



Precious metals

URBAN MINING IS KEY

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Cars, batteries, and particularly electric vehicle batteries, are full of important resources that we need to recover and reuse.

Precious metals such as lithium, copper, cobalt and graphite are all finite – that is, we can't just create more when we need them.

They need to be mined from the earth or urban mined from things we have already used.

With the growth in the uptake of electric vehicles in Australia moving to about 26 per cent by 2030, it's clear we need to shift our battery recycling rates from about 3 per cent to big double digits, even up to 80 per cent.

That's all batteries, including those in cars, torches, computers and almost every household appliance that blips when you turn it on.

Metals recovered from electric vehicle batteries, including lithium, can go back into new batteries, which underpins one of the key purchasing decisions for EV drivers.

For the automotive industry, this is about having a national plan for end-of-life vehicles that includes the full recovery of EV batteries.

Given we are at a new beginning with electric power trains – we had a good go back in 1910 – it's an ideal time for government to hatch a master plan that manages the recycling of critical metals in batteries, which would make buying an EV a truly green pursuit.

How about a battery deposit scheme for all new EVs that helps offset the cost of recovering these precious metals?

That's an idea worth pursuing.

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce



[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

CHAMPAGNE EDITION

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Hooray! Last week we had a full Motoring section without a single SUV or dual-cab ute. By the way, the Hyundai i20N looks tempting. Ray Kapel, email

I had a track blast in the i20N and it's a brilliant little hot hatch. We'd love to write more about performance cars, hatchbacks and sedans, but the vast majority of Australian buyers prefer SUVs and utes.

ROLLING OVER

I use the term "once around the clock" to denote a car that's done 100,000km, but my spouse disagrees that's the phrase's meaning. I assume it refers to when analog odometers had only five numbers, which reset from 99,999 to 00000, and not to current digital odometers, which show at least six numbers. Melanie Lau, email

The origin is as you say: 100,000km meant once around the clock as your odometer rolled over to 00000km. Mercedes-Benz claims to be first to introduce a six-digit odometer on its 1971 350 SL.

MIRACLES HAPPEN

Re: battery life, our 2010 Holden Barina has done 310,000km on its original battery and hasn't missed a beat. Alan Jones, email

That battery life is a marvel, but a Barina engine managing over 300,000km is a deadset miracle.

BRAVO, SIR

Re: battery life, my 1990 Mazda Bravo has just received its first battery replacement. That's only because I accidentally left the headlights on all day. Mick Olden

Good grief!

TREAD PATTERN

My 2018 Subaru XV has travelled 24,800km. I've been told the tyres will probably need

replacing at its next service. There's 2mm tread left on the fronts and 3mm on the rears. The dealer said because it's an all-wheel-drive tyres wear out faster. Is this true? Paul Todd, email

It's typical for front tyres to wear out faster than rears on all-wheel-drives, so hopefully the dealer rotated yours. Minimum legal tread is 1.5mm, and you can easily check this yourself. Tyre pressures, tyre balance, wheel alignment and driving style all affect tyre lifespan. Yours are wearing a bit early, but not dramatically so.

TOUGH TERRITORY

Re: the Ford Territory being one of the best Australian-made vehicles, our 2007 is 412,000km old and still going strong. It's been used for ski trips, has towed a caravan, boat and trailer and been used as accommodation with a mattress inside. It's comfy, had few problems and it's power means it'll pass anything. Except a petrol station. Kevin Bourke, email

Not all Territory owner stories are this rosy, but yours shows it's possible. Just don't ever total how much you've spent on fuel over the years to manage those 400,000km.

UTTER DRIVEL

I read with mirth your comment regarding 1980s Toyota Corollas surviving a nuclear holocaust. Having been involved with Toyotas during that era I know they are not as you espouse. I don't know where journos get this dribble from. Early Toyotas rusted badly, upholstery fell to pieces, had oil and shock absorber leaks, problematic engines and more. When are we going to get balanced opinions from actual experience? I'm confounded by an illusion perpetuated by some who are not in charge of the facts. Jim Stanfield, email

Number one rule of motoring journalism: report as you find. I've owned 1976 and 1984 Toyotas. One took me from Perth to Brisbane and the only repair needed was cleaning a battery terminal. The 35-year-old is still going today having lived the past 15 years by the sea. My comment wasn't meant to be taken too



BIG CHOICE

I'm looking at new seven-seat SUVs to tow a small boat. My budget's \$50,000, so what would you recommend between a Mazda CX-9, Kia Sorento or Toyota Kluger?

Paul Giannakis, email

All are strong choices and tow 2000kg, so it comes down to personal choice. Your budget only buys entry-level petrol variants, so you'll have to decide which standard features you deem most important. I'd go the Kia Sorento S at \$49,290 drive-away. The diesel's worth the extra \$3000 if you're planning long trips, and check out the Mazda CX-8 Sport AWD diesel too. The Sorento has the longest warranty at seven years.

seriously, but I'd still argue Toyota's reliability trumps most.

CLEVER TORQUE

Re: engines and towing, it's not number of cylinders but torque that counts. Look at 6.0-litre V8s of yesteryear, which weighed three times as much but had less torque than modern 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesels. Felix Wyss, email

Torque's your best friend when it comes to heavy towing or driving up hills. But speaking to those who tow, many like larger displacement or more cylinders as engines can feel less stressed and less likely to rev hard as the gearbox tries to decide on cogs. An unstressed engine should prove more reliable too. Electric pick-ups are about to be huge business. The all-electric Ford F-150 Lightning's on sale in the US next year, has 420kW, 1050Nm of instant torque and tows 4535kg. Range is up to 480km. These could change the towing game this decade.

OUT OF RANGE

I'm struggling to find off-road tyres for my 2016 Range Rover Sport. I want to travel the back roads of Flinders Ranges and Oodnadatta Track. The current Continentals are great but don't fill me with confidence off-road. Is there a suitable 21-inch tyre? I don't want to change rims if I can avoid it. Bryan Mason

If it's hard to find such tyres in town, think how hard it'll be to get 21-inch replacements in the outback. The Rangie should handle the rough stuff but those low-profile Continentals won't. It may be wiser to buy a spare set of 20-inch rims with all-terrain rubber, which will be easier to replace in remote areas. Speak to an aftermarket 4WD specialist and get five 20-inch rims with something like 285/50x20 all-terrain tyres. Not cheap, but then you can swap between on- and off-road rims.

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