



Instant asset write-off

COMMON SENSE MADE GOOD



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

One of the things I am particularly proud of — and which often has a positive impact on motorists — is the chamber's government lobbying.

Sometimes it's to change something that is having a negative impact on business, which can filter down to motorists. Sometimes it's to keep things as they are. Either way, the work is important.

A recent win was around a deadline the government set for its welcome Instant Asset Write-off Scheme — an incentive announced in order to support struggling businesses in the wake of COVID-19.

The scheme provides tax incentives for business owners to purchase equipment, such as motor vehicles and farm machinery, which is used in the course of running a business and providing the best service possible to customers. It incentivises people to spend money now that they may not have spent, with the government refunding some of the purchase price. Builders, plumbers, farmers and many others benefit from the scheme, and the money they spend helps keep Australia moving.

The original scheme was due to finish on July 1. The problem was that, because of COVID-19, some car factories and transport logistics came to a halt. This meant well-meaning people ordered utilities, tractors and harvesters, paid their money and waited for delivery. But unforeseen delays meant their tax refunds were at risk.

VACC, along with others, lobbied government to reconsider the deadline and we were pleased to see it pushed out to December 31. This is a great example of good policy being tweaked for the betterment of the Australian economy.

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

Share your thoughts
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WATT ABOUT A CHEAP EV?

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
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I'm convinced an electric car (EV) would suit my circumstances. I travel under 5000km per year mainly in suburban traffic, and have solar for home charging. I can't justify spending \$50,000 on a new EV, so have looked for a used EV. I've seen some Mitsubishi i-MiEVs for around \$10,000, but wonder how much longer its battery will last? If I needed to replace it, what's the cost?

Judith Williamson, email

Not cheap. I asked Mitsubishi Australia and, interestingly, they couldn't answer. "The issue is providing a price as we haven't sold a battery for an i-MiEV," a spokesman said. That suggests, of the 250 i-MiEVs sold in Australia between 2010 and 2013, none have required a new battery, or some were replaced free under warranty. i-MiEV forums say about \$10,000 for private owners is likely. Batteries degrade over time and use, reducing electric range, so don't expect a used i-MiEV to manage over 100km between charges. They're fun, easy to drive and zippy in town, but the cabin's small and very basic. Have the seller fully charge it before you inspect so the dashboard indicates the maximum possible driving range.

TIME MATTERS

My 2015 Toyota RAV4 has only done 70,000km but the Toyota service manager says it needs a 120,000km service for \$1200. This seems outrageous and I think it's time to switch to an independent garage. Any advice?

Duncan Campbell, email

A 2015 RAV4 needs servicing every six months, so the next is the 72-month/120,000km service, whichever comes first. It's a major service replacing transfer oil, rear differential oil, aircon filter, in-tank fuel filter and engine filter, as well as the normal oil change and inspections. If an independent garage does all these things by the book it may be

cheaper, but not by much. For main dealers, Toyota is typically one of the better value brands.

THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

I'm a single person approaching retirement seeking a low maintenance, reliable car which is easier to get in and out of than my 2014 Mitsubishi Lancer. It needs some power for highway trips, a reasonable boot for Bunnings shops, a comfortable seat, sat nav and auto headlights and wipers. Budget is up to \$30,000. Any suggestions?

Beverley Montiford, email

Small SUVs are popular with retirees due to their easy-to-access ride height. A Kia Seltos is of good size, drives well, looks fantastic and seven-year warranty gives peace of mind. The Sport (\$30,190 drive-away) ticks all your boxes bar auto wipers, but service costs are pricier than some rivals, such as the Mitsubishi ASX. Not as talented as the Kia, but for \$29,490 drive-away an ASX in ES ADAS grade services your needs and also has seven-year warranty. Also consider an ex-dealer demo Ford Focus Active from about \$26,000 drive-away. These have a higher ride height than other hatches, drive beautifully and have strong specification.

RUSTY DEMONS

Rust bubbles are appearing on my 2015 Subaru WRX's driver and passenger door pillars. These are double skinned sealed metal covered by a vinyl strip. I believe this is a manufacturing fault, and I've been quoted nearly \$900 for repair. I think Subaru should cover this, but the dealer still hasn't looked into it four months after I raised it.

Fred Van Vugt, email

We approached Subaru Australia as rust should not be a problem at this young age. I've learnt you independently had the repairs carried out by a specialist, and Subaru Australia refunded you the full amount of \$876.48. I was told that your brand loyalty (ownership since 1998 and eight Subarus owned in total) ensured the goodwill repair. Great result, but the dealer should have acted faster for such a loyal customer.



The road noise from my 2017 Mazda3 SP25 is a huge problem, so I want to replace the standard Dunlop tyres. Any suggestions?

Peter Fisher, email

These previous generation Mazda3s were noted for intrusive cabin noise, and it's not just the tyres to blame. Sound absorbing material wasn't up to scratch. Mazda owners have recommended Michelin Primacy tyres as a quieter solution.

PRICE OF OIL

The capped price service on my Jeep Grand Cherokee Trailhawk included \$224 for 8-litres of the supplied oil — Castrol DX Magnatec 5W-40. Retailers sell the same for just over \$100 for 10-litres. I raised this with Jeep Service and was told it's the price recommended by Jeep. Jeep Customer Service told me the dealer had the right as a private business to set the price of its oil, and the total cost of service was consistent with their capped price. Is it reasonable dealers charge over twice the retail price for oil?

Ray Smith, email

No, it's not. Rest assured the dealer will bulk buy oil far cheaper than it's sold to the public too. Ask the dealer what your next service price will be if you provide your own Castrol Magnatec oil as you're not happy with their extortionate mark-ups. If they have a problem with that, find a trusted local independent mechanic to do your logbook servicing. This is possible without affecting your Jeep warranty.

RETIREMENT PLANS

I want to upgrade my 2010 Toyota Yaris as my retirement looms. My wish list is Apple CarPlay, reversing camera, a boot big enough to hold my parent's walker and it can get up Yarra Valley hills with the air conditioner on. It must not have the indicators/wiper stalks on the wrong sides. I'm looking at a Hyundai i30 or Toyota Corolla for around \$20,000.

Anything else to check out?

Cheryl Watt, email

Don't cut your options in half by demanding the indicator stalk be a specific side. Your brain will adjust to a change rapidly. The Corolla hatch is a quality offering, but the boot and rear seat are tiny. It must be the current generation (from 2018 and with Batman wing-esque front lights) if you want Apple CarPlay. A used Hyundai i30's a safe bet and cracking value, but I'd lean towards a new car with your budget. Check out the Kia Cerato hatch (seven-year warranty and from \$21,490 on the road), and if you can stomach the indicator on the 'wrong' side, a Skoda Fabia Wagon ticks all your boxes and has a huge, easy-loading boot. Bargain too at \$19,000 drive-away for the manual and \$22,000 the auto.

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