



Aussie icon

UTE BOOM

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



When it comes to classic cars, Australia certainly has the goods. Our beloved Fords and Holdens are more valuable than ever. They're collectors' items, but what about the modern vehicles making motorists' mouths water?

Overall Toyota is the most popular vehicle marque in Australia again – 19 years and counting – taking out 21.3 per cent of the 2021 new vehicle market and outselling its nearest rival Mazda by more than two-to-one. And if I dig even deeper, for the sixth consecutive year the Toyota HiLux was Australia's best-selling new vehicle with a record 52,801 units sold last year.

Yes, the humble ute has always been an iconic part of the Australian motoring landscape but clearly, it has moved above and beyond the farm and 'tradey' domain.

This is the first time in Australian automotive history that a ute has led the new vehicle market over such a long period. Additionally, last year marked the first time that utes and vans combined outsold passenger cars.

Why? Well, while they may not be cheap, they are flexible and practical.

The ute has become the go-to adventure and getaway vehicle, while also having the potential to tick the 'family-friendly' box. The appeal extends to younger drivers too. The Commodore and Falcon were once the dream machines. It was almost a cultural statement. Which crew were you? Now the choices are endless but, across the board, the ute is right up there.

So, our love affair with the ute continues to go from strength to strength. Yes, the Toyota HiLux has taken the top spot in recent years, but I wonder what changes the electric fleet will bring? Petrol and diesel utes will need to make way for zero and low emission solutions.

It's not an 'if' but a 'when' scenario.

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce

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[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

EASY ON THE BRAKES



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO **MOTORING AT**
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
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Re: brake wear my 2015 Holden Malibu CDX has travelled 270,000km and has never had brake pads or rotors replaced. It drives like new and is the best Holden I've ever had; my first was a new 1972 HQ and I've had several Commodores too.

Geoff Grace, email
Make a list of history's greatest Holdens and you're more likely to find a Ford Falcon on it than the Malibu. But it wasn't a bad car by any stretch, and the diesel was the pick for decent shove to match an impressive chassis. It was just painfully dull. Owners seem to love them, and next to other Holdens of this era (Cruze and Barina) the Malibu's proved a reliable thing. But who knew the brakes were bulletproof?

REASON TO SMIRK

I smirked at your reply to Col Linton (LandCruiser) and John Lind (Kluger) about Toyota's long lasting brake pads. They didn't say if they drive long distances which means significant longevity as brakes are barely used compared to city driving. I've seen Subaru pads last up to 400,000km but nothing's said about them, only half-baked stories about Toyotas.

Jim Stanfield, email
Fair point. If you drive a million kilometres without stopping your brakes will remain good as new. Well, aside for some surface rust. You're right, constant stop-starting in cities wears brakes faster, but so does pulling up heavy rigs such as LandCruisers and Klugers. Even on long trips they must brake at some point.

STOP STOPPING

I'm convinced Mazda's i-stop, which switches off the engine when stationary, is little more than a scam to sell overpriced batteries. In our

Mazda3's case I estimate it saves only 10 litres of fuel per year, while a replacement battery costs in the vicinity of \$500. I habitually turn off i-stop every time I start the car. The Mazda service manager told me everyone hates i-stop but they're not allowed to turn it off permanently. I've read it can be disabled by adjusting a service switch near the bonnet release catch, would you recommend that?

Bob Wrycuda, email
It's your car, your choice. On Mazda forums others have used this service switch method (there's another trick with a bit of cardboard too) to successfully prevent i-stop working. Stop-start technology reduces idle emissions – let's all agree that's a good thing – but is annoying and adds more strain on parts such as the starter motor and battery. You do need a pricier stop-start battery, but I don't think it's a scam. My 2017 VW Golf has the technology and turning it off has become as automatic as putting on my seatbelt. Even so, I wish the switch was "opt-in" rather than "opt-out".

GROWING FAMILY

I'm looking for a \$15-20,000 used family car. It needs to have space for a baby seat or two, and I have Mitsubishi, Kia and Hyundai in mind. What do you recommend?

Justin Furno, email
With two young kids you don't need huge space, but you do want reliability and safety. Look for a post-April 2018 Hyundai i30 Go or i30 Active with optional SmartSense safety pack. It's a great all-rounder and will have some of its five-year warranty remaining. Current-generation Kia Cerato hatches (the "BD" series) from 2019 can be found for about \$20,000 and appeal with a seven-year warranty, strong safety and decent size. A 2018 VW Golf 7.5 suits too – we have one for our two kids – they're a great drive but only came with a three-year factory warranty. All have boots large enough for a baby stroller.

CHEAP FIX

Re: John Baguley's worn Hyundai carpet after 18,000km, Honda refused to replace my



TURBO TROUBLES

I bought a new Mazda CX-5 2.2-litre diesel in June 2014. After 33,000km and three years the engine was replaced by Mazda under warranty. Nobody would explain to me what had happened to cause it to blow up. Now at 68,000km the turbo has malfunctioned. A replacement from Mazda is approximately \$7000 and we'll have to pay. What are your thoughts? I'd expect a turbo to last a lot longer?

Greg Fox, email
A number of CX-5 diesel owners have reported turbo failure. The model was recalled in October 2019 for "an issue with accumulation of carbon deposits in the engine's intake shutter valve" that may cause "premature wear of some engine parts". Did you receive a recall notice and have the work done? Regardless, a turbo should last longer than eight years and 68,000km. If your services were carried out on time, speak to Mazda Australia and ask for a goodwill repair. If no joy, you can discuss options with the ACCC if you deem the turbo wasn't fit for purpose. If you have no choice but to repair it, a Mazda specialist should be able to reduce that \$7000 quote.

Civic's brake pedal mat at just 1500km. I've used a Kmart mat to cover it for the past year with no sign of wear so far.

Brian Jamison, email
Did you have sandpaper on your shoe soles for those first 1500 kilometres Brian? That's very early wear, but you've found the best solution. A decent set of mats are imperative if car companies are too stingy to make them standard fit.

JOIN THE QUEUE

I'm interested in a new car and can't decide between a Suzuki Jimny or Toyota RAV4. I only want a small three-door car and would like to know the safety features and price of these two please.

Cheryl Gould, email
I hope you're in no rush Cheryl – you've chosen two in-demand SUVs with lengthy waiting lists. Order a Jimny now and you'll be waiting years so you'd need an ex-demo, currently from a whopping \$40,000 drive-away. The Suzuki only has a 3 Star ANCAP crash rating and basic safety. They're brilliant off-road and full of character, but not great for daily driving on the bitumen. A basic ex-demo RAV4 to drive away is about \$48,000, which is way over its RRP. It has great safety but is too big for your needs if you fancy a small car. I'd research the Kia Picanto, Suzuki Swift, VW Polo and Toyota Yaris. These have far better availability and cost about \$20,000. Three-doors barely exist these days; all of the above are small five-doors.

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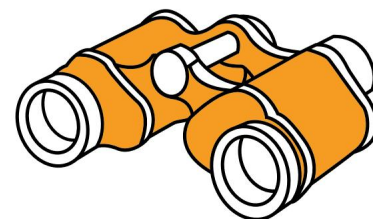
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