?

David Gray, email

I agree, with one caveat. The driver or a passenger must be able to change a full-size spare wheel if it's provided. We can't always rely on good Samaritans.

NO CARNIVAL

Last month I took delivery of a new 2021 Honda Odyssey Vi LX7. What a



ELECTRIC UNCERTAINTY

Loved your Tesla Model 3 review. Comparing its running costs to those of a Toyota Camry was very helpful in this era's shift from petrol to electric. But if the government is looking to charge electric and plug-in hybrid drivers per kilometre travelled, how does that work into the equation?

Chris Wanless, email

If the proposed road user charges for electric cars are introduced, it would make Australia one of the few places on earth to disincentivise EV uptake. The rest of the world incentivises it. I'm convinced a tax won't happen until EVs make up a significant proportion of vehicles on our road.



disappointment. Price increase, grossly underpowered, no front or rear parking sensors, no 360-degree camera, no 60/40 third-row seat split and the only USB ports are two in the dash. And this is a family-orientated vehicle! Get a Kia Carnival instead.

Raymond Black, email

I assume your Odyssey's a company car? I'm sure you wouldn't have bought it after testing one and having so many grumbles. I've not sampled this new model, but the entry-level price rise to about \$48,000 drive-away, your noted omissions and less power and torque than the Carnival don't help its cause. It only has seven seats, too, but positives include leather trim, second-row captain's chairs, power sliding doors and strong active safety.

DOUBLE UP

Re: advising a vehicle suitable for both outback and city driving, the only solution we've found is owning both a 4WD set up for camping and a town car. Instead of buying a new car that tries to do it all, we buy two good quality second-hand vehicles.

Melva Stott, email

Fair point. No car can do it all. A talented off-roader is a cumbersome, bouncy thing in town, and last I checked a little Suzuki Swift is not much chop on the Canning Stock Route. If you've space for two cars, and don't mind two sets of rego and service bills, your solution makes sense.

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Motoring

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