



'The expectation'

IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNICATION



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

It's unfortunate, but consumers sometimes have issues with business operators. As a consumer and the CEO of an association supporting people to run better businesses, I can see things from both sides.

It's true, businesses get things wrong. When they do, they should rectify the situation to the satisfaction of their customers.

But consumers get it wrong as well, and this can make operating an honest business harder than it should be.

Sitting somewhere in the middle of these two extremes is what I've coined 'the expectation'. This is when one side — or maybe both — imagines one thing but experiences something else.

It happens in friendships and marriages, so why wouldn't it occur in other relationships?

Getting 'the expectation' right relies on good communication. At VACC we communicate with members regularly about good business practices and providing great customer service.

I want that for all consumers. So, here's how you can help.

When you deal with a business ensure both parties come to an understanding of 'the expectation'.

So, talk through the scope of work and/or clearly identify what you are buying. Here's an example.

If you are getting a general car service, have a discussion about what that involves.

The business may understand you want all detected problems rectified. But is that what you want? Or do you just want the basics covered? If so, what are the basics?

Both parties should ask questions first, not later. That way you will both get what you want. And that's the way it should be.

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

Share your thoughts
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EURO VISION

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
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My 2007 Honda Accord Euro has just clicked over 430,000km. It still performs well, but I'm considering a replacement like a Honda Civic, Hyundai i30, Kia Cerato or Toyota Corolla. Any recommendations or alternatives?

Kevin Grice, email

The Accord Euro was a gem of a car — punchy engine and lovely driving dynamics. A new Toyota Corolla would offer you similar, albeit with limited rear seat and boot space. The i30 and Cerato are solid choices — the Kia wins warranty-wise — but I'd be loyal to Honda if I were you. I'm not a fan of the exterior styling, but the Civic's beautifully engineered and peachy to drive. Also sample a Mazda3 hatchback, or wait for a new Golf later in the year.

EARLY FAILURE

My Toyota dealer suggests I replace my 57,000km 2018 RAV4's water pump as it's leaking coolant. I've been quoted \$850. The dealer told me it's not a warranty item, but an independent mechanic disagrees. Should I raise this with Toyota's head office?

Darren McClelland, email

Contact Toyota's Guest Experience on 1800 869 682. Some dealers are quick to quote for repair when really this should be assessed for a warranty claim. If a new water pump plus fitting is \$850, life expectancy of such a pricey part must be more than three years. Your dealer may say a water pump isn't covered under warranty, but our fair trading laws mean for one to fail in such time probably wouldn't make it fit for purpose.

ROLE REVERSAL

One often hears of car dealers bending over backwards to make a sale only to have the purchaser disillusioned by after-sales service. My Chrysler 300C buying experience was the

direct inverse. My first order was in August 2019, then (after no communication) I had to reorder an updated 2020 model with a latest delivery date of February 2020. I showed up at the dealer in March to be told by the stock controller it was still being built. It eventually arrived in May, then COVID held it up until July. It took almost a year from placing the order to receiving my car. Positively, the 300C has met all my expectations and the dealer's service department has been excellent, but the sales experience was abysmal.

Andrew Ross, email

Some dealerships excel at customer communication because they recognise its importance. Others, dismayingly, just don't get it. One sales manager's lack of professionalism can ruin a dealership's team.

GOING SPARE

Paying \$89,000 for a Tesla without a full-size spare wheel is really wasting your money.

John Booth, email

I hate to generalise, but is your typical Tesla owner going to change a flat by the roadside? If most of your driving is done in the suburbs, then it's best not to waste range lugging around a heavy spare.

LET'S TALK

David McCowen's Tesla Model 3 review said: "having to tap through menus to adjust airconditioning, windscreen wipers or open the glove box is annoying." Having owned one for 18 months, all these items and more can be done using voice command.

Peter Watts, email

Very true, but we can't pretend voice command works perfectly every time. Sometimes all you want is a switch to quickly crank up the aircon. That said, when I tested the Model 3 its voice command was superb.

COUNTRY LIFE

Last week's Tesla Model 3 review raised some excellent points. But it's a shame in three weeks of testing there was no dedicated



I have a 2008 Peugeot 307 diesel wagon with over 330,000km and am seeking a replacement. I want a 2.0-litre wagon with full-size spare, good economy and safety. I'm not keen on SUVs or auto gearboxes, but I'll consider them if I have to. Budget is up to \$40,000.

Alexis Tacey, email

You're going to have to compromise. New wagons with manual gearboxes and full-size spares are simply not offered. A Mazda6 wagon has a chunky 2.5-litre engine, but better economy's found with a Ford Focus ST-Line wagon. It uses just a three-cylinder turbo, but it's a great engine and sporty drive. If you go to the SUV dark side, pick a Toyota RAV4 GX Hybrid — excellent economy and a full-size spare.

period of urban driving. I'd suggest the majority of Teslas will be city-based.

Grahame Tindall, email

As it was the Model 3 Long Range (claimed 657km range) the story was designed to test its suitability for longer trips. My Model 3 Performance test used 15.7kWh per 100km in the city. David did 18.1 on his rural/highway odyssey.

RATTLING ON

Re wheel nuts, a lot of problems are caused by overzealous use of technicians' rattle guns. I insist they use a four-way wrench or hand socket on my car. I've never had a nut loosen from not using a rattle gun.

Peter Lion, email

Having been stranded by the roadside, tendons bulging while trying to loosen nuts fitted by a rattle gun, I'm in total agreement.

COLD CHISEL TO THE RESCUE

Re Mazda BT-50 wheel nuts, same happened to me. The soft outer coverings rounded off after using the vehicle's tools. It took an hour with a small cold chisel to remove them all. I advise all BT-50 and Ford Ranger owners to change their nuts while they can.

Col McKenzie, email

Better to spend \$50 or so now than have this happen while you're out bush.

SMOOTH SAILING

I couldn't agree more with Con Greenwood about DCT (double clutch) gearboxes. In six years with my Audi I've never experienced any jerkiness or hesitation. If you don't left foot brake and use the parking brake for hill starts I guarantee you'll never experience problems.

William Ma, email

The double-clutch debate goes on! All DCTs are not created equal, so while your Audi may be smooth, many are not.

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