

## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

## CHIP AWAY AT IT



## IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT  
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In May 2016 I bought a Mazda CX-9 and about three months before the three-year warranty expired I noticed several rust spots under the roof's paint. I'd even had after sales paint protection carried out. Mazda Australia evaluated the rust spots and said they were due to "external influences" and not from any manufacturing concerns.

Lorraine McKenzie, email

I've contacted Mazda Australia and been promised its customer service team will review your complaint. Beyond that, they won't comment on individual cases nor elaborate on "external influences." They should have offered you some possible causes. My smash repair contact looked at your photos, confirmed they're stone chips exposed to the elements, with yours looking typical of being in coastal areas with salty air. They need to be sandblasted or sanded and then repainted.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS?

My wife's 2015 Volvo XC70's battery failed last month and had to be replaced at a cost of \$288. The car has an extended warranty and is always serviced by Volvo but customer service refused to cover any costs. Am I being unreasonable?

Andrew Holland, email

Not unreasonable, let's say optimistic. Four years from a battery isn't terrible and, even if you've done low kilometres, battery life can be reduced by short drives, humidity and high temperatures. The stop-start function on modern cars doesn't help, so you need a pricier enhanced flooded battery (EFB) to cope. I'd not bear a grudge against Volvo Australia on this matter. Their servicing charges, though ...

## A HELPING HAND

Re Toyota RAV4 Hybrid delivery delays. In August we sold our LandCruiser, preparing for our RAV4 Cruiser Hybrid's arrival. Apparently, our order hasn't even been "accepted" by Japan yet. You said, "Hopefully Toyota will compensate cases like yours." What can we do?

Kay and Ian Golding, email

Toyota Australia is responding to the long RAV4 Hybrid waiting time, especially the most in-demand Cruiser grade you've ordered. A Toyota spokesman says they're about to trial a "heavily subsidised lease program as a solution to those who need to stay mobile while waiting for their new car". The cars will be new Camrys, Klugers and RAV4s in different grades, which you can return when your new car is delivered. Sounds promising but we'll have to wait for more detail. Speak to your Toyota dealer and hopefully they'll be among the 34 dealers trialling this lease program.

## SCREEN SAVERS

My 2015 Subaru Outback's information screen is almost impossible to read when sunlight hits it. I can't increase the screen brightness any further. Is there any solution?

James Wilson, email



## UTE SALUTE

I'm ready to upgrade my 2010 Ford Falcon FG ute. I've found nothing comparable now that Holden and Ford have stopped making utes. I want a two-door petrol. Any suggestions?

Ed Brosolo, email

You won't find a new one. If you want to upgrade, buy used and aim for something like a 2016 Falcon FG ute or 2017 Holden VF ute. Today's "utes" are proper pick-up trucks. We miss the uniquely Aussie utes as much as you do.

My Honda Jazz's screen can't be viewed when the car is in sunlight. During the day, it's no use if I can't see the reversing camera, or to change radio stations or make calls. Any modification to help?

Glenda Murray, email

Common complaint. Some owners have had success fitting an anti-glare screen protector, as you would for your phone. 3M in Australia has a range of sizes or you could simply cut one to fit.

## NON-PERFORMING SEAL

The rubber seal around my 2015 Audi Q5's windscreen is losing its colour, going greyish white. It's garaged and not regularly out in the weather. What could be causing this and should it be covered and replaced by the dealer?

Dale Himstedt, email

Also common, especially in the Australian sun, even if your car is mainly garaged. If it's a manufacturing defect, Audi should consider a goodwill replacement. Ask your dealer or Audi customer care, it's worth a try. Saving and preserving your original rubber would be less hassle. Try something like Bowden's Own Orange Agent to deep clean your car's rubbers, then Vinyl Revival to cure and preserve them.

## THE X FACTOR

When you're advising about SUVs, you never consider the Fiat 500X. I've had one for three years; it's as good as any car I've driven and has plenty of features. It shouldn't be dismissed.

Robert Hills, email

It's personal choice and the 500X has the quirky looks many owners crave. We can't compare every model - there are almost 40 small SUVs on sale in Australia - and the 500X manages just 0.1 per cent market share. It's in need of an update, too, most likely by the end of 2020.

## BIG IS BEST

I'm old-school and look at engine capacity and performance before Bluetooth. This time next year I'll be shopping for a large SUV, up to \$80,000. I can't stand the notion of a four-cylinder turbo diesel, preferring six or eight cylinders, decent sound and a bit of grunt under my right foot. I won't gamble on a Jeep, so I'm considering a used Mercedes-AMG GLE63 or ex-demo VW Touareg - I know it's a diesel but at least it's six-cylinder, and looks best value. I tow a 5.5m boat occasionally. Got any suggestions?

Peter Watts, email

The AMG's 5.5-litre twin-turbo V8 will give you all the performance and glorious sound you'd ever need. In no way is it economical but it's the



heart's pick. Hop in the new Touareg and you'll be blown away with how advanced its technology is, and its Benz-rivalling premium feel. Reassuring to have a new car warranty too. Check out a 225kW Land Rover Discovery V6; ideally an ex-demo with lots of cost options. As for a wildcard? Skoda Kodiaq RS. Give its 176kW performance and noise a chance before dismissing four-cylinders. It looks a performance bargain and arrives in March.



## The law's a lemon, not vehicles

WE ALL EXPECT A FAIR DEAL, BUT HOW MUCH EXPECTATION IS TOO MUCH?

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



My microwave bit the dust recently. But when it refused to heat my dinner one last time, I was pretty philosophical. It had provided a decade of service. Can't ask for more than that.

When we buy products with hard-earned money, we expect them to be fit for purpose and work reliably. Fair enough. But I reckon, when it comes to high - and potentially unreasonable - expectations, vehicles get a dud deal.

Vehicles are incredible machines made up of thousands of parts and hundreds of systems, and manufacturers spend billions of dollars designing, testing and validating them to achieve reliability and long service.

That's what consumers expect. But do we expect too much?

Think about the abuse vehicles go through. They sit out in the weather - blistering summer days and stormy winters. They pound along uneven bitumen, pot-holed concrete, craggy rocks and dusty roads. Cold engines get revved. Doors slammed.

Is there any other product on earth that suffers that much abuse?

So, it disappointed me to see the Queensland Government introduce so-called 'Lemon Laws', which mean that consumers can return a used vehicle to a dealer - even if that vehicle is over 10 years old and has travelled more than 160,000km.

Such laws must factor in age and price paid, but I'd say that consumers in Victoria, including myself, are already very well served by the wide-ranging Australian Consumer Law.

Which is, I might add, not a tool to remedy buyer's remorse. We don't need to follow Queensland's lead.

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



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