



## ZEV tax ALL ROAD USERS SHOULD PAY

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



How would you feel if you knew your neighbour paid lower council rates than you because they grew vegetables, or if a work colleague paid less tax than you because they cycled to work?

Not happy? I thought so.

But what if a similar scenario existed for motorists, whereby you paid for the build and upkeep of the roads you drive on and some other road users paid a lot less, maybe nothing?

Some bodies want the owners of internal combustion-powered vehicles to do just that — pay for our roads, while those who choose electric vehicles escape paying their fair share.

The Victorian State Government has steered the right course on this debate.

Its contentious Zero and Low Emission Vehicle Distance-based Charge Bill 2021 passed the Victorian Legislative Council recently, and a new road user charge came into play from July 1.

Now, 2.5 cents per kilometre will be charged to owners of Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV) — which includes hydrogen, although few hydrogen passenger vehicles are commercially available in this country — and two cents for plug-in hybrid vehicles.

Some industry groups criticised the Bill, claiming it would discourage the uptake of low or no emissions vehicles.

VACC contends that it's the fairest way to improve and maintain the state's road network — if a motorist uses the roads, they should help pay for the build and upkeep.

Let's get one thing straight — the State Government's electric vehicle road user charge is not about the environment or being a gas guzzler or a greenie.

It's about roads. That's all.

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

Share your thoughts  
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### IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Re: Charlie Beecham's letter on Chinese cars, I believe their sales growth is for two reasons. They're built to a better standard than previously and, as opposed to competitors, currently have stock in reasonable numbers. I've been waiting seven months for a new Hyundai due to stock shortages. It will be interesting to see if strong Chinese sales continue when rivals have proper stock again. Jeff Graham, email

Sound reasoning. The likes of MG are also cheaper, well equipped and have a seven-year warranty. I'm not a fan of the way they drive but for many consumers this won't be a huge concern.

### BE PREPARED

Re: defrosting windows, 99.9 per cent of today's cars have the means to do this and it takes two minutes. Go out to your car, start the engine and turn the air conditioner and heater to full. Set the controls to demist and your windows will defrost. I've told this to a hundred people and they look at me like I'm a madman. Just try it! Herb Healey, email

Who has two free minutes when trying to get three tardy kids out the front door for the school run? Okay, good suggestion. You should turn the air recirculation off and drop your windows a bit too. But you'll still need to scrape ice off your windows.

### HYBRID DINOSAUR

Re: hybrid cars' longevity, we bought a 2005 Toyota Prius in 2008, now showing 210,000km. The only repairs or replacements needed have been three sets of tyres, front brake rotors and pads all around. We'll happily buy a replacement nickel-hydrate battery rather than selling it as we trust the car. It's still

performing well and does 5L/100km in town and 4.6L/100km on long runs. Graham and Lilian Warner, email

Good to hear. I was quoted \$2350 for a new Prius battery from my local Toyota dealer, and you also receive a \$500 rebate when surrendering your old battery. It's about three hours labour too — roughly \$450. That's not cheap at about \$2300 all up, but not crippling, either, and new ones have a ten-year warranty. Third-party companies offer refurbished batteries for less.

### FEEL GOOD FACTOR

In recent years you've focused on battery-powered cars that nobody can afford and aren't relevant if you live in the country. I can't see the fuss with battery cars when they have to be charged by fossil fuel and cost twice as much to buy. Is it just to make you feel good? Steve Peters, email

Electric cars aren't suitable for everyone. And you're right, they are still very pricey. But we can't ignore them. Some car brands have committed to phasing out petrol cars altogether over the next decade, while all the mainstream brands are committed to EVs. Electric vehicles can be charged using home solar, while Chargefox's ultra-rapid stations are powered by 100 per cent renewable energy and batteries.

### LAZY SHIFT

On four occasions I've experienced acceleration lag from a standing start with my 2021 Kia Cerato GT. Once this almost resulted in an accident. I've described the issue to my Kia dealer and they say they know of no other occurrences. My friend with the same car has had the same issue. Can you shed any light? Greg Argue, email

I'm afraid it's just the nature of Kia's (and many other brands') dual-clutch transmission. I experienced similar when testing the Cerato GT. It's a brilliant gearbox for quick changes on a back-road, but can be very slow to wake up from standstill or low speeds. When I tested it, I found using Sport mode improved low-speed hesitancy.



After 70,000km my Mercedes-AMG A45's light came on and it had what appeared to be a misfire. A full investigation revealed a failed injector, the head needed a rebuild with all eight exhaust valves being replaced at a total cost of more than \$7500. It was out of warranty so I requested a goodwill repair as it's only been serviced with Mercedes and at less than five years old would be covered under Mercedes' new warranty. I was told the best I could hope for was them possibly covering parts but me the labour. Shane Smith, email

That is an early failure and it transpires Mercedes has improved its goodwill offer after further investigation of the matter. Mercedes-Benz Germany diagnosed an injector fault caused the valve issue and they'll cover the cost of replacement parts as well as putting the engine head back together. They will also cover 50 per cent of the remaining labour. We're also told only the single damaged valve needed replacing. You tell us "the result is as good as I could expect under the circumstances," so hopefully you can get back to enjoying that beastly engine.

You can also ask the Kia dealer to try a transmission reset at your next service.

### HEAVY LOAD

Can an electric tailgate be retrofitted? My 2019 Ford Focus hatchback's boot is very heavy, I open it several time a day and have torn a tendon in my shoulder as a result. Susan Matrin, email

There are third party companies that do this, but it's not cheap. Factor on parts and installation costing more than \$1000 — quotes vary depending on the type of car. Companies specialising in converting vehicles for disabled people typically offer the service.

### WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

I bought a 2010 Toyota Corolla last year, but my pre-purchase test was limited to 55km/h. After purchase I noticed a slight whine at 60km/h, which disappeared at 70km/h. The dealer changed the transmission oil but no improvement and I'm concerned I've bought a lemon. Marie Heggie, email

The whine you hear could be a few things but a slight noise doesn't mean it's a lemon. It's an 11-year-old car, so we can't expect it to be perfect.

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