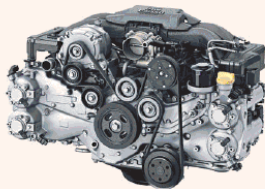


ADVERTISING FEATURE



Going electric

WHERE'S THE PLAN?

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



In its Draft 30-Year Infrastructure Strategy document, the Victorian Government states it may phase out all internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles during the next three decades, in the absence of a Federal Government move.

If that happens, the sale and registration of new internal combustion vehicles in Victoria would cease.

The term 'sale and registration' means Victorians won't be able to go interstate for their internal combustion fix. In theory, they might be able to buy their vehicle in, say, Queensland, but they won't be able to bring it back home and register it in Victoria.

By 2050 all this might be moot anyway, as in other parts of the world, time is ticking. The UK recently brought forward its ban on petrol and diesel passenger vehicles to 2030.

That might sound like a long time but, in product design and verification terms, it's not. This means the major vehicle constructors have probably already abandoned 'traditional' engine development.

Ford recently announced it would go completely electric by mid-2026. General Motors is ending ICE production by 2035.

That's okay, but I am worried about the possible consequences of these decisions.

What happens to the more than 380,000 people employed in Australia's automotive industry? What becomes of consumer choice? Who looks after owners of internal combustion-powered vehicles in the future?

What are the answers? I promote environmental responsibility, but governments need a plan to transition the auto industry and the millions of motorists it services, or we will have a big problem on our hands.

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

Share your thoughts
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REALITY BITES

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I saw the recent report from UK consumer group Which? finding plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) to be far more polluting than advertised. We have to face facts these vehicles aren't as efficient as claimed.

Steve Atkin, email
 The report highlighted issues with plug-in hybrids (PHEV), which can travel on electric power for short distances before switching to petrol. An average of 22 PHEV cars from different manufacturers was 61 per cent less efficient than official figures. The problem comes with how PHEVs are tested. Which? tested them in a different manner to the official testing procedure, hence the different figures. The problem is that fuel use comes down to how you use the vehicle. The Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV has an all-electric range of 54km. If you only drive that distance per day and recharge with solar, your fuel use and CO2 emissions are zero. If you drive it longer distances you'll be using its petrol engine – our testing returned 7.1L/100km. There's no exact science here. To be fair, official petrol and diesel economy figures are often daftly optimistic too.

SHOCKING BILL

Our 2012 Mazda CX-5 was serviced this month with 92,000km on the clock. To our dismay we were advised of major suspension problems costing more than \$4500 to repair. It's been serviced since new at the Mazda dealer, been well looked after and we cannot understand the massive invoice for repairs.
 John and Lorraine Deshon, email
 Your bill shows it cost \$1115 parts and labour to replace two lower control arms and \$2634 total to replace the rear subframe. The report says both were necessary due to "worn bushes". Bushes (or bushings) are made from shock-absorbing rubber or polyurethane, and are like fat washers that reduce friction between your suspension's metal parts. It appears Mazda won't just replace these

relatively cheap bushings – they replace the whole unit such as your very expensive rear subframe. A company like SuperPro sells the bushings separately, and an independent suspension specialist could do the work, though sadly it's too late for you. Contact Mazda Australia to ask if they'd retrospectively assist a loyal customer with cost of parts.

LOYAL CUSTOMER

Re Christmas Come Early regarding goodwill repairs, I'd like to add Nissan Australia to your list. My 2016 Qashqai's gear selector was sticking in Park, and it was fixed at no charge despite being 18 months out of warranty. Gives me faith that great Aussie service still exists and they stand by their vehicles.
 Brian Lourigan, email
 Relatively inexpensive fixes like this done for free usually means you buy from the brand and dealer again. Smart business.

WAGON WANTED

I'm interested in the new Skoda Octavia wagon but can't find pricing details on Skoda's website. It only lists driveway price for the RS version at \$52,990. As much as I'd like the hot one, my budget only stretches to the entry-level Ambition. Also, when will they arrive?
 Simon Joyce, email



Demand for the new Octavia is high and they're expecting short supply. The first non-RS versions should land around August. The Octavia Ambition wagon is \$35,260 drive away with metallic paint. If you order white – the only non-metallic colour – you can save \$770.



PROBLEM DRINKER

I bought my Mazda CX-5 petrol AWD new in September 2020, and the fuel consumption's terrible for a four-cylinder. It has ranged between 14.7L and 15.1L/100km. My old six-cylinder Ford Falcon had better economy. What could be wrong?
 Ron Fitzgerald, email
 Last year I tested the same model as yours and got 9.3L/100km over nearly 1000 kilometres, although I live in regional Queensland, not a capital city. My test was a mix of town, highway and back roads. If you're commuting in heavy city traffic every day, you'll use more fuel, although your numbers do seem high. There are basic things to try. Check your tyre pressures, remove unnecessary weight, raise the AC temperature and focus on accelerating and braking smoothly. If you're using E10 fuel, move to normal 91 or 95. The car should improve as the engine loosens but if you see only marginal improvements, insist your Mazda dealer investigate, as there could be a more serious problem.

OUT OF AIR

My 2013 Subaru Forester's airconditioning has failed despite the car only having travelled 57,000km and being serviced every six months. I've been told the compressor, condenser and TX valve need replacing. Subaru Australia has said it is prepared to pay half the cost of parts, while I pay the other half plus gas and labour, for a total of \$1808. I believe the airconditioning should last more than seven years, so is it unreasonable for me to expect Subaru to pay completely for parts?
 Uta Vorst, email
 Tough one. I agree there's reasonable expectation your aircon should survive longer, but at least Subaru's offered some help despite your expired warranty. Airconditioning units, according to those in the industry, should be serviced every two years. This probably hasn't been done as part of your Subaru services. It's a big bill. Perhaps get a quote from an independent airconditioning specialist to see how it compares. Making a Fair Trading complaint may be your only other course.

TIMES ARE CHANGING

Every other motoring story seems to be about electric cars these days. Why? I see one a week on the road if I'm lucky.
 Lachlan De Vries, email
 We cover all the new releases and there have been a few EVs lately. Like it or not, global governments are legislating fossil fuel cars out of showrooms. Some 75 per cent of new cars sold in Norway last year were full electric or plug-in hybrids. In Sweden it was 32 per cent, Holland 25 per cent, Finland 18 per cent, Germany 14 per cent and the UK 11 per cent. Here, the official figure is .03 per cent.

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Motoring

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