

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

REWARD YOURSELF



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

My wife and I are in our 80s and looking for a car to replace our excellent 2008 Toyota LandCruiser. We no longer tow or need three rows of seats. We've been waiting for the new Toyota Kluger Grande but it's hardly any smaller. We don't like small cars, and drive long distances each winter. A Lexus RX350 Sports Luxury is a little smaller and has all the bells and whistles, but how much more expensive will it be to own than a Toyota? We recently sold our 2015 Volvo XC60 due to its stiff, uncomfortable ride, and it had problems the dealer couldn't fix. Even so, we'd consider the new version. Any advice?

Keith Harris, email

At your age, if you have the funds, treat yourself to some luxury. A new generation Kluger isn't likely to arrive until very late this year or next. The Lexus is a step up in luxe, and price. I'd say no need for the Sports Luxury; the entry-level Luxury is plush enough. Service costs? The RX350 will cost roughly \$500 more over three years, about \$1785 total. Your Volvo experience wasn't great, but the updated XC60's a superb SUV, and capped price service costs were slashed last year. Give the Lexus and the Volvo a test-drive, then weigh them up against waiting for the new Kluger.

RALLY ACE

Re first cars, I bought a bright red Ford Anglia in 1963. A neat little car, but it kept jumping out of second gear. Eventually I left it in the back yard and took over my father's 1964 Ford Cortina. A great car, it went like a cut cat. This I traded on a 1968 Hillman Hunter, the same model that'd won the London to Sydney rally. I drove it from Melbourne to Noosa Heads — parts of the Newell Highway were still gravel — then back down the coast. Excellent.

Laurie Cuthbert, email

LOST LOVE

Re first cars, in the early 1980s I owned a 1965 Chrysler Valiant. It was smooth and powerful, and comparable on fuel with modern six-cylinders. I sold it for \$3000 and now regret that immensely. It was a rare, rust-free example, so I shudder to think what it'd be worth today.

Paul Reddish, email

More than \$30,000 for a good one today. Don't dwell on it!

FAMILY HEIRLOOM

Re missed cars, my grandfather owned a silver 1980 Toyota Celica with imitation wood dash from new. I fell in love with it, and asked if I could have it when he stopped driving. Thirteen years later it was mine. It broke my heart when I had to sell it. I've tried buying another but nobody seems to have one anymore.



WEIGHTY ISSUE

I'm the happy owner of a 2013 Toyota Prius. I'd love to put a tow bar on for a 6x4 trailer, but the owner's manual says towing is not recommended. You can't buy a tow bar from Toyota or aftermarket in Australia, but you can in America, with owners saying they can tow small trailers with little impact on economy or performance. I don't have a clear reason why Toyota doesn't recommend towing. Will it do untold damage to the transmission? I see the current Prius can tow 725kg in overseas markets.

John Carson, email

Your biggest hurdle is legal. Your Prius isn't rated to tow in Australia, so the police may fine you and your insurance may be void in an accident. John Lapworth from the Prius Club of Queensland said some members have towed without problems. "The official line may be no, but a Prius can tow a light trailer with a light load, such as furniture," he said. "The hybrid transmission's reverse gear is pretty weak, so you can't really reverse a trailer. Plus, you'd need a custom-made tow bar." My thoughts? With the expense and possible legal hurdles, just rent a ute from Bunnings when you need to lug loads. Four hours costs \$50.

Kelly Broadbent, email

Rare model today. Despite being 40 years old, I bet your pop's old Celica is running around somewhere.

TOYOTA LOYALTY

I'm in complete agreement with your Toyota Corona-loving correspondents. My first car was a 1969 Corona, and I had a ball learning car control in it. One of the finest cars ever built as far as I'm concerned, and I don't care who disagrees.

Helen Moss, email

Amen. All these old Toyota fans can't be wrong, can they?

ITALIAN FLAIR

Re first cars, mine was an Austin A40 Farina (1958-67), bought for \$375 when I turned 18. It was designed by Pininfarina, very reliable, and the 980cc motor and gearbox could be dismantled with three spanners and a screwdriver! I had a lot of fun driving it.

Michael Shepherd, email

HEY CHARGER!

Re loved first cars, when I was 14 I was given the pensioned-off family car, a 1972 Chrysler Valiant Ranger with 245 HEMI motor. It drove like a fast whale, and I only realised how great it was when I sold it and moved on to tradie utes. I still yearn for a nice Chrysler. I vividly



remember loving the "Vitamin C" coloured Valiant Chargers in the 1970s.

Shane Douglas, email

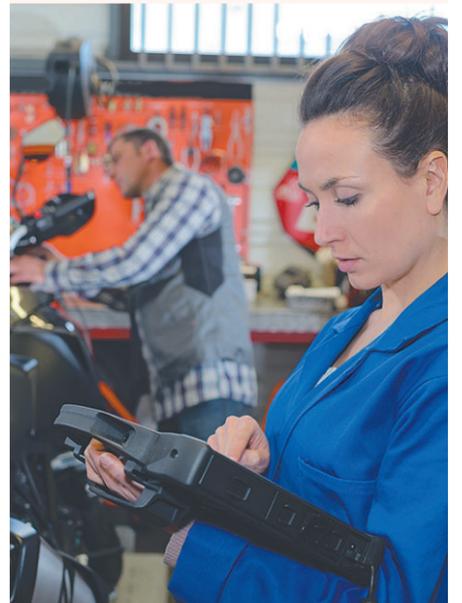
Shannons' Autumn online auction from May 20 has a 1971 VH Charger R/T up for grabs, with an estimate of \$95-105,000. It was the third Charger R/T built, and in the equally gorgeous Hemi Orange colour. If you don't, I will. Lotto win depending...

KEEN AS MUSTARD

Re old Toyotas, five years ago I got a one-owner, original condition 1979 Corolla sedan in 1970s-appropriate hot mustard yellow. What a jewel! Sparkling performance, powerful AM radio and booming sound system (cassette tapes, of course). It's a genuine "classic Corolla" with round headlights and chrome bumpers. I often hear people saying they wish they'd kept theirs.

Jerry Wells, email

When the nuclear apocalypse comes, the only survivors will be cockroaches and chrome bumper Toyotas.



Two degrees of separation

IT'S OK TO
DO A TRADE



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

What we don't yet know in these uncertain times is what business and employment will look like in six months. Unfortunately, as people lose their jobs, one unforeseen issue of the COVID-19 situation will be a further widening of the skills gap in trades — particularly automotive — in the medium-term future.

Automotive trades — mechanics, auto electricians, panel beaters and many more — have been in critical shortage for well over a decade. As parents wave their children off into higher education programs, we have effectively pulled the plug on Australia's skills pool.

We have all been tempted to believe that higher education is best. Even using the term 'higher ed' sends a clear message that everything else is 'lower ed'. That's just not right.

The result is that we now have plenty of double-degree baristas, but we can't find enough people to fix the brakes on our vehicles.

Ironically, every automotive apprentice in Australia is employed from the day they start their apprenticeship until they finish it. This means their transition from training to employment is far more reliable than a graduating university student seeking work after study.

It's time to re-think how many young people we churn through universities, irrespective of the number of jobs available in the economy. We need to remind our youth of the benefits of trade careers and the value of being able to actually fix something.

Come on Australia, be brave, tell your kids it's OK to do a trade.

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



Share your thoughts
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