

## ADVERTISING FEATURE



## Which direction?

RESEARCH REVEALS THE ROAD AHEAD

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



**A** new report prepared by VACC shines a light on the auto industry and what it means for the motorists it serves.

Key findings in the Directions in Australia's Automotive Industry 2021 report include:

- There are more than 72,000 registered businesses operating across the automotive industry, employing 384,810 people.
- The industry contributes \$39.35 billion to Australia's GDP, about 2.1 per cent of the country's economy.
- Nationally, 52 per cent of automotive businesses are experiencing a shortage of skilled labour. Skill shortages in regional areas are more severe than in metropolitan areas.
- The current industry skilled labour deficit is estimated at 31,143 positions nationally, the highest number ever recorded. This deficit is forecast to rise to 38,700 positions by 2022-23. Light vehicle mechanics represent the largest single skill shortage with a deficit of 17,509 positions.
- Demand for automotive apprentices is expected to be more subdued in the next two years. Potentially, there could be up to 11,000 fewer automotive apprentices hired by automotive businesses.
- By 2030, battery electric vehicles are expected to comprise up to 26 per cent of new vehicle sales in Australia. Electric vehicles could be the catalyst that significantly alters or dispenses with the existing dealership network model, due to the supply of electric vehicles being via a dealership or direct from the manufacturer to the consumer.

These are just some of the findings contained in Directions in Australia's Automotive Industry 2021, which provides a fascinating insight into the state of our industry.

The report is available for free download at [vacc.com.au](http://vacc.com.au).

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

Share your thoughts  
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## ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

# ULTIMATE CHOICE

## IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I own a Mitsubishi Pajero Sport GLS and am looking at the new Exceed model. I need a tow vehicle and have just learned about the SsangYong Rexton Ultimate, which seems to have all the bells and whistles. Any thoughts? Paul Mac, email

I've not tested the Rexton, but have tried the smaller Korando SUV. It looked good, was well-equipped and luxurious, but didn't drive very well. Judging by reviewers I trust, the Rexton Ultimate offers similar. That said, if you're coming out of a Pajero Sport, cornering ability and urban driving joy aren't your norm. Definitely test the SsangYong. There's 3500kg towing capacity - if you need that much - a seven-year warranty, decent luxury and tech and annual services are a reasonable \$375. No ANCAP rating's a concern, as is resale value and minimal dealers. But at \$54,990 drive away it's \$6000 less than a new Pajero Sport Exceed. That pays for a lot of diesel.

## DARK AGES

Re paying for a used car, I had this issue when selling to an interstate buyer. I wanted to see the money in my account, she wanted to see the car on a transporter. We looked at every alternative the banking systems offered - nothing. In the end we did a FaceTime call where she showed me a bank deposit slip and let her speak to the delivery driver. Banks make billions in profits but can't guarantee a transaction in real time.

Ross Kroger, email

Sounds comical in this day and age. Stand by, please read the letter below.

## CASHLESS SOCIETY

Your advice to take payment for private

second-hand car sales is a little behind the times. I recently sold my car and used the latest NPP (New Payment Platform) offered by most Australian banks. The NPP allows you to register a PayID against your phone number or email that directs payments to your bank account. I insisted on a deposit by this method and had funds in my account within 60 seconds. Keys were handed over when the final payment, using the same method, was seen in my banking app.

Shane Slater, email

I'm a little behind the times? You sound like my children when they ask why I bother with a manual gearbox, watch DVDs and put on Led Zeppelin vinyl. If both parties are satisfied (and tech-savvy enough) NPP looks good as it's provided by the Reserve Bank of Australia, but I'd recommend consulting your financial institution and check if there are any fees involved. It's not like the banks to provide something for nothing.

## WHAT IS NORMAL?

I bought a Subaru XV this year and almost immediately noticed a shudder under low throttle, as if the motor had an intermittent miss or fuel supply issue. The Subaru mechanic confirmed the shudder, reported it to Subaru Australia and I was told: "we advise the slight hesitation at light throttle when accelerating is a normal characteristic of the CVT transmission." I've had a number of cars with CVT gearboxes, including a 2017 Subaru XV, and never encountered this problem. Are Subaru's words reasonable and should I just put up with the problem?

Keith Rodway, email

Whining is more a CVT characteristic, although they can be jerky if you're on and off the throttle in bumper-to-bumper traffic. As you've had a CVT-equipped XV before, you're well placed to recognise if it doesn't feel right. I see Subaru has investigated and ensured your software is up to date, but the service manager's recommendation



## HATCH A PLAN

Why do motoring journalists, when testing the Mazda3, always choose the hatchback? I own a 2019 SP25GT sedan and it has more boot space, more back seat room and is far better looking.

Steve McGlone, email

We did a comparison test of the Mazda3, Corolla and Subaru sedans last year and the Mazda's a pretty thing. Design is subjective, but for me the hatchback's styling is glorious. Certain things - such as a push bike - are easier to load in a hatchback, but you're right, its boot is 295L versus your sedan's 444L, and the four-door's rear seats are less claustrophobic. Even so, hatchbacks make up 68 per cent of Mazda3 sales despite the hatch and sedan costing the same.

to "drive the car harder" isn't terribly helpful. Make sure you have in writing your report of the problem and Subaru's response just in case it worsens in future. For now, try manual mode and using the paddle shifters on the steering wheel to see if that reduces the judder.

## HEIGHT MATTERS

I'm an older driver and my wife has dodgy knees. We're in the market for a new car, and the most important information for us is seat height. But every salesperson I ask says the height from the top of the front seats to the road is "not listed in the brochure". Is there any way I can find this out?

Rob Bingham, email

You're right. For those with physical mobility issues this information is key. Mystifyingly, car companies have been slow to realise this. I can easily find out a Toyota Camry's 4th gear ratio and front overhang but not something genuinely useful for consumers. A seat with greater adjustability has more potential, but the only way to check suitability is to test it: mobility problems and body shapes are very individual. Small and medium SUVs are popular as they offer good "hip points". Anecdotally, the Mitsubishi ASX and Honda CR-V are pretty ideal.

## POWER STRUGGLE

I have a 2010 4WD Holden Colorado and think its battery is running down as it has been slow to start on cold mornings. I've never replaced its battery, nor did the previous owner, so it's 11 years old and done 150,000km. It has an ACDelco battery, are they still around?

Jas E, email

More than a decade and 150,000km is a hell of a good innings for a battery, so it's best to replace it now before it fails and leaves you stranded. ACDelco batteries are still available at Holden dealers and independent battery retailers. I'd get a like-for-like replacement for your Colorado - we should show loyalty to reliable products.

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