

## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

## KEEP IT SIMPLE



A friend is looking for a suitable tow vehicle replacement to pull a mid-size 1690kg fully loaded single-axle pop-top caravan. They currently use a front-wheel drive 2012 Nissan X-Trail with continuously variable transmission and coil spring independent rear suspension, which I consider not ideal for towing on Australian roads. I'd suggest RWD or AWD with a coil or leaf sprung live rear axle and conventional auto transmission. They're not big people so they don't want a large 4WD. They're after a late model used example.

Pete Tothill, email

Hard to satisfy all those criteria and for it not to be a big 4WD. As suggested above, a late model VW Tiguan has the required tow rating at 2500kg, is all-wheel drive and uses a dual-clutch auto gearbox, not a CVT. It's also a well-appointed and comfortable thing to cruise in. If it's not too big for your friends, a used Mitsubishi Pajero Sport is excellent value. It's based on the Triton ute so has a ladder chassis, beam rear and conventional auto. It'll comfortably tow the van with its 3100kg rating and opens up the opportunity for proper off-roading when touring if you unhitch the van.

## RAISE THE LIMIT

You quote the Volkswagen Tiguan as having 2500kg towing capacity, which is correct, until you look at the towball load limit of just 100kg. I am sure it'll tow the weight fine but good luck dealing with your insurance company if you have an accident.

Cl, email

This is true of older Tiguans but last August VW raised the Tiguan's tow ball limit from 100kg to 200kg, after re-evaluation with its technicians. Great news for owners and far better for peace of mind should insurance come into it.

## TROUBLESOME TRAMS

Re poor radio reception in cities. Our 2012 Honda CR-V has terrible reception when travelling under tram power lines. We listen to talkback radio and it's Murphy's Law when it gets interesting we turn on to a tram route and get white noise. FM has no such problem. Is this unique to CR-Vs or do all modern cars have the same poor AM reception near trams?

Jack Coffey, email

We've had lots of letters about poor AM reception, especially from Melbourne. Electromagnetic fields (EMF) put out by trams can scramble radio waves. Lower AM frequencies are more powerful so generally have better reception. Back in 2006, 3AW in Melbourne switched from 1278 to 693 to improve matters but those pesky trams still cause interference, no matter what car you're driving.

## WRECKERS ARE SUPERB

Re the Skoda Superb's space-saver spare. I phoned three wreckers and got prices of \$175, \$225 and \$275 for a suitable full-size rim with roadworthy tyre. Skoda dealerships quote \$693 for rim only. If the style of alloy

V1 - MHS0121010



## NO TURNING BACK

I've just ordered a new Audi S5 Coupe — please tell me it's a good car. Disappointingly, it doesn't have speed sign recognition as an option in Australia, although it does in Europe. Rob Rayner, email

Sounds like your \$100,000 decision is keeping you awake at night, Rob. Shouldn't you have asked this before signing for one? Worry not, the S5's a beauty to look at, has a stunning cabin and that 260kW turbo V6 is a belter.

## IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Isn't important (it's hidden under the floor after all), a specialist wrecker's the place to buy one.

John Kruger,  
Skoda and Tatra Register of Australia

## DOWN TOOLS

In June I placed an order for a new Toyota RAV4 Cruiser Hybrid with an agreed trade-in price on my Hyundai ix35. I was advised the build would be August and delivery September. In July I read the RAV4 Hybrid's sales were being halted while Toyota investigated a brake issue. The Toyota dealer originally said I'd experience no delay but this has now changed to delivery in mid-November. Where do I stand regarding the valuation of my trade-in Hyundai, given it will be five months older than when first valued?

Anne Shipway, email  
The delay on your RAV4 Hybrid's delivery is frustrating but good news is the vehicles have had their brake issues remedied and are back on sale. You signed a contract on an agreed value on your trade-in, so despite it being older, the dealer will honour the amount. It's worth noting on the contract that: "If the trade-in vehicle is not in substantially the same condition as when valued by the Dealer, the parties may negotiate a variation." With the delay, hopefully Toyota will be both apologetic and generous with a few sweeteners for your new Hybrid.



## RUBBISH RIDE

I recently bought a used BMW 325i with run-flat tyres. The car has a firm ride anyway but run-flats don't help with their stiff sidewalls. One tyre had to be replaced for it to get a roadworthy certificate because of damaged sidewalls. I was told this was because it "had been run on a flat run-flat". Isn't that the point? The expensive replacement tyre took three days to arrive. One week after I bought it, another tyre went flat and I was told it had a faulty bead and wouldn't seal. Another new one needed. I've owned more than 30 cars over the years and never had so many tyre hassles. I've now fitted "normal" tyres and put a space-saver in the boot.

Rob Stephen, email  
Good for you, Rob. What you've done is a viable alternative, though it's a hassle to get hold of and store a space-saver. I bet the BMW is less crashy to drive without the run flats now. I had advised my dear old mum to do likewise with her run flat-shod Mini — and the comfort level was greatly improved.

## ADVERTISING FEATURE



## Time to rethink costs to consumers

ROADWORTHINESS  
RULES FAIL  
THE COMMON  
SENSE TEST

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



I'm a classic car tragic. As a kid, I remember being driven around in the family's Wolseley sedan. It wasn't a classic at the time but today it's a minor collector's item. So, my interest is always piqued when I hear an older car's backstory.

One I came across recently is the Elfin GTS Coupe (pictured above), built in Adelaide in 1960 for a Melbourne enthusiast.

It was so complicated and expensive to build it remained unique, but the man who commissioned the car still owns it almost 60 years later. Incredibly, the GTS Coupe is also road registered.

Now, I know nothing of this car's condition but, having never changed hands, it's possible the GTS Coupe has never had a roadworthy inspection.

I don't have a problem with older cars, but this highlights a ridiculous piece of legislation currently enacted in Victoria that adds to the cost of all new vehicles.

When manufacturers build vehicles for sale in Australia they're required to meet Australian Design Rules and be certified for road use. However, when that vehicle is sold in Victoria it must be submitted for a roadworthy inspection, even if it's travelled zero kilometres. That's ridiculous.

On the other hand, a vehicle that's been in one individual's ownership for decades may fly under the radar.

It's strange the Victorian State Government allows this anomaly to occur. New vehicles shouldn't require a roadworthy, but I reckon a roadworthy inspection on all vehicles over five years of age is a good idea. What do you think?

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

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