



Can my vehicle be repaired right now?

THE ANSWER IS YES

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Victoria's stage three and four COVID-19 restrictions mean it's difficult for people to maintain their vehicle and ensure roadworthiness. The good news is that repairs and maintenance can be carried out on vehicles from permitted industries, meaning VACC workshops can help essential service workers do their critical work.

All consumers can also have critical and urgent repairs carried out on their vehicles to ensure the health and safety of all Victorians. In addition, routine maintenance and logbook servicing can be completed to maintain the vehicle's roadworthiness. This is great news for people concerned about the condition of their vehicle and are unsure if they can engage their local VACC business for safety checks and rectification work.

To help, VACC has developed a safety checklist for vehicle owners. This list doesn't include all potentially urgent safety issues that may arise. Instead, it focuses on the most obvious ones that can easily be checked at home.

Ask yourself these questions about your vehicle:

- 1 Are any lights not functioning correctly, including the indicators and brake lights?
- 2 Are dashboard warning lights illuminating?
- 3 Do any tyres have worn tread or visible signs of damage?
- 4 Is there body damage that could be dangerous to you or another person?
- 5 Is your windscreen cracked?
If you answered 'yes' to any of the above, contact your local VACC automotive service provider for urgent assistance.

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

Share your thoughts
ceo@vacc.com.au

[ROADSIDE ASSIST]



MODEL CUSTOMER

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Re Tough Sell, you mentioned electric cars under \$100,000 but omitted Tesla's Model 3. We own two, they cost about \$70,000 each, are delightful to drive and have a range up to 250km, mostly recharged from solar.

David Pym, email

Two Teslas? No wonder its share price is through the roof. There are a number of new electric cars for sale under \$100k, but my list was of the cheapest, all costing less than \$60,000. The best drive-away price for a Model 3 right now is about \$77,500.

NO CHARGE

Re Electric cars, you still can't tow a caravan with one. We are a big country. All I see about electric cars is city centric.

Raymond Turvey, email

Last year Scott Morrison said EVs couldn't tow and was quickly fact checked. Truth is some can tow, and in some ways are ideal for it. The instant torque from the electric motor or motors means great pulling power, and if you can recharge for free (or cheaply) you'll save a packet over diesel or petrol on your adventures. For circumnavigating Australia, you're right, we're not ready yet. Not enough places to fast charge and an EV's range will plummet with a van behind. But they are capable. A Tesla Model X is rated for 2250kg, while the plug-in hybrid Porsche Cayenne E-Hybrid manages 3500kg with a 280kg tow ball download limit.

NO CHARGE

I'm 69-years-old and drive a 2016 Mazda3, which is currently driving well. Would you advise I trade it to buy a new Mazda3 or keep it? I don't know how long I'll keep driving but hopefully into my 80s.

Elizabeth Donnellan, email

Keep your car. If your Mazda3 is going well, you enjoy it and it isn't lacking something you deem integral, I see no need to change. I advise people to own the car that suits them now, not what you think may suit in three years. Some rush to buy a higher SUV for fear of being less mobile as they

age, but this may not happen until you're 90 or older. Your car is out of warranty, but if you keep it well serviced the Mazda3 should be reliable.

TECHNOLOGY FAIL

Our 2014 Isuzu D-Max has driven only 17,000km, but the radio started having problems, then the GPS screen, the head-unit buttons and the steering wheel controls. The reversing camera was also going on and off. A replacement cost for everything has been quoted at \$4500. This is too much for us. What can I do?

Sunny Yan, email

I broached this with Isuzu Australia and was told a full genuine audio system replacement unit cost \$4170 before fitment. That's a ludicrous amount. There is a much cheaper alternative that I was told the dealer has already offered to you. For \$570 fitted there's a Post-Warranty Audio Exchange Unit — basically an overhauled refurbished one, much like the exchange program Apple Care does for its products. I'd go for this in your instance, but clarify with the dealer what length warranty this replacement part will have.

BILL SHOCK

My 2017 Mitsubishi ASX just had its 60,000km service costing \$550. So much for fixed price servicing! The bill was more than half my age pension. The previous services cost \$230. Can I go to my local garage without voiding warranty?

Lal Whyte, email

Yes you can. Registered independent mechanics can do logbook servicing and this won't void your warranty as long as they use factory-approved parts and fluids and service to Mitsubishi's schedule. Mitsubishi offers capped price servicing for up to ten years for current new cars, but yours only had three years/45,000km.

ELITIST TECHNOLOGY

I'm disappointed Mazda 3's new Skyactiv-X engine is only available in the range-topping X20 Astina. I preferred Holden's approach with the EH (1963). Every car in the range got the new 149 "Red" motor rather than the lower grades chugging around with the EJ's old grey motor.



RURAL RELEVANT
I'm recently retired and considering a new SUV. I live in regional Victoria and like the Subaru Forester, Honda CR-V and Mitsubishi Outlander. Which is the best all-rounder for reliability, safety, fuel economy, servicing and parts? I want a full-size spare wheel. Are there superior SUVs?

Bridget Rogowski, email

Considering you location the Forester would be my pick for unsealed roads or snow and ice thanks to its clever X-Mode. It's huge inside, has a full-size spare, is comfy and quiet, loaded with safety kit and 7.4L/100km fuel use isn't bad. The first five services total \$2385. The Outlander is great value and has incredible 10-year warranty and capped price servicing, so is worth a look. Do sample the CR-V too — none of your choices are bad ones — but the medium SUV leader is the Toyota RAV4. Pick the GX model for a full-size spare wheel.

James Taylor, email

Holden's Red motor may have been introduced nearly 60 years ago, but I see your point. Mazda's new Skyactiv-X engine is very much a flagship motor for its flagship 3 — it burns petrol more efficiently, produces few emissions and uses mild hybrid technology. There's very clever science involved, and having just tested one, can report it's impressively quiet and refined. Not terribly fun though. If you want it in your Mazda3 you'll need a rather silly \$44,470 for the X20 Astina. I'm sure the engine will eventually filter down to lesser grades to justify its development costs..

FUN-SIZED HERO

I'm seeing lots of new Suzuki Jimnys on the road and I read a report there's a waiting list of 12 months to buy one. Is this really true?

Andrew Parish, email

It is for certain specifications or colours, but there are a few at dealer yards to drive away if you're not too fussy. Why so popular? They're fun, incredibly capable off-road and don't have any rivals.



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Prestige Vehicles

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