

## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

## MAKE THE GRADE

## IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

We're considering buying a Toyota Camry SX 2.5-litre or 3.5-litre V6. I've heard the V6 has plenty of get up and go but the 2.5-litre's quite sluggish. What are your thoughts?

Terry Burman, email

The V6 has some mumbo but don't expect fireworks, it's still a Camry. Put your foot down often and it drinks the pricier 95 RON fuel too. I wouldn't pick the 2.5-litre unless it was with the hybrid (for \$2000 extra and you can practically halve your fuel bills). Give one a try alongside the V6, it may surprise you. You'll need a different grade as you can't get an SX Hybrid.

## EXTREME LEFT

Re Kias veering left, my 2013 Optima did likewise. I had wheel alignments at Goodyear, Beaufort and Pedders but none fixed the problem. Goodyear suggested over-inflating the left front tyre — I had the left at 40psi and right at 35psi. This didn't cure the problem but it didn't pull to the left as much. Incidentally, my new Kia Cerato doesn't pull to the left.

Glenn Carmichael, email

Desperate times, desperate measures? I'm surprised Goodyear suggested different tyre pressures — this could lead to other issues — but interesting it improved things in your case. Kia Australia advises anyone else afflicted should visit a dealership that has wheel alignment equipment for evaluation. Of course they'd say that but it's probably the smartest solution.

## DYNAMIC THINKING

With the huge expenditure I see on Victorian roads, why doesn't the government use technology that's been available for years now to vary speeds on freeways and highways according to road and weather conditions? Real life isn't a static, go-slow event — it's dynamic. Electronic speed signs, monitoring cameras and satellites should make it possible. That way we could raise highway speed limits when traffic is relatively light, lowering the limit in heavy traffic and when weather is abysmal.

Greg Jarosch, email

The technology is being used to a degree in Victoria and other Australian states but you're right, more could be done. A mature debate about raising speed limits with such technology is long overdue but unlikely while speed rather than bad driving is blamed for our rising road toll. I used to live in France, where rare common sense applies. Autoroutes had a speed limit of 130km/h in normal



conditions, 110km/h when roads were wet or it was raining, and 50km/h in heavy fog, snowy or icy conditions.

## BAFFLING PROBLEM

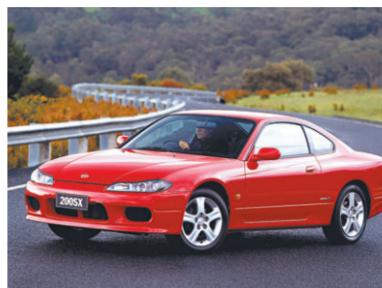
Our 2009 Mazda3 SP25's fuel tank baffle has come loose and the dealer has quoted \$1000 plus labour for a new tank with only a one-year warranty. Our research shows other SP25s have had the same issue, our dealer supported us and suggested we deal with Mazda Australia but they advised the car's too old for them to look into and a fuel tank has a useful life of about 10 years. What a kick in the face.

Mark Borg, email

Mazda Australia refuses to discuss individual cases with us but I see other owners of Mazda3 SP25s have had exactly the same problem. My mechanic reckons 10 years is disappointingly short for a fuel tank's useful life (he has cars 50 years old with their original tanks) and the fact it's a broken baffle rather than the tank itself suggests poor manufacture. Despite your car's age, and being long out of warranty, I'd have expected Mazda to offer some assistance if this is a known weak point. If you are prepared to fight this one, pursue the matter under Australian Consumer Laws or with the ACCC.

## DISTANT DREAM

As a classic car lover I'm rather concerned about the phasing out of petrol. How can they do this? Classic cars bring so much joy to



Australians and I'd be very unhappy to discard my piece of history — a Nissan 200SX Spec R. It's my only mode of transport.

Trish Young, email

Panic not. The UK might ban new petrol and diesel car sales from 2035 — I can't see Australia being that bold — so an all-electric future is a distant dream. I don't have a crystal ball but there'll still be juice for proper driver's cars such as your Nissan for decades to come. Don't stockpile the 98 yet.

## BRAKIN' BAD

Re the \$3943 repair for Hyundai's electronic park brake. I wouldn't call it gobsmacking, I'd call it obscene. Why on earth do manufacturers fit such a device? What's wrong with a conventional handbrake? The labour cost is ridiculous: do they dismantle half the car? Hyundai should be embarrassed.

Colin Pearless, email

When getting my 2016 Santa Fe's electronic park brake replaced under warranty at the Hyundai dealer, I met another customer having his replaced too.

Peter Wilson, email

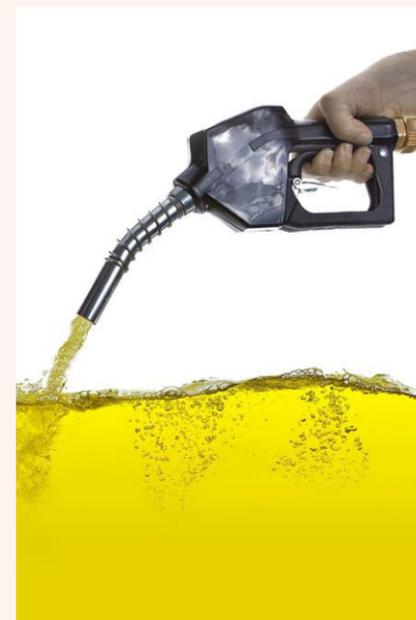
My 2013 Hyundai Santa Fe also had a problem with its electronic park assembly, leaving the wheels locked. The NRMA representative and tow truck operator told me they'd seen other Santa Fes with the same \$4000 problem. Mine was replaced under warranty.

Jeff Doyle, email

It is too much money. I'm all for progress but not at this cost when most owners were perfectly happy with a manual handbrake. Spoiler alert: Hyundai isn't the only brand charging four figures for such a repair. Re costly replacement parts, I've been quoted \$3100 for parts and fitment of a new brake booster, master cylinder and ABS unit for my 2011 Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series. Should I expect some goodwill contribution from Toyota or am I kidding myself?

Brad Midson, email

The second option, Brad. Your 'Cruiser is nine years old. It's a tough bill to stomach, so there's no harm in asking. Good luck.



## That's the spirit

## FUEL IS A NUMBERS GAME, RIGHT RON?

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



It used to be simple. At a fuel station, you would either fill up with super or standard. Today, there is a wider selection, with outlets using brand names for premium fuels. It's all good, but with greater choice can come confusion.

So, which fuel is right for your vehicle? Let's tease it out.

Petrol is rated by RON (research octane number). Regular was typically between 88-92 RON and super was 94-97. Now you can get 91, 93 (ethanol-blended E10), 95 and even 98 RON.

Basically, the higher the octane rating, the more compression the fuel can withstand before detonation. It's not important to understand the technicalities, except that different engines are designed to perform best using certain fuels.

The first point of reference for your vehicle's required RON is the car's handbook, which should be in your glovebox. There's often advice printed on the inside of your vehicle's fuel flap, too. If you have neither, contact your vehicle manufacturer.

Generally, most vehicles are fine using 95 RON. If you're at the forecourt and don't know what to do, go with a higher rating. Higher RON is more expensive but not necessarily better for your engine, if it's not required. However, using a higher rating than needed probably won't hurt your engine, so it's better to be safe than sorry.

Using a rating lower than required could cause 'pinging' or 'knocking' — that dreaded sound that can lead to catastrophic engine failure if ignored. And you don't want to hear that ...

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



Share your thoughts  
ceo@vacc.com.au



## HANDLE WITH CARE

I love my 2015 Peugeot 2008 but Peugeot's just quoted me \$300 to update its satnav maps. Updates haven't happened at any services to date and the vehicle's now out of warranty. Is this price reasonable?

Deb, email

I don't find it reasonable but it's not uncommon.

Peugeot introduced MapCare in late 2015, providing free satnav map updates for three years from purchase, with updates occurring at authorised Peugeot service sites. If you didn't get updates with your previous services, demand the dealer tells you why and insist you're entitled to your complimentary updates immediately.