



## Will I void my warranty?

DO YOUR HOMEWORK FIRST

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



A question I'm often asked is, 'Will my warranty be void if I don't have my vehicle serviced at the dealership where it was purchased?'

The short answer is no.

Research shows that many Australian motorists have scheduled servicing conducted at a franchise dealer — often the one from where they bought their vehicle — for the entirety of the warranty period. After that time, many people choose to visit aftermarket repairers for their service and repair requirements.

That makes perfect sense.

But there are some things to keep in mind before you entrust your vehicle with any business.

Firstly, are genuine parts and equipment, or parts that are fit for purpose, being used? You should ask this question up front and if you don't receive a reply in the affirmative, then you should go elsewhere.

The second main consideration is whether your chosen service centre has the necessary training and equipment to correctly maintain your vehicle.

As a general rule, you may pay more for servicing at franchise dealers. But there are good reasons for this. Dealers have invested in the necessary tools and equipment, they use genuine parts, and they have access to factory-backed training and technical information.

Aftermarket repairers may have this too. But they may not. So you should conduct some research before engaging the services of a new or unknown repair centre. Seek a reference or check online reviews.

Above all, keep in mind that it's your vehicle, so you're free to take it wherever you like.

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

Share your thoughts  
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## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]



## THE WRONG BOX

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT  
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Do you think Toyota will put an automatic transmission in its LandCruiser 70 Series tray back?

Rebecca Anderson, email

Nope. Certainly not in the current model. These hardcore farmer-favourite work utes use only an old-school manual transmission as they're less complex than an auto, (arguably) less likely to go wrong and allow a bump start if the battery or starter motor dies. Ideal for work vehicles in the middle of nowhere. The new LandCruiser range should arrive in two years. Perhaps the revised 70 Series will get an auto then, as well as no doubt losing its V8 engine for a V6 diesel or V6 hybrid.

### TEETHING TROUBLES

My 2017 Holden VF Commodore SV6 has travelled only 5500km, but its infotainment screen intermittently goes blank when driving. The instrument cluster does the same on the odd occasion, and I need to switch the car off and on again for normal operation. It's been back to the Holden dealer for rectification with no success. They say unless they can get the blank screen there's little they can do.

Geoffrey Kennedy, email

This is why intermittent problems can be so frustrating: they rarely reveal themselves when you're with the mechanic. Other owners have reported a similar issue with their Holden MyLink infotainment. Some have had luck by simply disconnecting the battery (negative terminal first) for 15 minutes so it resets. If the problem comes back, make a short video of the dead screen and instrument cluster to show the dealer. This should expedite a warranty repair if they see the evidence.

### LIFE MEANS LIFE?

My daughter's 2013 Volvo SUV experienced clunking and other issues with the automatic

transmission. It's travelled 125,000km so we asked the Volvo dealer to service the transmission when doing its annual service and were told: "The transmission is sealed for life and it's not a Volvo recommendation to be 'serviced'." We took it to an automatic transmission specialist instead, had it serviced at a far cheaper price than Volvo and they discovered the transmission oil was very dirty. Since then, the car's never performed better.

Malcolm N, email

We received a letter last year from a Volvo owner whose auto gearbox had failed after 124,000km. Apparently not changing the transmission fluid was a causative factor, despite it being "sealed for life". As you've found, these gearboxes can be unsealed and the filter and fluid checked and changed. My mechanic suggested many manufacturers deem 160,000km or eight years a "lifetime," so it's worth having a sealed for life transmission investigated before this, especially in our harsh climate and if towing's involved.

### CHEAP ROLLING

Re tyre life, this week I replaced the original fitment rear Dunlops on my 81,400km 2010 Toyota Yaris. The fronts lasted 72,000km. I'm \$400 out of pocket for the set of four like-for-like replacements, inclusive of fitting, valves, balancing and alignment. I now drop a 20c coin into an old tin each evening to help mitigate the expense.

Anthony Watkins, email

To all readers with German cars on fancy 20-inch wheels using soft, low profile tyres: my sympathies after Anthony's gloating. Apparently, a Bugatti Veyron's set of 500kmh-rated Michelin PAX tyres cost up to \$US42,000 (\$65,000) and are good for 4000km. Hope that makes you feel better.

### LOYALTY LOST

Re tyre life, my Audi only managed 20,000km on its original tyres, my friend's Mercedes only 17,000km. My local tyre shop recommended a rival brand with marginally more road noise, but they lasted the next 50,000km. Avoid



## WORKING LIFE

I'll be 18 in October and want to buy my first car. I plan to be a builder, so need a four-door ute with tray, manual transmission and as many safety features as we can afford. Our budget is \$20-25,000.

Jacob C K, email

Nice to see somebody buying a proper ute relevant to their work. For your budget it's either a used four-door with basic safety or a new two-door 4x2 ute with advanced safety. Car-like active safety has only really arrived on utes in the past couple of years, so you'll need some compromise. If you can manage with two doors, a new Toyota HiLux 4x2 Workmate is \$24,490 drive-away. It has five-year warranty and excellent safety for its class: AEB with pedestrian detection, lane departure alert, road sign assist and active cruise control. You'll look properly professional in a HiLux and it'll hold its value too. For your budget, most used late-model four-door utes have minimal safety and high kilometres, but if you want diesel and 4WD this is the way to go. I'd look at a 2016-17 Mitsubishi Triton or Ford Ranger.

going "same again" and ask a tyre specialist to find something longer lasting and cheaper.

Jody Ogle, email

Replacement tyres are something you really don't need to use a main dealer for. That said, don't skimp on your rubber. It's the only point of contact your car has with the road and cheap tyres can be a false economy. Don't go "same again" if you're not happy with the original tyres, but don't fit the incorrect size or cheap replacements. Get expert advice from a trusted tyre shop.

### CABIN FEVER

I have a couple of cars not being driven much due to lockdown. Over what period of time will fuel become stale? Should you keep your tank full so condensation doesn't occur? Are there any complications that could occur by not using your car as often?

Robert Bucci, email

Good news is your car's fuel tank and fuel system are well sealed and general consensus is petrol's good for about six months. BP has a fact sheet online suggesting "fuel has a storage life of six months at 20C or three months at 30C." Top up with premium unleaded (unless your car's diesel, obviously) when you next drive — it's still cheap right now — and yes, a full tank or a fuel stabiliser (available from auto stores) is a good plan if it'll be idle for some time. Best to give the cars a short run once a week. Otherwise, battery, tyres, hoses, fluids and more will suffer.

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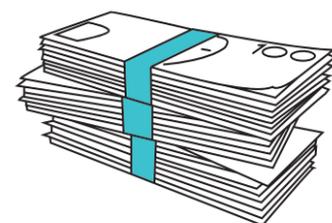
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