

ADVERTISING FEATURE



Alternative fuels

GOING THE DISTANCE

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



The Australian Government is optimistically focusing its carbon emission plans around new technologies, including 'green hydrogen', to meet ever-growing environmental pressures.

Green hydrogen is a great technology, creating electricity by extracting hydrogen from sources such as water for power generation, energy storage, and to propel the vehicle fleet.

The problem is we are caught in the convenience trap that has provided vehicle fuels locally and on almost every corner for more than 100 years.

We have grown so used to having fuel retail outlets ubiquitously spread across the country that any suggestion electric or hydrogen fuel stations may not be evenly spread in the same way will no doubt be a concern to motorists.

Electric charging stations are actually less of a problem from a technology point of view, given the electricity network touches almost every property in the country.

But hydrogen needs to be injected into vehicles at an extremely high pressure and at very low temperatures. Thus arrives the problem of convenience.

Could we realistically envisage mini hydrogen plants dotted through suburbia?

Would the cost of the installation outweigh other advantages?

This is a big consideration for government. Even if we can get the production costs of hydrogen down to a realistic level by 2050, how do we get it into vehicles given we don't have hydrogen at home?

This is where industry insight and research really come in.

Big decisions need to be made, which will impact motorists and those working in the industry — it just makes sense to draw on expert knowledge to ensure Australia stays on the right track.

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 MOTURING AT
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

I agree with Paul Williams; I miss exciting Australian-made cars. My VF Commodore SS-V Redline wagon always has me looking back when walking away. I remember when buying new cars was exciting. My wife just tested the Mazda3 and Toyota Corolla. She didn't like either, and has instead fallen in love with a Mazda CX-30. Damn SUVs!

Matthew Simpson, email
If you must buy an SUV, the CX-30 is a very good one. Yet picking one over the gorgeous and talented (albeit pricey) Mazda3 has me with head in hands. Exciting new cars are out there but the trend towards SUVs, dull design and auto/CVT gearboxes is bad news for those who love cars.

GLOBAL SHORTAGE

Re: your advice to get a bicycle rather than wait for a new car due to supply issues, there are waiting times for those too. I put a deposit down in March and it won't arrive until July.

Dave Lardner, email
It's not just pushbikes either. I see motorcycle makers Yamaha, Honda and Kawasaki have apologised for delays in new deliveries too — production slowdowns due to the pandemic, freight issues and global shortage of semiconductors.

KEEP IT REAL

As a consistent reader of your column, I note

many car owners have issues and faults with relatively new vehicles. People need to realise age is often not the issue but how well the car's maintained, driven and serviced. I own a 2004 Citroen C5 wagon, bought three years ago for \$4000. Airconditioning aside, it's had barely an issue and I travel between 200km and 700km per week. It's checked mechanically before long trips and valeted twice a year.

Ira Zettler, email
Too true. Fresh lubricants and sticking to service schedules usually prevents problems. Sadly, it won't always work that way and even the best-maintained cars get sick. Conversely, my old housemate had a 1984 Ford Falcon XE beach car he proudly boasted hadn't seen a mechanic's workshop or fresh engine oil in six years. Somehow, it refused to die.

CASH IN HAND

With the used car price surge and more cash changing hands for privately sold vehicles, what's the best or easiest way of transacting this money to ensure it goes through without any issues?

Daryl Rowe, email
An in-branch bank transfer between buyer and seller is safest. This proves the buyer has the funds, and once transferred, they can drive away the new car. Cash is quickest, but I'd suggest, if possible, doing the exchange inside a bank where you're both on camera and the cash can immediately be deposited. Internet bank transfers can take a few days to clear, and like a bank cheque, can be cancelled. Write out a receipt with the car's details, registration and full details of buyer and seller.



BATTERY SWAP

After reading your Kia Niro electric vehicle article it highlighted a long-term problem all EVs will have. If I buy this latest Kia and the new model (EV6) arrives in 12 months with far quicker charging times, can this new battery pack go into the Niro or are the fittings incompatible? Basically, can an older model be retrofitted with new technology batteries?

Guy Huntley, email
Good question. Battery technology is improving apace, and fitting more efficient units of the future to older EVs will hopefully be an option. Concerning your Kia example, the just-launched Niro's battery cells, packs and modules look the same as the far more exciting EV6's. It launches later this year/early 2022. However, the latter's architecture and battery pack mounting points are different, so a straight swap wouldn't be as easy as taking Duracell AAAs out of your remote control and putting them in an alarm clock.

CREOPY KIA

Kia has a rather creepy ad at the moment featuring a large shadowy vehicle and the line: "The first GUV." My interpretation would be Great Ugly Vehicle?

Patricia Woolcock, email
Oh, Patricia. Just when Kia has made people movers sexy! The ad is for the new Carnival, and GUV stands for Grand Utility Vehicle. I recently tested the Carnival SLi Diesel (\$62,790 drive-away) and have developed an unhealthy obsession with the eight-seater. I've become a practicality-loving dad in my old age, plus it's luxurious, loaded with safety and looks gorgeous. But why the ad is shot at a racetrack is beyond me. It's a lumbering unit, not a sports car.

POOR PASS

I've witnessed motorists giving cyclists too much space when overtaking them, crossing way over to the wrong side of the road regardless of oncoming traffic. The rule is one-metre width when passing in a 60km/h or lower zone, and 1.5 metres if over 60km/h. Cyclists riding to the left of the cycle lane would help their longevity too.

Johnny Aldersey, email
Better too much space than not enough. It's not always practical for a cyclist to be to the left of a cycle lane due to potholes, broken glass or debris. Drivers can briefly cross painted lines to overtake, but only when there's a clear view and it's safe to do so. I know it can feel inconvenient waiting to pass a cyclist, but if the risk of killing someone isn't incentive enough, on-the-spot fines may be. In Queensland, if the matter goes to court, a fine of more than \$5300 can apply.

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