

## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

# HARD YAKKA



### IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT  
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I have a fantastic Ford Ranger Wildtrak, bought new in August 2018, but at its recent service I was told the battery was on its last legs. It's done 60,000km and the battery has a 12-month warranty. The replacement one comes with a two-year warranty. Is there anything I can do to have Ford replace it free? It shouldn't fail after such a short time.

Keith Ferguson, email

Batteries degrade with time and use and the distance you've covered is far from typical — 60,000km is about four times the national average. A car battery should last about five years under "normal" use but higher kilometres, short rides, city use, humidity and heat get your battery working overtime. The longer warranty on the replacement battery is confusing. You could ask Ford Australia for a free goodwill replacement but don't hold it against them if they decline.

### A HELPING HAND

Re lack of help from the ACCC. Apart from the disaster of faulty Takata airbags, I doubt a single motorist has had a positive response from the ACCC in resolving a car-related issue. I requested the ACCC rule on an electrical design fault affecting thousands of Mazdas, where the battery charging is limited to 12V (about 25 per cent capacity) for long periods; unacceptable when travelling Australia-wide. ACCC directed me to the Office of Fair Trading, which suggested legal action through the courts. I've asked a Federal MP to fight for the appointment of an industry ombudsman to cover such situations.

H. Wrangell, email

The ACCC should serve the role of ombudsman and only last month showed some clout with the settlement it reached with Volkswagen. It has also been active with its Takata airbag safety alerts. Yet it's clear many car owners, yourself included, feel the ACCC lacks teeth.

### SMALL VICTORIES

My 2011 Volkswagen Passat required an engine rebuild. I approached VW for assistance with costs and was rebuffed. I filed with ACCC, then contacted the Office of Fair Trading in Queensland. Within 10 days I got a call from VW offering to cover the cost of spare parts. Net result: I was happy but it would have cost VW a lot less had they come to the party on first approach.

John Woolfield, email

Your repair bill still would be significant but this can be chalked up as something of a consumer win.

### WHO TO TRUST?

You say: "Who knew E10 fuel could evoke such passion?" Answer's easy, everyone's looking to save a quid, and drivers wonder about E10

every time at the bowser. Motorists would like intelligent, authoritative, reliable information, not just from someone's mate or mechanic.

Ron Callander, email

We'd all love reliable information on E10. When you go fact finding, you find contradictions. What's a reliable source? Oil companies? Fuel retailers? The government? Here's an example. The NSW Government's E10 site ([feulforthought.nsw.gov.au](http://feulforthought.nsw.gov.au)) has a myth-busting segment. "Myth 1: E10 is bad for my engine. Fact 1: E10 is compatible with most modern petrol cars on the road today." Hardly in-depth, is it? A disclaimer for its E10 Compatibility Checker says: "We source data from third party sources ... believed to be reliable, but no guarantees or representations are made by us that the third party content is accurate, complete, current or reliable." Don't know about you, I'm not flush with confidence there.

### TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

I think you made a mistake with the Volvo S60 T8's fuel economy figure of 2L/100km. For such a heavy car? Nah. Needs to be corrected.

John Grist, email

Not a typo. The Volvo's official fuel economy figure is 2L/100km as it's a plug-in hybrid. But as author Richard Blackburn said: "The fuel number is misleading, as it's based on a short test cycle that places extra emphasis on the car's 50km electric-only range." On his lengthier test, the T8 returned nearer 8L/100km.

### WORTH THE COIN?

I'm looking at a new Mazda3 G25 GT Sedan manual. It sounds pricey. What are the warranty



and service costs? Is it worth the dollars?

Peter Murphy, email

I'm a champion of the new Mazda3. Despite its relatively high price, you're getting a beautifully engineered, well-equipped car. Warranty is five years/unlimited km, services are every 12 months/10,000km for a reasonable \$1007 over three years. I like the GT grade's luxury feel but the 2.5-litre engine isn't strong enough for the money. I'd favour the cheaper, less powerful G20 versions, which still have good inclusions.

### ONE FOR GRANDDAD

A historic poser we'd love to know the answer to. The user's manual with a 1936 Vauxhall suggested "to obtain best results, start off in second gear". Can this be right? Why?

Trish Young, email

Not one for the teenagers out there. I asked Steve Ward at Classic Car Clinic on the Gold Coast, who says: "First was a crawler gear for getting up driveways and the like. As long as you don't try it on a hill and burn your clutch, second is fine for pulling away on these cars."



## FALSE READING

In your Porsche Taycan review it's described as all-electric, yet has models called Turbo and Turbo S. Where would Porsche fit a turbocharger on an electric motor?

Peter Piper, email

There are no turbos involved. It's just a familiar naming convention on Porsche cars — and very misleading. Despite this being a Brave New World model for Porsche, the brand is sticking with familiar nomenclature for the EV.



## Eyes wide open

EMBRACING CHANGE ISN'T EASY, BUT IT'S THE WAY FORWARD

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



BM president Thomas Watson once said: "I think there is a world market for maybe five computers." Watson went on to head the world's largest computer company and would have been up with industry trends, yet he still made that famous clanger.

Clearly, even when you're at the heart of something, it's easy to miss the big picture.

The world is evolving, and with change comes opportunity.

Recently, I heard about a report titled, *100 Jobs of the Future*, the result of collaboration between Deakin University, Griffith University and Ford Australia.

It identified 100 occupations that could emerge in the future, and everything from technological advances, climate change and globalisation to an ageing population influenced roles across sectors.

These types of studies don't happen by accident, they're in response to recognised societal shifts.

One thing for certain, though, from an auto industry perspective, your service providers are actively adapting to a brave new world.

That's good news for you as a consumer. It means your mobility needs — from buying, maintaining and repairing to disposing of your ride — will continue to be looked after into the future.

I will leave the last word on innovation to a man who, by his admission, was nothing special — he just saw opportunities where others didn't. His name is Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft: "Never before in history has innovation offered promise of so much, to so many in so short a time."

Now, that one sounds about right.

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



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