

[**ROADSIDE ASSIST**]



Big investment

FUEL FOR THOUGHT

Bruce McIntosh
TACC State Manager



Tasmania has been earmarked for a \$1 billion production plant for synthetic green fuels (also known as e-fuel).

According to the *Australian Financial Review*, the plant (to be located south of Burnie if all goes to plan) could produce up to 100 million litres of e-fuel a year once it's up and running.

So, we're talking big money and big volume.

And it's worth noting that Porsche owns 12.5 per cent of the organisation that will be running the show, HIF Global.

When Porsche announced its stake in the organisation earlier this year, it stood by its pledge for 80 per cent of its new vehicle sales to be fully electric by 2030. However, in the same breath, representatives maintained that e-fuels development was an important additional strategy to ensure the large numbers of traditional vehicles that would still be on the road could be catered for in the future.

The claim is the plant will make fuel that will be close to carbon neutral when used in trusty internal combustion engines.

Clearly, these Porsche people are in the know and see there will still be a demand for fuel in the next decade, even as many motorists make the switch to electric vehicles.

Now, the approval process for the plant has only just started – with Tasmania's Environment Protection Authority being filed a notice of intent – so nothing is set in stone.

However, with all the resources and research at its fingertips, what does a major marque like Porsche ramping up its investment in sustainable fuels signal?

Well, that things are definitely heating up.

And word on the street is that HIF Global has focussed on European markets. My question is – will we get the goods locally?

Prepared by **Tasmanian Automotive Chamber of Commerce**

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thegrillepodcast.com.au



DIGITAL REVOLUTION

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
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I'm surprised our \$36,000 Kia Seltos doesn't have an owner's manual. Kia suggested we look it up online and download it, but believe me, as an 80 year-old it's all beyond me.
Lindsay Richards, email

Our 2022 Kia Stinger doesn't have a printed owner's manual. It's only available as a PDF, or a hard copy's available for a fee. For a \$70,000 vehicle, a complimentary manual should be offered. A 500-plus page PDF doesn't suit all customers, but Kia's head office advised this is their policy. Disappointing for an otherwise great vehicle.

Chris Rizonico, Whittlesea
The key here is the 500-plus page bit. Modern owner's manuals are telephone directory-sized and take up most of the glove box. And in these environmentally conscious times, not printing these tomes for each car makes sense. A smart solution is having a built-in digital version accessible through the car's infotainment screen. I've used this in a few cars with mixed results – it has to be user-friendly. I understand your frustration – about \$65 buys a hard copy – but it actually makes sense now manuals are 500 pages rather than 30.

GRACE PERIOD

A friend's MG is due its first 10,000km scheduled service. He's booked it in, but by that time he'll have exceeded 10,000km. The dealer says this is fine, but I reckon he should get it done beforehand. Do manufacturers allow a tolerance?

Alan Baillie, email
They do. Anecdotally, manufacturers allow you to be a few thousand kilometres or months overdue before they deem it a missed scheduled service, which would jeopardise the warranty. The MG dealer is correct to say it's fine. Just don't roll in two years late and with 200,000km on the clock. At the height of Covid lockdowns, manufacturers gave even more leeway as owners couldn't get to workshops, parts were unavailable and waiting times were huge.

TORQUE IS CHEAP

I'm considering a 2019 Holden Colorado LTZ auto, but my concern is the torque converter. I've heard reports of them failing under 100,000km. Have you heard similar? We'll be towing a two-tonne van around Australia and I don't want to be stranded somewhere waiting apparently six months for a new one.

Kathy Gregory, email

Failure of the Colorado's auto transmission's torque converter is a well known problem. If towing a heavy van, you'll be met with terrible vibrations should the issue arise, then a potential long wait for repair. Positively, Holden's five-year warranty would cover costs, but not the inconvenience of waiting weeks for parts to arrive. If you buy it, have the transmission serviced immediately by a specialist – the gearbox may be "sealed for life" but ignore this and get new oil. The same specialist may also recommend fitting a transmission cooler. If funds allow I'd consider a used Ford Ranger for towing, while a Mitsubishi Triton, Isuzu D-Max or Mazda BT-50 are solid, cheaper options. Favour utes with some factory warranty remaining.

FAULT IN OUR STARLINK

I bought a 2017 Subaru Forester a few months ago. Recently the Starlink infotainment screen froze. I took it to a Subaru dealer expecting a software update but was told it needed a replacement, refurbished unit for \$2100! I



THE SIMPLE LIFE

I love my 20-year-old car as it's so simple to operate. I need a new car, something like a Toyota RAV4 or Mitsubishi Outlander, but I'm concerned how complicated modern electronics are. Do any manufacturers do versions of their cars which are simpler to use?

G May, email

Any new car will feel like a quantum leap over your turn-of-the-century old faithful. It's unavoidable. Car companies must fit numerous electronic driver-assist features to ensure a decent safety rating. Also, having a uniform "infotainment" screen range-wide is easier than offering a cheaper bare-bones option with only AM radio. For the size you're after, consider a Honda CR-V V6. It lacks the nannying, beepy (but useful) advanced driver aids but I reckon once you get your head around smartphone mirroring and the multi-angle reversing camera you'll appreciate them.

notice Starlink has been slammed by many US owners, but Subaru's online service claimed no knowledge of any Australian complaints.

Geoff Slattery, email

Firstly, contact Subaru Australia and politely ask for a goodwill repair here. In the US, Subaru agreed to a \$6.25 million settlement relating to malfunctioning Starlink systems – including in Foresters. In case Subaru didn't try it, reset your Starlink infotainment. There are YouTube instructional videos. If you have no joy, don't pay that \$2100. Visit a car audio specialist and have a more advanced aftermarket unit (with smartphone mirroring) installed – total cost should be roughly half Subaru's quote.

OUTTA GAS

My work vehicle is a Ford BF Falcon factory-fitted with LPG (liquid petroleum gas). There's only one station left in town selling LPG and it frequently runs out. I'm considering a low-kilometre used ute as a result, but should I look at diesel or petrol with threats to fuel supplies? I only carry tools and have about 10 years' work left in me.

Ian Ross, email

A shame to give up your LPG Falcon, but fear not, we're still going to be able to buy diesel and petrol here in ten years' time. I'd consider a van rather than ute if your tools fit in a Falcon. Vans are typically cheaper, nicer to drive, more secure and more economical. But all used prices are daft at the moment, so consider a new van if possible as you plan to keep it ten years.

UNDERVALUED?

Re: Chris Day's 2015 Holden VF Calais 3.6L, you advised he should insure it for \$25,000. My stepson has the same car and asked me to let you know: "Whoever wrote that doesn't go on the internet much. I couldn't replace it for anything less than \$35,000 at the moment and there ain't many for sale." Perhaps Mr Day needs a value closer to \$35,000?

Bruce Coleman, email



On the internet classifieds there are currently 57 2014-16 VF Calais 3.6L listed for less than \$25,000. Is your son perhaps referring to the V8 Calais? Those are valued from \$35,000. Mr Day's model is also a Series I (model year 2015), not a pricier Series II (MY16).