



## Higher education

WOULD YOU LIKE A JOB WITH THAT?

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



What a relief. The Australian Government has finally decided to reduce funding for higher education qualifications that have poor job connections.

Recently, Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan announced an overhaul of university fees, which saw arts degrees increase by 113 per cent, while teaching and nursing courses fell by almost half. It's plain to see — the Federal Government wants people studying for jobs with definite career paths.

It's a common-sense decision and very welcome by the trades industries.

For some time VACC has raised with government that qualifications without jobs at the end are costly and, in many cases, waste valuable learning time for school leavers.

The chamber also argued that any qualifications offered by universities or technical training providers should come with an 'expectation of employment' ranking. This information is available to governments, so why not let young learners know this before investing years — and lots of money — in obscure courses that may lead nowhere?

We should ask young career aspirants if they actually want or need a degree. Many don't but opt for higher education anyway 'just because'.

For many young people apprenticeships are a fantastic career choice. Trade apprentices get paid while they learn and graduate with transferable skills that are at little risk of becoming obsolete. That's a great thing to rely upon, especially in times like these.

And for the record, all apprenticeships have a job entry point and a job destination. It's the best training model in the world. Let's embrace it.

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

Share your thoughts  
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[ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

## IS IT CHRISTMAS?

When I was collecting my 2012 Subaru XV after a recall fix, the service person said they had found some other issues, including a leaking timing cover. I was fearing a big cost being long out of warranty, but to my pleasant surprise the dealer, Subaru Mentone, had contacted Subaru Australia and got approval to fix the faults free of charge. I'm thinking this is what you call goodwill, even though I hadn't been using Subaru to service my car after the three-year warranty ran out.

Ken Flanagan, email

Well this is heartwarming. Evidence shows you're more likely to receive goodwill repairs outside of warranty if you continue to service with a main dealer, so your case looks exceptional. Well done Subaru, and you go buy a lotto ticket Ken.

### NO FAVOURS GIVEN

I notice the oil price remains ludicrously low (about \$40 a barrel) but unleaded at the servos is no longer under a dollar, but back to \$1.40. How about fuel retailers cut us some slack while we're doing it tough with coronavirus? When we're all driving electric cars, these thieves will be sorry.

Des Escott, Brisbane

Looks like Queensland's prices are highest in the country right now. You can still find fuel cheaper in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. Download an app like PetrolSpy to get current prices at servos in your area.

### SPACE FOR ALL

My partner, who's recently had a baby, wants to upgrade her Ford Focus to a small/medium SUV. I'm happy with new or used (up to two years old), with a maximum budget of \$30,000. Suggestions?

Ben Mantel, email

Ah, classic new bub SUV migration in evidence here Ben. Nothing wrong with that, but be aware a small/medium SUV often won't offer much extra boot space over a hatch. That said, a Focus boot is pretty small, plus an SUV's higher ride height makes strapping bub into a child seat easier. Safety's key with your newborn, so I'd pick Kia's excellent Seltos in S grade with Safety Pack. It's \$27,990 drive away,

### IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT  
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bridges the gap between small and mid-size SUV with its roomy cabin, gets 5 Star ANCAP safety and seven-year warranty. Cross-shop with a Hyundai Kona and new Nissan Juke if you can abide the styling. Mid-size SUVs? Look at a 2019 Hyundai Tucson and the 2018/19 Subaru Forester.

### LUXURY SPORT

I'm interested in a 2014-17 Mercedes-Benz A250 Sport. What's your opinion on the car, and its good and bad points?

Kristian Edgcombe, email



Great looking thing the A250 Sport, especially with its diamond front grille. Aim for a 2016 and later variant with all-wheel-drive. Earlier ones were front-drive. It has a great sporty cabin with red stitching and seat belts, infotainment's good but search for one that was optioned with smartphone integration. You may not like the ride in town. Even with AMG Ride Control as standard, the Comfort setting is still harsh, especially if 19-inch wheels were optioned. Find the right bit of road and it's brilliantly rewarding. Insist on a perfect service history, and avoid ones that have been thrashed — it's a proper driver's car.

### TOUGH CELL

My 2017 VW Tiguan's battery died one week after the car's warranty expired. I asked about a goodwill replacement from the VW dealer (I'd



### MINIMAL USE

My 2011 Holden Commodore SV6 is technically due its 120,000km service but has only done 65,000km. I've dropped a few minor things from recent scheduled services as I'm retired and only covered 6200km, 4700km and 3800km in the past three years. The 120k service includes expensive platinum spark plugs and pollen filter, should I still do so with my low kilometres?

Ray Dean, email

My independent mechanic says as long as your annual oil and filter change is done (oil degrades with time as well as use), rest easy on the other stuff on a 10-year-old Holden. He did warn to keep an eye on the timing chain on these SV6s. You do low kilometres, so unless you're experiencing poor acceleration, misfires, a rough idle or trouble starting, your spark plugs are probably fine. High fuel consumption can also mean plugs need changing, but you're in an SV6 that likes a drink so you probably wouldn't notice anyway. That was the mechanic's joke, not mine.

serviced it there the week before) plus the battery maker, but no luck. Very disappointing. As an aside, the stop-start function hadn't worked for four months prior, but with a new battery in it worked again.

Jaime Garrick, email

Car batteries aren't covered under warranty, unless you can prove it was faulty. Three years' life isn't brilliant, but not terrible either. Aftermarket batteries often have a three-year warranty (or longer), but yes, those stupid stop-start systems add extra strain on them.

### RICHLY DESERVED

I'm in my late 60s and want to upgrade to some luxury. I'm considering a 2017/18 Range Rover Evoque or BMW X4. I like a bit of power but am torn between petrol and diesel, mainly because both need premium petrol at great expense. No towing, a few long trips, but also everyday city driving. Your opinion?

Jeff Wright, email

Well done for chasing luxury. You only live once, right? Both the Evoque and X4 prioritise style over practicality, and neither's cheap, but they are sleek SUVs that make you feel special. I'd go diesel, unless you're always doing short city runs and could clog up the diesel particulate filter. Both cars' diesels are more economical and torquier (better low-down shove) than their petrol equivalents. That said, BMW's 3.0-litre straight-six in the X4 M40i is a belter if performance tops your list. Basically, the X4 takes it for driving dynamics, the Evoque for class and ride comfort, especially in HSE or HSE Dynamic grade, so pick your preference. Find one with some warranty remaining, and cross-shop a Porsche Macan too before committing.

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