

[ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

# NOT SO HIP



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Due to my wife's bad hip she sits in the passenger seat of our 2019 Mazda CX-5 with a cushion in a wedge shape so her hip is lower than her knees. As a result, the sensor isn't detecting a front seat passenger, meaning a light comes on saying the passenger airbag is switched off. We find this dangerous. Is there anything to be done?

Phil Knoxfield, email

Very interesting. Seat sensors aren't designed to work with cushions, thus your problem. The weight-sensitive sensor exists to prevent the passenger airbag deploying if it believes a child in a child seat is sitting up front — airbags can do more harm than good to kids. You can switch a passenger airbag off permanently; I'm not aware whether you can switch it to permanently on, which would suit your circumstances. Mazda's own advice is to have your wife readjust her posture, then refasten the seat belt, until the "airbag off" light goes out. It may not be comfy or practical but for safety's sake, your wife may have to lose the cushion. Some studies have shown use of items such as cushions can reduce the effectiveness of the seat belt and can increase elderly drivers' likelihood of injury. For safety's sake, lose the cushion to make sure belt, seat and airbag operate as designed. Perhaps a foot rest could alleviate her hip pain but allow the seat sensor to detect her?

**FIGURE THIS OUT**

On a 3700km return drive from Melbourne to Queensland, my 2013 Toyota Camry averaged 7.7L/100km on regular unleaded. To achieve the same overall cost using 95 RON it would need to return 6.5L/100m, or 6.2L/100km on 98 RON, based on current fuel prices. Should fuel economy figures have to take into account the recommended fuel?

Mike Flynn, email

Solid point, Mike. We'd have to do likewise for diesel and E10, as their price fluctuates against petrol. Then there's the fact higher octane petrol can improve fuel economy versus regular, plus it keeps your engine cleaner, helping efficiency and prolonging its life. Don't get me started on hybrid/plug-ins/electric car economy testing. One solution? Quote fuel economy figures as tested — but make it mandatory to list what octane fuel was used to produce these figures.

**COLOUR CODED**

Re lack of brake lights when following an electric car with regenerative braking. A family friend in the late 1960s developed a small traffic light assembly mounted on the rear parcel shelf. The red light came on when you braked, the green light when accelerating and the orange light when you lifted off brake and accelerator. It could work well in an electric car.

Bill de Vries, email

If heavy regenerative braking occurs in electric cars

the brake light comes on, reassuringly. As for the traffic light set-up, it may have merits, but I reckon we have enough distractions these days without a disco show in the back window of every car.

**PARENTS DON'T KNOW BEST**

I've recently seen two instances where drivers have overtaken on double lines. I see very few cars with driving school signs. Is this why our road toll is increasing? Young people learning from parents or friends may know the rules — but not the simple art of driving sensibly.

Patricia Woolcock, email

Using a driving instructor may seem expensive but you're learning to pilot a deadly weapon and professional instruction is needed. Having your big sister or Uncle Dave sit with you is cheaper but you'll pick up their bad habits. Fewer driving school cars? Could be evidence of fewer young people needing or wanting a licence.

**BALL AND PAIN**

Re Raise the Limit. I own a VW Tiguan. VW changed the tow ball weight from 100kg to 200kg, with limitations. For the Tiguan 132 and 162 it's 200kg with two passengers, 100kg with four passengers and 60kg or 70kg with five passengers. In the Tiguan Allspace with seven occupants, your ball limit is 20kg or 30kg. Strangely VW doesn't allow for any gear in the vehicle but presumably you may load it to gross vehicle mass including the reduced ball weight.

Graham Hill, email

My 2016 VW Tiguan with 2500kg tow rating had 100kg ball limit given on release. Did the ball limit re-evaluation apply to all models or just 2018/19 examples?

Shane Lord, email

As if towing limits weren't confusing enough. Kurt McGuinness from VW Australia says: "Unfortunately

we can't say that the 200kg ball weight rating applies retroactively, only for vehicles with warranties starting from July 26, 2018. Depending on occupants and load, down ball weights may vary." Maybe just take a tent. Or book a motel.

**LAP OF THE GODS**

We're looking to replace our 2005 Holden Rodeo ute. Our local Holden dealer directed us to a 2019 SsangYong Musso. They said it had a five-star ANCAP rating and it seemed a good deal. I noticed the middle seat in the rear has only a lap belt and thought this odd. I checked to find it has no ANCAP rating. I was horrified.

Geraldine Klein, email

The sales guy should have checked the facts. The Musso has not been ANCAP tested but company



spokesman John Taylor says: "SsangYong Australia is currently working with ANCAP on future planning and testing in order to bring the safest possible products to our market." Autonomous emergency braking (AEB) is fitted across the Musso range and fitment of the rear centre belt is "currently under review by the engineering team at SsangYong's head office in Korea". Positive signs for the future but I wouldn't put a member of my family in that middle seat.



**A BIT RICH**

I agree 100 per cent with the reader pointing out you review cars people can't afford. Stick with real cars and forget the exotics.

John Huggard, email

Australia's cheapest new car is the \$13,990 Mitsubishi Mirage — last month's sales tally, 25.

Porsche's 911, starting from \$242,000, sold 30. OK, awful argument presented there but if we just tested Toyota Corollas and Ford Rangers, readers and writers would get very bored. Trust me, John, when you win lotto you'll be hunting down our Ferrari and Aston Martin reviews.



## Are motor shows really dead?

THERE'S A MARKET FOR A NEW AUTO EVENT, AND MONEY TO BE MADE



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

A colleague recently attended the Bangkok Motor Show and saw great opportunities. It got me thinking: Could a show be revived in this country?

It's clear from our experience of the Australian International Motor Show folding in 2015 that motor shows are not flavour of the month. Or rather, they weren't.

Australia saw the first motor exhibition in Sydney in 1925 and from 1927 Melbourne hosted an annual show, with the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce being involved from the start. But in 2008 the house of cards began to fall.

A German manufacturer — disgruntled at the cost of exhibiting at dual 'international shows' in two cities in a country of 20-odd million people — decided to invest elsewhere. Other manufacturers followed suit.

And, of course, digital assets like websites, videos and social media gave manufacturers tools to effectively market products to buyers, without the need for expensive motor show stands.

So the motor shows stopped.

But there are many who would like them to return. Will they? Maybe. There are investors and event specialists kicking ideas around.

Lessons have been learned that could result in a very successful event. For example, an essential aspect of any new motor show format is that it becomes a selling event.

Our counterparts in Thailand are leading the way. This year 1.6 million people attended the Bangkok Show, with 45,000 cars and 5000 motorcycles sold. In only 12 days! Who wouldn't want a piece of that?

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

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