

[**ROADSIDE ASSIST**]**TROUBLE IN PARADISE?**

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

With the reported issues with Toyota's current 2.8-litre diesel engine, from diesel particulate filter malfunctions, fines for blowing smoke and going into limp mode, is it something to be avoided, or are things being exaggerated?

Talha Altun, email

It's a risk buying any car. Things can and do go wrong. Toyota's issues are well reported as it's our runaway best-selling brand. That 2.8-litre diesel is used in Australia's best-selling vehicle of the past three years, the HiLux ute. There are tens of thousands on the road and some of that number will experience problems. That makes it newsworthy, whether in major newspapers, enthusiast forums or pub chats. Toyota's one of the better car companies at putting things right and the fact it now has a five-year warranty would give me more confidence to own one.

WEARING THIN

I own a 2017 Subaru Impreza. I love its safety and drive but it's developed a small worn patch in the carpet on the driver's floor between the seat and the dead pedal. Subaru Australia says it's not a warranty item and won't be fixed. I've been driving for more than 40 years and never had carpet wear. Will my next car will be a Subaru? I'm reconsidering.

Sharon Baynes, email

After two years, a carpet shouldn't wear out. I've noticed a lot of cars these days have really thin footwell fabric. It's easily prevented with car mats but many brands have these as a cost option. That's the problem. You've just paid, say, \$30,000 for a new car, then are asked for an extra \$200 for floor mats, which feels like a rip-off. It would cost them very little to throw in free mats to prevent the dissatisfaction you're feeling. As you indicate, they may lose your brand loyalty.

AT YOUR SERVICE

What are your thoughts on service intervals? I have a 2017 Mitsubishi Outlander turbo diesel and service intervals are every 15,000km. My mechanic suggests 10,000km. I'm confused.

Ian Paul, email

Engines love fresh oil. Simple. The cost of a basic oil and filter service isn't much for peace of mind. It's even pretty simple to do yourself. That said, manufacturers are (hopefully) conservative with



their service intervals and 15,000km intervals are commonplace with today's advanced engines and oils. Remember services are annual or every 15,000km; time degrades lubricants too.

THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE

I'm an advocate of regular driver testing — not just for the elderly but for everyone. Our cars require inspections periodically for roadworthiness but not drivers. I've held a licence for more than 40 years and consider myself a good driver — but who knows if I am? Can someone like me undergo a driving test to evaluate my capability? I contacted the Queensland transport department and asked what would happen if I failed such a test. They declined to answer.

Barrie Goedecke, email

Good to see you being so responsible and caring about your ability, Barrie. I've a friend who is senior driver educator at a driver trainer facility in

Gympie. Such a place would be ideal to assess your driving ability and safety. They have specific courses for adult drivers and a mature driver awareness course. It's a refresher covering car control, emergency braking, curve braking and on-road drive assessment. Cost is \$225 but you'll get an objective run-down of any aspects of your driving that need work.

ECONOMY TEST

Re the respective fuel economy of various grades of fuel. I did the same thing with my 2002 Hyundai Elantra and achieved similar results to your reader, getting better returns from higher octane grades. I also took into account the varying prices for the grades (all on the same day). When considering fuel prices, I worked out that regular 91 RON the most economical for me.

Keith Norris, email

In my own experience, I've matched the similar returns for E10 and 95RON. I only use 95-grade E10 and only for long interstate trips.

Chris Vardanega, email

Interesting findings. Personally I still like the higher quality and better cleaning properties of 95 and 98 in my cars, despite the extra cost, and I won't use E10 as my trusted mechanic insists the fuel delivery can be compromised.

THE WAITING GAME

I'm looking at buying a Toyota RAV4 Hybrid Cruiser — but given the six to eight-month waiting list, is it really worth it?

Mark Heaton, email

It's a very good medium SUV and the hybrid set-up is superb. At about \$50K on the road it's a substantial purchase, so you don't want to rush things. Test one thoroughly first and compare against the likes of the VW Tiguan, Hyundai Tucson, Mazda CX-5 and Subaru Forester. If the RAV4 Hybrid's still your favourite, get on that waiting list.

FLIP THE SWITCH

Re keys stuck in the Subaru Forester's ignition barrel. I had the same problem with my 2016 Subaru Outback. A faulty micro switch on the transmission select lever was the culprit and a new switch the solution.

Billy Beck, email

AN IDEAL VENUE?

Having bought a Hyundai Accent just a few months ago I was interested in the review of its "replacement" Venue SUV. It should be a big seller, especially with more power than the Accent. The eight-inch touchscreen is a vast improvement over the Accent's pathetic five-incher, with no Android support or GPS. I think the Venue's lack of paddle-shifter with the auto gearbox is a mistake — I enjoy the option of driving as a semi-manual when I feel like it.

Mervyn Cooper, email

The new Venue's a good thing but you're right, its rather lacklustre engine would benefit from paddle-shifter control. I drove the manual version, too — seemingly no Australian will buy one with three pedals yet it made for a far more engaging drive experience.

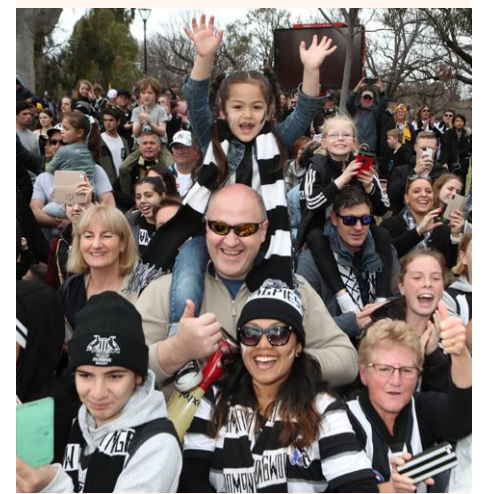
TIME TO MODERNISE

The head-unit screen in my 2004 Ford Territory intermittently turns off and on, or stays dull. Is there an easy fix or should I replace the whole unit?

Gregory Erwin, email

It's 15 years old and ripe for replacement. Discuss your options with a car audio

specialist. They can neatly integrate an aftermarket unit, with the likes of Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, digital radio and even a rear camera set-up, depending on your budget. If you plan to keep the Territory, it'd be a wise investment and make your drive a lot more enjoyable.

**It's all kicking off in town**

PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS VITAL TO BETTER MOBILITY

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



If you're heading to the AFL Grand Final Parade today, you're in for a treat.

It's a great day for supporters of all ages, with plenty to see. Marching bands, roving entertainers — not to mention your footy favourites...

It's a fabulous event in a central location, with the Parade commencing outside the Old Treasury Building on Spring Street and culminating at Yarra Park.

But whatever you do, don't drive there.

There are numerous road closures around the city centre and MCG, and parking on nearby streets is likely to end in tears, with inspectors red-hot this time of year.

The great news is that major Melbourne events are incredibly well served by public transport. And, coming from an industry perspective, I recognise the value of public transport within Victoria's mobility landscape.

Walking, cycling, scootering/motorcycling, and catching buses, trams and trains are all viable means of getting around for most people.

And with Google Maps and phone apps available to help get you there, things have never been easier.

In the future we may even be using "vertical take-off and landing aircraft" to get about town, with talk of Uber conducting "flying taxi" tests in Melbourne.

Never say never, but until then we'll have to stick with what we know.

Nothing quite beats the convenience of hopping in your own car, but I get it — there are simply times when it makes a lot more sense to use an alternative. It's all about seeing the bigger picture.

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

Share your thoughts
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