



Heading out again

RECOMMISSIONING YOUR VEHICLE IS SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

If, like many of us, you've been working from home for months, you probably haven't used your vehicle much. Maybe not at all.

That's fine.

But in the future — perhaps when you start to return to the office — you'll need your vehicle to be in safe working order.

While you're home you can keep an eye on your vehicle's battery to ensure it doesn't go flat. Do this by starting up your vehicle a couple of times a week and let it idle for 10 minutes. Or perhaps take it for a short run to the shops once a week.

You should also check over the tyres for any deflation, and inflate them to the manufacturers' recommended pressures at the closest service station.

If you are confident, check the condition of your engine's oil and coolant at the same time.

Conducting these simple procedures should ensure your vehicle is in good working order while it's hibernating in the carport.

But time and non-use are the enemies of complicated machinery, like a vehicle. They need a run to keep things lubricated and operating smoothly. Even if they are not being driven regularly, vehicles need to have their oil and fluids changed, as these degrade over time.

The best thing to do is have a professional look over your vehicle for any service and safety issues to ensure your car, motorcycle or commercial is in tip-top shape, and that it will be ready to go when you are.

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

Share your thoughts
ceo@vacc.com.au



FORWARD PLANNING

ROADSIDE ASSIST

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I've recently ordered a Toyota RAV4 Hybrid and am expecting a six-month wait. What sort of fuel economy can I realistically expect to get from the Hybrid?

Ron Peckitt, email

Demand for the RAV4 Hybrid remains incredibly high — Toyota just can't build them quickly enough. In terms of real-world fuel economy, it depends where you drive it. In urban areas, it uses roughly half the petrol of the non-hybrid AWD RAV4 — 5.0 L/100km versus 9.4L/100km — as the Hybrid can run on battery power alone at low speeds, then recharge when braking. This happens only rarely on the highway. The Hybrid's official combined economy is 4.8L/100km. On my "real world" test I returned 5.6L/100km: excellent for a mid-size family SUV.

WHEEL WORRY

Re: rattle gun tightened wheel nuts. Could they do damage to the rim itself, and/or the nut? I'm worried about my alloy rims.

Paul Andriessen, email

The technician would have to be being very careless, but yes, overtightening can strip nut threads, as well as damage your wheels and your brake discs. A good tyre workshop will always use a torque stick (limiting the tightness) with the rattle/impact gun. Better yet, they'll do final tightening with a torque wrench. Damage can also come if your nuts have been overtightened and you struggle to remove them during a roadside wheel change.

CRACKING COVERAGE

Re: cracked Toyota Prado dashboards, you told Gary McNeil his car was "18 years old so we can't expect any help from Toyota." We took our 2003 Prado to Mandurah Toyota in WA, they photographed our cracked dashboard, sent it to Toyota Australia and we were given a free dashboard, only paying

labour costs for fitting. This happened only last month.

Lorraine Atherton, email

Wow. Incredible service from Toyota. I've never heard of a goodwill repair on an 18-year-old car. I feel for Toyota Customer Service now. They may get bombarded with similar requests. What's next? HK Holden owners badgering General Motors for goodwill repairs on dodgy 50-year-old water pumps?

NOISE CANCELLING

I've just bought a new Hyundai Tucson. I'm very happy with it, but tyre noise from the Kumho Crugens on coarse chip roads is appalling. Can you suggest something to quieten things down a bit?

Barry C, email

I've not personally used a set, but have had friends recommend Michelin Primacy tyres for much reduced road noise. Numerous readers have written in to confirm this.

CUT IT OUT

Re: the reader with torn leather seats in his four-year-old Mazda BT-50, my 2012 Ford Territory Titanium had a similar problem. It reached about 50mm long, but despite being out of warranty Ford arranged supply and fitment of a new leather seat squab at no cost. This is how a customer expects to be and should be treated.

GD, email

Re BT-50 worn seats, the same thing happened to mine. Outside warranty, my Mazda dealer in Orange had them re-covered at no cost, acknowledging it was the "substandard quality of the hide" that caused the issue. Suffice to say I will (and did!) buy another Mazda.

John Newton, email

Who knew? Proper customer care brings return business. I bet you bought your new Mazda from the same Orange dealer, too.

OVER SANITISED

Re: Wearing Down, my 2015 Subaru also had a



THIS YEAR'S MODEL?

I've just booked in my Santa Fe to my local Hyundai service centre only to learn it's a year older than I was told when I bought it new. The compliance plate on the door states 09/2017 and I bought it in 10/2017. The service data shows it was manufactured in late October 2016 and I've been informed I have to sell it as a 2016 model. I'm fairly angry and hope the five-year warranty period started on the day of purchase.

Bernie Hayes, email

Panic not, sounds like you've been misinformed. For starters, the five-year warranty definitely begins from the date of purchase, not build or compliance date. Car model years don't run to calendar years, so I checked with Hyundai Australia and was told the MY17 Santa Fe started production in May 2016, so yours is definitely a MY17, although built in 2016. You can advertise yours as a Santa Fe "Model Year 2017" or "MY17".

steering wheel wear issue, and my Subaru service department also suggested hand sanitiser to be the cause. Within a week Subaru Australia approved a goodwill replacement. My daughter's 2018 Toyota Corolla had a similar delamination issue, but Toyota would not assist. It's not hard to guess what our next vehicle is going to be.

Garry Christensen, email

As above, here's your ABC for snaring return custom. This sanitiser-damaged steering wheel problem may well snowball. Will manufacturers respond with coatings that don't break down from alcohol-based sanitisers?

RELATIONSHIP DETERIORATING

I have a 2018 Suzuki Ignis with 73,000km. It also has steering wheel deterioration and I don't use any cream or wear rings. This is my third and last Suzuki.

Kevin Hughes, email

That is early wear, and your car is still under warranty. Give Suzuki a chance to put it right. They may offer a warranty or goodwill fix. Contact their customer care and see if they'll help.



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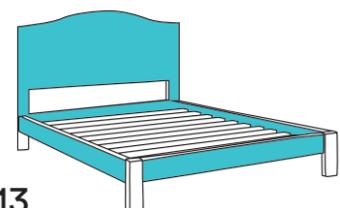
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