



## Vehicle scams

DON'T GET  
CAUGHT OUT

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



According to Scamwatch, Australians lost \$1 million to vehicle sales scams last year. Already, in the first quarter of 2021, almost \$300,000 has been squandered by unwary consumers.

Typical schemes involve posting fake listings for secondhand vehicles at attractive prices on popular trading websites.

One scam involves a 'seller' claiming they're in the military and want to hawk their vehicle before deployment overseas.

They post low prices on sought after vehicles to create a sense of urgency and then, to allay fears, may suggest a smaller amount of money be deposited in an escrow account.

Of course, the bank account is fake and the 'sold' vehicle is never delivered. Don't be the next victim.

Here are a few things to safeguard yourself against scammers:

- Look at email addresses carefully. If a person is in the armed forces their email address should be @defence.gov.au not an iteration of this and certainly not @123abc.com.au

- If a price looks too good to be true it almost certainly is. Ask to inspect the vehicle in person, or have it inspected by a Licensed Vehicle Tester before handing over any money.

- Be wary of paying through third party websites, such as escrow accounts, or eBay.

- Do not deal with a seller who is evasive and makes excuses for not appearing in person or presenting the physical vehicle.

The best way to avoid vehicle scams is to use a Licensed Motor Car Trader.

Finally, keep a regular eye on the Scamwatch website for scam alerts. Go to: [scamwatch.gov.au](http://scamwatch.gov.au).

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

Share your thoughts  
[ceo@vacc.com.au](mailto:ceo@vacc.com.au)

# SEDANS WITH PUNCH



[ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

### IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT  
[CARS@NEWS.COM.AU](mailto:CARS@NEWS.COM.AU) OR  
PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

My 2012 Lexus GS250 F Sport has been a great driver's car, but it's time to replace it. A car that's powerful, sporty and great to drive is very important, but as I drive about 100 kilometres each day, ride comfort and noise suppression must be good. I've been considering a four-year-old Mercedes-AMG E43 or BMW 540i. Your thoughts, and others to consider?

Andrew Georgiou, email

I do love a performance sedan, and both the AMG E43 and BMW 540i are at the top table. The AMG offers 295kW/520Nm and 100km/h in 4.5 seconds, the BMW 250kW/450Nm and 100km/h in 5.1 seconds. I tested both in their day, and gave the AMG the edge on driver reward and ride quality, although the BMW had the classier cabin. Used prices are near \$100k for 2017/18 E43s. The 540i looks about \$20,000 cheaper, swinging things in BMW's favour. I'd cross-shop a brand new \$67,700 Kia Stinger GT (274kW/510Nm and 0-100km/h in 4.9 seconds) or the smaller \$90,000 Tesla Model 3 Performance (3.3 seconds to 100km/h and 567km all-electric range). New car warranties are a big bonus.

### CRACKS FORMING

My Toyota dealer quoted \$700 for a fitted replacement windscreen on my Corolla. I thought this very steep so took it to my local windscreen replacement business where they charged me \$198. They also told me they do quite a few screens for that dealer. A lesson in scepticism and shopping around.

Peter Mitchell, email

That's a big difference. The dealer may also have quoted for recalibration - if fitted to your Corolla - of the camera behind the top of your windscreen, which is part of the active safety set-up. I'd check

with your dealer to ensure it doesn't need to be recalibrated now the new screen is in. If your car doesn't have a forward-facing camera, that dealer charge looks ridiculous.

### POWER SHIFT

I'm considering an electric car but not sure if one would suit me. I drive a lot in the city but also do regular country trips of up to 600km. I'm retired, need an SUV for easy access and have a budget of about \$100,000. I need to carry my elderly mum and her wheelchair too.

Sue Boe, email

I've tested and lived with enough EVs now to know the transition isn't too hard, although those longer country trips will require a little patience, as you'll need to stop for roughly an hour to recharge. I'd consider the Hyundai Kona EV, above, (484km range, from \$62,000) and Mercedes-Benz EQA 250 (426km range, from \$76,800) but check your mum's wheelchair fits. A \$76,990 Volvo XC40 Recharge Pure Electric with 400km range arrives later this year and should be well worth a look. Bear in mind those range claims are achievable in the city but not on the open road, where EVs are less efficient.

### EASY FIX

Re: Hybrid Dinosaur, I'd like to reassure those with Toyota Prius battery concerns. I'm an automotive technician and have owned an ex-taxi Prius with 700,000km on the clock. Its battery comprises a number of cells and if one or more are faulty, an auto electrician can identify them and replace these individually for not much money.

Luke McInnes, email

There's an increasing market for remanufactured hybrid batteries, and replacing damaged individual cells works out cheaper than a full battery replacement. A new complete Prius battery costs a hefty \$2300 fitted, but a 10-year warranty is reassuring.

### DROP THE CLUTCH

Re the Kia Cerato GT's dual-clutch gearbox nearly causing a crash with its delayed



### WHY CHANGE?

I have a 35,000km 2017 Holden Astra Hatch R+ which has been ideal for me but I was wondering what new similar model hatch or SUV you would recommend as a replacement? Also, are there potential issues I should look out for on the Astra?

Kerry Malone, email

You say the Astra hatch is ideal and only covered 35,000km. Just keep it, Kerry. The Opel-sourced Astra is an underrated car and has proved reliable. Rare instances of piston failure (listen for engine knocks, rattles or a smoking exhaust) have been reported, and its paint chips easily. New-car supply is tight and prices are high to reflect this. If you're desperate for something new look at the recently updated Kia Cerato or Mazda3, but you'll find them far pricier than your Astra was four years ago.

response, I experienced the same in my 2009 VW Golf. I've refused to buy another. I'm not a great fan of CVT gearboxes, but they're preferable to dual clutches to avoid those life-threatening moments.

Paul Flavel, email

Interestingly, the new Volkswagen Golf has a conventional torque-converter auto, replacing the dual-clutch unit on the previous model. The GTI and R models will continue with a dual-clutch though. BMW's new M3 and M4 also have torque-converters rather than dual-clutches. Perhaps the tide is turning?

### HEIGHT RESTRICTION

Re: the Subaru XV heavy tailgate, we found similar with ours and overcame it by fitting a window sash cord. We tied this over the struts which acted as a restraint, restricting how high it went up.

Alan Fragar, email

Good plan. Braided sash cord is very robust so looks a sound DIY solution for those with heavy or too-high tailgates.

### WHICH TOW VEHICLE?

We need a new car for towing our two-tonne caravan. We're looking at the SsangYong Rexton Ultimate and also the Isuzu MU-X. Any advice?

Peter Negro, email

Definitely test the \$54,990 Rexton Ultimate - it's loaded with equipment, has a seven-year warranty and 3500kg tow rating. The dealer network is limited, though, and resale is poor. Isuzu's new MU-X is due in showrooms next month and as it's based on the impressive new D-Max ute it should be a great all-rounder. Isuzus are solid tow vehicles and are safe bets, but expect the new one to cost a good chunk more than the outgoing model and the SsangYong.

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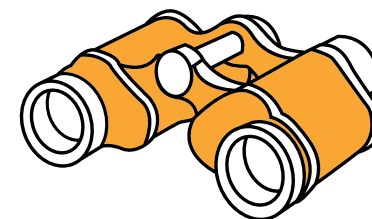
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