



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I want to upgrade my 2012 Hyundai Accent to a small SUV. It must have leather, great fuel use and cost no more than \$30,000. Happy to buy demo or late second hand. I'm considering a Hyundai Kona, Renault Kadjar or even an MG? Justine Downing, email

Test all on your shortlist to discover which suits you best. If you're Hyundai loyal, ex-demo Kona Elites with leather cabins cost about \$30k and are impressive all-rounders with reasonable economy. Renault's Kadjar Intens with leather can't be had within budget, while I can't recommend the MG as they haven't let me drive one. If rear seat and boot size aren't important, I'd look at a near-new Mazda CX-3 Akari. Gorgeous leather cabins, fun little things to drive and decent economy.

KEYED OFF

Re. the charge to repair modern car keys, our Holden VZ wagon's spare wouldn't work. The Holden dealer told us the key mechanism was faulty, not the battery, and it cost \$290.

Norman Warren, email

Modern proximity keys — or smart keys — are wonderful until they go wrong or are lost. Lose both the main and spare set and prices get very ugly, very quickly. It's worth getting a quote from a good automotive locksmith as well as your main dealer. You were relatively lucky. Holden keys are generally less complicated and cheaper to repair or replace than most proximity keys.

GOOD LUCK

I've just bought a 2012 Holden Cruze with 68,000km on the clock. I'm very happy with it and wondering is there anything I should look out for with this model?

Fred Hein, email

Take a seat and pour yourself a stiff drink Fred. Hopefully you had it inspected before purchase as the Cruze's reliability record is woeful. Positively, post-March 2011 versions (like yours) were South Australian assembled, and seemingly better quality than older Korean-built Cruzes. An abridged version of problems includes: auto transmission failure; oil leaks; oil cooler cracks; blown head gaskets; power window, coil pack and turbo failures, plus early brake wear. The model's also had 13 separate recalls. Fingers crossed you get lucky.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

I notice on my morning delivery run a lot more cars without headlights on, especially in dusty or foggy conditions. The set and forget nature of auto headlights gives a false sense of security. How do we educate about these dangerous practices?

John Aldersey, email

Making people aware through these pages is a start. People of Australia: don't rely on auto headlights — turn your lights on.

RETIREMENT PLANS

I'm considering a 2WD crew cab ute for my retirement, costing up to \$20,000. It should be comfortable, reliable, economical and have auto transmission. It's purely to get me around, carry passengers and the dog sometimes, and pick stuff up from Bunnings. Any suggestions?

James Owen, email

To fit your criteria you need to look at five- or six-year-old utes, many with high kilometres and tired from work. If you go this route, I'd favour a higher-selling 2WD ute as you'll have more choice and a better chance of finding a good one. Toyota HiLux, Ford Ranger, Holden Colorado and Nissan Navara are most popular, and all are solid offerings. I'd not classify any as particularly comfy or economical however. How about a different approach? Choose a three-year-old wagon such as a Skoda



I'm considering a petrol Mazda CX-8, but wonder if the non-turbo 2.5-litre engine is powerful enough to drive our family of four (two kids under five) for holidays up the east coast once or twice a year? I'm reluctant to buy diesel with some countries banning it. What's your opinion?

Francois Leclerc, email

Great family car, the CX-8. Plenty of space for another child should you add to your collection. A diesel is \$7000 more than the cheapest petrol version, which is about \$40,000. The diesel is more economical, has more poke and is all-wheel-drive, but I don't reckon you need it. The petrol engine will cope with coastal road trips, only getting revvy and noisy on steeper climbs.

Octavia, Holden Astra or Hyundai i40. Comfier to sit in and drive, more economical and plenty of room. Bunnings hire out utes for \$35 per two hours, or \$65 per 24 hours. This might be a more cost-effective solution.

POSITIVE TERRITORY

I agree with reader Wayne Cole about the Ford Territory. We had a 2010 Territory and was the best car we'd ever owned. It was written off three years ago and replaced with a 2012 Titanium. It now holds the crown of best car we've ever owned. I'm only disappointed they don't build them anymore.

Ian Gould, email

Ford Territory fans have been firing shots after I questioned Territory reliability. Good. It's nice to see there are some satisfied customers. I wish Ford had a proper Territory replacement too. The Everest is too off-road leaning, and the diesel-only Endura can't seat seven.

PRICEY PLASTIC

I own a 2014 Mercedes-Benz B200, and recently had to purchase a new "Raw Air Line" for \$385.60 as part of the old one had disintegrated. The part seems to be a simple air flow connection between two parts of the engine with no filtration function. Mercedes Australia told me no technical advice was available about the part, but I'd like to know why it's so expensive and if its disintegration could have deposited bits in my engine?

Keith Pope, email

Mercedes says the air line is "quite a large and complex bit of moulded intake piping that draws air from the front of the vehicle, then runs behind the radiator support and into the air box." They say it's "made up of multiple pieces including a flexible part that allows for engine movement/vibration". Enough to cost \$385? Maybe. Mercedes says it's extremely unlikely any debris could have made its way into your engine.



Industry associations

WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

Back in the day, as people formalised the division of labour, they began to associate within like-minded groups, to share information and support each other.

Ever since then there have been associations. There are associations for just about everything — hairdressing, building, optometry — and they play a very important role in society.

The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC) is the peak association for the automotive industry in Victoria (and Tasmania). Our members are business owners: vehicle and tyre dealers, mechanical and body repairers, body builders, windscreen repairers, vehicle restorers — everything automotive.

VACC's role is to advance the industry and we do this by acting as a voice for those working within it. Almost weekly I meet politicians and regulators, letting them know how their policy affects real people who work in your neighbourhood and employ locals.

VACC also provides trusted information to help people run better businesses and this is likely to positively impact you, their customer.

VACC has a team of experienced professionals who provide technical information, workplace relations advice, OHS&E guidance, and more.

One of the things VACC does, for which I am most proud, is employ about 500 apprentices. We select, place and mentor these young people to ensure there is labour to sell, service and repair the vehicles of the future.

It's all important work that keeps the economy moving and people employed, and we could use more of that right now.

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

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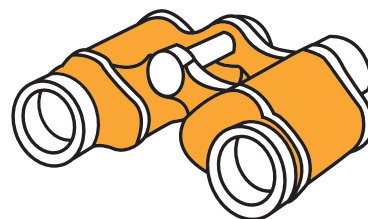
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