

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]

THE WAITING GAME

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
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PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

I bought a new MG ZS in October 2018, which stopped working on March 1, 2020. It was towed to the MG dealership and after three days of me calling trying to get information, I was told it looked like the head gasket had gone and the engine was damaged. I was reassured this would be covered under warranty, and have recently been told parts had been ordered from China but could take between two to four weeks to arrive. I'm extremely concerned about the major damage and lack of response from MG.

Sal Tozer-Jones, email

A concerning failure, especially as you say you have a full main dealer service history. That head gasket failure will have probably cooked the engine's oily bits, so it'll be a time-consuming repair, even once parts arrive. These are unprecedented times so we can cut MG some slack on the lack of communication and parts availability fronts. Ruth Fletcher, spokeswoman for MG Australia, said it's "standard for MG to provide a loan vehicle when a customer's car is off the road." Ensure this is the case with your dealer, and let's hope for a swift repair.

NO SECOND CHANCES?

We bought a Mitsubishi Outlander new in 2016. It has covered 45,000km, always been serviced with Mitsubishi and for four years



was very reliable. Last month the CVT transmission needed replacing due to failure of the final drive bearings. A week after repair, the copper washers attached to the transmission also failed. Everything was fixed under warranty, but we've lost confidence and trust in the vehicle. Is it worth keeping or do we sell before more problems arise?

Jade Wood, email

Your case shows the importance of long factory warranties. Most brands now offer at least five years, something Mitsubishi introduced in 2004. Should you sell now? I don't think so. Your trust in the Outlander may return in the next year with trouble-free motoring and your warranty's good for another year as long as you don't exceed 100,000km. That said, it'll be easier to sell with some warranty intact, and new-car bargains are to be had as dealers are currently desperate for sales. You can get a 2020 Outlander seven-seater for \$31,490 drive-away with seven-year warranty. That's solid peace of mind.

I'LL BE IN THE SHED

While the current COVID-19 lockdown is challenging, old blokes like me don't mind getting reflective about their life with cars. My dad used to take me and my sisters to school in his brand new 1970 HG Holden and last year I bought a tired ute version — same year — to enjoy and slowly fix up. The fixing up part is now being forced on me until I can drive it again, and that's a great way to keep busy. If you've time on your hands, now's the opportunity to fix up a classic. It's brilliant for your mental health.

Ron Artis, email

Excellent point, and I've noticed classic car values have dipped in the past year or so. I fondly remember my second car, a 1976 Toyota Corona wagon — bought for \$600 and driven across the Nullarbor from Perth to Sydney. Quite an adventure for two teenagers in 40C-plus heat with no aircon and only AM radio. The Corona's hardly a blue-chip classic, but I'd love another for old times' sake. I'm sure the wife and kids would understand...

PARKING PERILS

A warning for your readers. We have native



paperbark trees outside our house and have been plagued by tiny black seeds that drop from them and stick like glue to the car's paint. If they're not washed off immediately, they're very difficult to remove. Park under cover or well away from trees.

Peter Mitchell, email

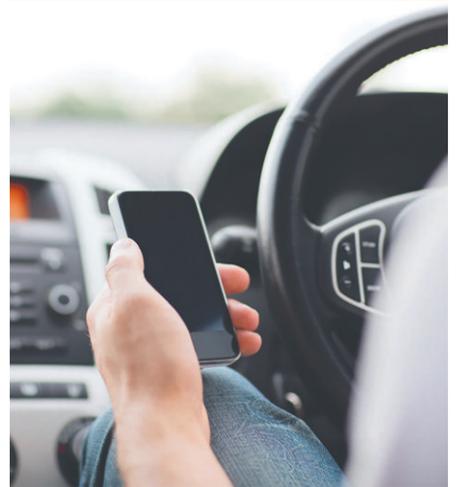
A timely email, as many cars will be parked outside in the same spot for a long time during this lockdown period. You may think you've scored a great shady spot under trees, but your car is now a target for seeds, leaves, sap, and bird, insect and bat poo. Clean any off immediately, choose your parking spot carefully and consider buying a car cover. Good ones are about \$100 from auto stores.

IN A FLAP

In the 1970s most new passenger cars leaving dealerships had mud flaps attached to protect the paint. Today very few if any passenger cars do. Why?

Craig Mitchell, email

Because they look daft. And because most cars don't drive on mud or unsealed roads these days. Going back a few decades dirt road driving was far more likely. Cars are better sealed underneath to prevent damage caused by road grime, but also, mud flaps aren't a legal requirement except for tray back utes and some 4WDs. Cost's a factor too. Don't worry, car companies will still sell you them as accessories rather than give them away. A set of rears for a Mazda CX-5 is \$227, or a full set on your Mazda3 hatch is \$368. On a wet highway, the car behind will thank you for a lack of spray.



Distracted driving

WHEN IT COMES TO SAFE DRIVING, THE PERCENTAGES ADD UP

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Recently, I was reading some research commissioned by an insurance comparison company about distracted driver behaviour. And the numbers aren't pretty.

The national survey of 1000 adult Australian drivers presented eight common vehicle distractions — eating, drinking (any beverage), texting, searching for items on the back seat, using mobile apps, wearing headphones, grooming, and watching videos — and asked respondents whether they had done any of these things while driving, or while stationary in traffic.

Alarmingly, 78 per cent admitted to 'multi-tasking' behind the wheel. Consequently, distraction results in almost one in 10 fatalities and 14 per cent of all motor vehicle crashes.

Let's have a closer look at the numbers. While driving, 34 per cent of motorists admitted to consuming beverages and 29 per cent said they've eaten. 'Only' eight per cent admitted to texting and using apps while driving, but nearly a quarter reported having texted while stationary in traffic, such as at a red light.

It's illegal to hold or use a mobile device at any time, when in control of a vehicle, even when idling. Drivers can only make or receive calls if their phone's in a cradle and can be operated hands-free with Bluetooth controls.

New 'phone cameras' will catch you out and heavy fines and demerit points are only the beginning of the misery caused by distracted drivers. Plus, if you cause an accident and are found to have been infringing traffic rules, your insurance provider may invalidate your claim.

Stay alert at the wheel and keep yourself and others alive.

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

Share your thoughts
ceo@vacc.com.au



FRENCH CORRECTION

Re: official fuel economy figures often being wildly wrong. Renault has got it right. We bought the Captur small SUV 20 months ago, with fuel use quoted at 5.4L/100km. In suburbia we get 5.8-6.4L/100km and on a 1800km return trip to Broken Hill we saw 5.1L/100km.

Albert Rain, email

Good work. I had a 2016 Captur on long-term test and returned 6.3L/100km after 8100 kilometres driving. Not bad, but the little Frenchie does weigh similar to a snail's shell and I don't live in a big congested city. The only drawback about the Captur is that it requires pricier 95 RON fuel. I'm getting 5.9L/100km from my VW Golf 110TSI, with the quoted use being 5.4L/100km. That said, I'm testing a Jaguar F-Type right now and seeing 10.5L/100km rather than the official 7.2L/100km. Oops. Guess it depends how you drive it.

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