



DO YOUR JOB

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

Re Blow the Budget, I agree about unnecessarily expensive cars. Dealers seem to be gouging the public in times of crisis. A Toyota Yaris is now nearly \$30,000 for decent specification! Why don't so-called expert reviewers speak up about new cars going up more than inflation? And don't blame extra features costing more — these are packaged, bolt-ons by makers and their suppliers. Your comment on easy credit illustrates you are part of the perception problem.

Jim Connect, email

It's not my fault buyers can get easy credit to buy an expensive new car. Personally, I find it irresponsible. Cheap new cars are there if consumers want them; the Kia Picanto at \$14,690 and Mitsubishi Mirage at \$14,990. They have engines, four wheels, four seats and a boot. Extra features do drive up costs. Six airbags, a reversing camera, auto emergency braking, smartphone connectivity and a colour touchscreen are standard in even our cheapest cars. In 2020, the cheapest Toyota Corolla costs \$23,895. Fifteen years ago it was \$19,990. That 2005 Corolla Ascent had one airbag and lacked airconditioning, traction control, ABS brakes and electric windows. I'd say we're getting a much better deal today.

LEXUS LOVE-IN

Your advice to David Reid about buying a Lexus RC F was spot on. I bought a three-year-old example, and it can be a docile urban car, fast tourer or exciting muscle car at the turn of a knob. Quality and value are amazing. Petrol is a small part of overall vehicle cost, so enjoy the V8 for as long as you can.

David Sinclair, email

Naturally-aspirated V8s are sadly not long for this world. Emissions restrictions will kill them off in the next few years. Build a large shed, start hoarding these thumping relics now and you should be richly rewarded down the line.

WORTH THE WAIT

Good to see you recommending the Toyota

RAV4 Hybrid; I just got mine after waiting nine months and it ticks all the boxes. It returns 5L/100km and rego in Queensland is just \$416 as it's a hybrid. The ride's quite harsh, though.

Mike Gocs, email

The RAV4 Hybrid was Australia's best-selling car in August, the first time a hybrid variant has achieved this. Sales were helped by the injection of an extra 8000 into the country. As a result, Toyota says wait times were "essentially back to normal." Dealers have stock, but if you want a specific specification not in the country, a three-month wait will be typical.

RULES ARE RULES

My wife's Volvo V40's first annual service cost \$700. It had only travelled 3000km. It's now due its second service, but it's only driven another 2000km. Can we avoid it? Another \$700 seems expensive.

Karl Adomeit, email



I recently bought my dream car, a Kia Stinger GT. I'll be lucky to drive 5000km per year, but Kia insists it must be serviced by time and not kilometres driven. Kia's servicing is quite expensive — over \$749 in the third year. In the past I've serviced my Ford Falcon G6 based on kilometres driven without any problem, so should I service on kilometres or date?

Sue Bridges, email

Sorry everyone, but services need to be at least annual, regardless of distance travelled, due to essential fluids degrading with time as well as use. You're risking your mechanical components' health if you don't follow manufacturer guides, plus you'll void your warranty if you skip services. An independent mechanic can do logbook servicing (if using factory-approved parts) which can save you money.



EXPENSIVE WIPEOUT

I was the happy owner of a 2017 Isuzu MU-X, until I endeavoured to update the GPS system. I took the SD card from the car, put it in my computer, followed instructions on Isuzu's website and saw the update was successful. I put the SD back in the car and the GPS screen went blank. No data on the SD card. My Isuzu service centre sent the SD away to be checked, the provider didn't want to take responsibility for a replacement and I've been told it's \$695 for a replacement GPS. I'm dissatisfied and disappointed.

Linda King, email

Isuzu Australia claims you admitted accidentally wiping your SD card, so while it's regrettable, they can't be held accountable as it wasn't a card failure. Each SD card is paired to an individual GPS unit (to prevent theft) hence the big bill. Isuzu said their GPS provider — Navixtras — charges them \$427 for the new card and licence. Not sure how that translates into a \$695 bill for you, though. Manufacturers should find a way to make it impossible — or at least very difficult — for customers to accidentally wipe their cards.

SEEKING TRACTION

Is Volkswagen planning a new version of the all-wheel-drive Passat Wagon?

Glen Thompson, email

Underrated car, the Passat Wagon. More practical than most SUVs, too. VW Australia told me 206TSI and Alltrack variants are due early in the first quarter of 2021. Both are all-wheel-drives, and will join the updated front-wheel-drive 140TSI.

SEE THE LIGHT

Re auto headlights not coming on at dusk, my late father gave me a piece of wisdom. If you can't see the pattern of your floor mats clearly, put on your headlights.

Allan Comben, email

Good advice. Or in the case of my old Suzuki Sierra, if you can't see the road through the rust holes.

TOUGH BRAKES

My 2017 BMW X5's brakes feel overly sensitive and aggressive, making it difficult to come to a smooth stop. The BMW service adviser said the brakes are performing "as normal" but a brake fluid flush "may help with the sudden braking." I'm considering different pads, but the adviser said non-genuine pads would void warranty.

Glenn Morris, email

First of all, using non-genuine or "non-OEM" brake pads will absolutely not void your warranty. The ACCC prevents car companies insisting on this, but aftermarket pads must be of good quality and made specifically for your model. I'd visit an independent brake specialist, explain your issue and have them recommend a quality alternative. They can also assess your brake fluid.



Regional roots

STATE-WIDE SUPPORT IMPORTANT

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



When VACC was founded on September 20, 1918, it wasn't at a gathering in a Collins St office building.

The foundation meeting was held in Bendigo. Ever since then regional Victoria has been incredibly important to us.

Our longest standing members are in regional areas. VACC has a member that has been with us for 102 years (Wilson Bolton, car dealers servicing motorists in Horsham and surrounding areas) and, in November, we welcome another centenary member, Edney's Leongatha. Across rural and regional Victoria are longstanding member businesses that we rely upon and they, in return, rely on us.

One of the things VACC has done very well over the years is recognise regional members.

In fact, when we marked our centennial two years ago, we celebrated in Bendigo and there is now a plaque on what was once the Bendigo Chamber of Commerce rooms attesting to the fact.

Recently, we ran commercials on regional television promoting our members because, while Melbourne businesses were in stage four lockdown, the rest of Victoria operated under different conditions. We wanted motorists to know this.

At the same time, we ran different messages on Melbourne FM radio.

This is one example of how we cater for different members.

Another service VACC offers, unique in all Australia, is a team of area managers who visit and service members across the state.

Currently this may mean a 'virtual' visit, but we are still there for our members. It is a challenging time, but VACC is well equipped to continue supporting automotive business owners.

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

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