



[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

ELECTRIC UTE'S IN TRAIN

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
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You report people are "buying Ford Rangers and not thinking about the environment". I bought my 2019 Ranger XLT with 2.0-litre diesel (it emits 195g/km of CO₂) because I need a ute. I did think of the environment but until car companies make a hybrid or fully electric ute that isn't compromised — and the government gives incentives and there is a suitable recharging network — we'll keep buying diesel utes. They are the Swiss Army knife of vehicles.

Chris Hellmitt, email

It won't be long. In July, Ford used a prototype all-electric version of its F-150 pick-up — the size above our Ford Ranger — to tow a train weighing more than 450 tonnes. You read that right. Ford's also invested more than half a billion dollars in Rivian, a US start-up business planning to bring its electric ute with a claimed 4500kg towing capacity to Australia, possibly by 2022. Your current or next diesel ute may be your last.

EXECUTIVE DECISION

I'm considering buying a 2018 Jaguar XF Sportbrake S30d with 8000km, formerly driven by a Jaguar executive. It's under \$95,000, has warranty until the end of 2023 and includes a five-year service pack included. The auto emergency braking (AEB) only works up to 80km/h — are there any other downsides? I tend to keep cars for seven years.

John White, email

These Jag wagons look stunning, have massive cargo space and, from what I've been told, drive in the sporty, balanced fashion expected of a Jaguar. The diesel packs loads of torque: 700Nm. That long warranty and included servicing give massive peace of mind. Your biggest concern will be depreciation. These S30d versions were \$123k new, so the biggest depreciation hit has already happened. If it's a Jaguar Australia owned car, it'll probably have generous optional extras too. Looks a bargain and a brilliant alternative to an F-Pace SUV.

SIGNS ARE THERE

Re the Audi S5 lacking speed sign recognition. One of the reasons Volkswagen Group gives is that our street signs are not consistent in Australia, and may give the customer a negative perception of not working well.

Kyu, email

Valid point. I've tested numerous cars where speed sign recognition is frustratingly inaccurate. VW's reasoning is sound but rival brands have the technology — which, you could argue, even if it's not perfect all the time is better than not having it at all. A paper published by Austroads last year made recommendations for changes to enhance traffic sign readability to aid the recognition tech

NOT WORTH THE WAIT

After waiting four months for delivery, I collected my 2019 Toyota HiLux Rogue but



EXPENSIVE TASTES

I regularly read your motoring section but I am disappointed by the large number of expensive cars tested. A car like the new Mazda3 sedan doesn't seem to get a mention despite its popularity and quality.

Steve Peters, email

The Mazda3 sedan hasn't had a huge amount of

coverage as it arrived a few months after the hatchback version — the same car with different skin — so the five-door garnered the bulk of the coverage. You're right, it's a great car. We try to balance reviews of affordable cars with expensive ones but the latter have wide appeal to readers, even if most of us can't afford them.

less than 24 hours and 100km later, it was back at the dealership with a knocking sound from the engine. Toyota Australia confirmed it was a major fault. Dealer's been great, Toyota Australia ordinary at best. The unbreakable HiLux? I think not.

Peter Nelson, email

That's a shocking start to your ownership and highly unusual. If the dealer's been great, keep things cordial but insist that they put you in another vehicle while the fault is repaired. If the problem persists, a replacement engine or even vehicle would be expected.

NEW WAY OF LIFE?

What's your assessment of the Series II Suzuki Vitara AWD turbo regarding fuel, safety and finish of the car?

Shane McCarthy, email

I've only tested the entry level 2WD and found it honest value for \$24,990 drive-away. Hard cabin plastics are abundant though — the AWD AllGrip Turbo example you're considering suffers the same — but specification is decent and there's strong active safety gear. The turbo engine returns 6.2L/100km which is good, but do you really need AWD? It's \$34,990 drive-away but the 2WD turbo just \$29,990. I wouldn't recommend serious off-roading in the Vitara AWD; leave that to the Jimny stablemate or a Subaru XV. Two new small SUV players are



imminent: Kia's Seltos and Hyundai's Venue. Best to hold fire until you can test-drive both and compare them to the Vitara.

LONG TERM FUTURE

There are lots of dual cab ute comparisons and reviews but none of those I've read seem to touch on the topic of reliability. How do we choose a 4WD ute that will last longer than the warranty period?

Talha Altun, email

Car reviewers may have the experience and knowledge to review new cars but none of us has the crystal ball required to predict long-term reliability. It's why we've collectively criticised short warranties in the past and now, hopefully in part due to our efforts, five-year warranties are the norm for all mainstream brands.



Tyres make the world go round

THERE'S MORE TO THAT STRIP OF RUBBER BETWEEN YOUR VEHICLE AND THE ROAD

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Tyres are a grudge purchase. I know. They're not cheap and they're not sexy. They're black bits of rubber. But that handspan's width of tread is the only thing between your vehicle and the road. So, they're incredibly important to your vehicle's performance and your safety.

Since the wheel was invented people have been trying to 'dress' them to improve comfort, longevity and performance, and this is where the word 'tyre' comes from. A tire (the favoured American spelling) is a contraction of attire, as in a 'dressed' wheel.

The first 'dressings' were wood, then steel, and later, rudimentary strips of rubber.

The first pneumatic tyre (one that can be inflated) was patented by Scotsman Robert Thomson, although John Dunlop's cycle tyre, made from 1888, is often cited as the first practical tyre.

The first automobiles appeared around this time and the race began to produce ever-better tyres. Many of those early companies — like Goodyear, Dunlop, Michelin and Pirelli — still exist.

Manufacturers spend billions of dollars and countless hours designing, testing and validating tyres for many applications: cars, bicycles, motorcycles, commercials, trucks, mining equipment and farm machinery.

Today, manufacturers are developing tyres specifically for electric vehicles and ones that heal themselves when pierced. Tyres that absorb pollution and that produce electric power by their rotation are also a reality, in prototype form at least.

Tyres are big business. Tyres are important. Think about that next time you head out on the road.

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

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