



Federal or state?

FORK IN THE ROAD TO LOW EMISSIONS

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Victorians have two elections to contemplate next year, and the environment will be key to who controls power.

The incumbent federal and state governments have begun outlining their environmental credentials, but there's a problem — they don't line up.

Daniel Andrews has pledged to halve Victoria's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 — in part by increasing new zero emissions vehicle (ZEV) sales to 50 per cent.

This move goes further than anything offered at a federal level.

There are fewer than 7000 ZEVs currently registered in Victoria, although subsidies should increase that number.

But I am not a supporter of distorting markets through subsidies, as this can unfairly benefit one business over another.

Victorian motorists can now receive a \$3000 subsidy when buying ZEVs.

Applicable to cars only, motorists can access the subsidy once and businesses twice.

Scott Morrison on the other hand has vowed motorists will have freedom of choice regarding EV uptake, ruling out banning petrol and diesel vehicles or using big subsidies to encourage people to make the switch.

The Prime Minister has committed to a technological approach instead.

The Low Emissions Technology Commercialisation Fund is part of the federal government's overall plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 — not 2030.

This fund will bolster the automotive industry as it transitions to a lower emissions future and will throw support behind local innovators to create the solutions needed to bring about net zero emissions.

We will all be a lot better off if both governments realise their promises.

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I'm considering a used 2018 Volkswagen Arteon R-Line. It's striking to look at and the drive is very impressive. You rarely hear about them or see many, but it's a beautiful car. Is there anything I should be cautious about before buying? There are Stage 1, 2 and 3 enhanced performance options too, are they worth considering?

Dave Reid, email

The Arteon is a rare beast. VW has only sold about 1300 of these flash four-door coupes since their 2017 launch, mainly due to their price. A new model has just been released but the old one is still worth considering. It looks great, while the engine (a detuned version of the Golf R's) and handling/comfort balance make for a superb all-rounder. I tested one on Tasmania's windy roads and was mighty impressed. No big reliability issues, but target post-October 2018 versions — that was when VW changed from a three- to five-year warranty. I'd steer clear of a tuning chip. The standard performance is ample (0-100km/h in 5.8 seconds) and the work may void warranty.

BIG BROTHER

For Christmas I was gifted a dashcam and after a few days of using it am convinced they should be standard on every new car. Mine only cost \$70, was easy to fit and the video quality is excellent. They should be mandatory to prove fault in accidents.

Charles Gallagher, email

I'm torn on this one. I think aftermarket dashcams like yours are ideal because the user has control. If a dashcam is factory fitted, the cynic in me thinks car manufacturers could access your footage without your knowledge or permission. I've read 1984 and am not a fan of the proliferation of CCTV and facial recognition cameras.

BUSH WHACKED

At my 2017 Range Rover Sport's recent service

I was advised its front suspension arms and bushes needed replacing for \$2100. I was shocked as it's impeccably maintained, has done only 52,000km and its only off-road "work" is parking on our nature strip. I unsuccessfully asked the dealer and Jaguar Land Rover for goodwill assistance as this is very early wear. Should I pursue things further? The amount in question makes the pursuit through consumer channels cumbersome and potentially expensive.

Robin Povey, email

I suspect, as is often the case with these replacements, the suspensions arms are undamaged and it's just the bushes that are cracked. Sadly, it's easier to replace the whole bush/arm unit than just the time-consuming bushes, hence the expense. It's early for these bushes to sustain damage, but not ridiculous. I'd keep trying Land Rover. Maybe suggest they pay parts and you pay labour as a compromise. If not, head to an independent specialist. The job with them is closer to \$1000 than \$2000. As you say, it's probably not worth your time or money to pursue the Fair Trading route.

BRAKE TEST

My new car, a Haval Jolion, has radar cruise control. I've not owned a car with this before. It's generally good, but when a car moves into my lane on the motorway the Haval slows very quickly. Do the brake lights come on even though I haven't touched the brakes?

Ron Smith, email

Good question. Your brake lights will come on in such circumstances to warn following drivers. On my recent Haval Jolion test I also found its radar cruise to be a bit aggressive, getting confused on motorway corners when there was no car in front. Otherwise, it is a welcome feature.

DANGEROUS LEFTIES?

Is it safe to brake with your left foot in an automatic car? I've always braked with my right, believing this to be safer and more appropriate. Could you please advise?

Geoff Franke, email

If you like a good pub argument, government



JOIN THE QUEUE

We're interested in a new Toyota RAV4. We won't be off-roading so would you recommend front-wheel-drive or all-wheel-drive? What would one cost and shall we buy now or later next year?

James Turner, email

I'm sounding like a broken record, but it's you and the rest of the world chasing a new RAV4. This desirable SUV already had a long waiting list before semiconductor shortages and Covid restrictions delaying production. For your needs 2WD will be fine — take the money you save and get the Hybrid version. That said, waiting lists have been longer for Hybrids: up to a year depending on grade. My favourite is the 2WD Cruiser Hybrid for about \$50,000 drive-away, but an entry-level 2WD GX Hybrid has a shorter delivery date and is only about \$41,300 on the road. If you don't want to wait, private sellers are trying to flip theirs. As a warning, RAV4 Cruiser Hybrid AWDs (about \$54,000 drive-away from Toyota) are currently listed privately for between \$64,000 and \$70,000 before government charges. I'd get on Toyota's waiting list ASAP.

Covid policies, anti-vaxxers and left-foot braking are favourite subjects. Is it safe? Some say it causes pedal confusion — cue the news story of a pensioner driving into a coffee shop — others say it prevents such accidents. Racing drivers left-foot brake and there's no law about doing so on the road. I'm a left-foot braker and personally believe it's the safer choice for me, but the NRMA's driver training calls it a "dangerous habit." Common sense suggests braking with the foot you deem safest.

A BIRDIE TOLD ME

I just had my 2016 Outlander serviced at a Mitsubishi dealership. The service manager told me the air conditioner needed treatment at a cost of \$124. I refused, he got quite pushy, and I went online and priced an aerosol spray cleaner for \$24. All I had to do was place it in the footwell and open the spray while the aircon was working. I asked him if that was what they do and he just walked away. Needless to say I won't be going back.

Robyn Jay, email

The job may involve removing dash trim to gain access to the cabin air intake duct for the spray to work best, plus removing the old cabin filter and replacing with new. If the dealer was going to do such things he should have explained the process to justify the labour cost involved. If he was going to just let off an odour eliminating spray the \$124 is hard to justify, although the dealership may have a \$100 minimum charge for any work performed.

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