



Leading the way

BOARDS PROVIDE FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



ASX-listed companies, not-for-profit organisations, and your local amateur sporting club all have something in common. They are likely to be led by a board. So is VACC.

Boards are interesting beasts, each with its own culture and common personality. Sophisticated companies are commercially charged with high-powered business people sitting around the table. A charity or not-for-profit might have members filling the board positions — with furthering the cause or industry the main priority. A sporting club or community organisation is likely to have community benefit front of mind.

These are all worthy ways of steering an organisation, and all are necessary to the running of our nation.

VACC's executive board consists of nine individuals elected from committees representing different sectors of the auto industry — like mechanical repair, tyres and franchise vehicle dealers — with financial members making up those committees. The board was established like this to ensure balance and representation across the industry, and it works very well.

Like on most boards, there are positions for president, vice president and secretary, with six other general director positions.

Through the Fair Work Commission and the Australian Electoral Commission, VACC conducts elections every two years, with this year being an election year. The process opened in July and every step of the way, the system and the ballot result are audited for correctness and fairness. The results will be publicly announced in November.

VACC is a member organisation and could not run without the fine leadership provided by the executive board.

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

Share your thoughts
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IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT
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My friends and I talk about how generic and boring most car designs are today. Range-wide Mazdas all look the same, as do Lexus and they're stuck with ugly X-shaped grilles. That's why I love Ford Mustangs and Chevy Camaros, which look as exciting as they drive. Don't get me started on those tip-over SUVs.

Paul Williams, email

Sadly, many car makers go for safe styling as if they put out a daring design that doesn't meet market approval they'll face a sales nightmare. It's easier to design a tough muscle car such as the Mustang to appeal to revheads than it is a mass-production family car trying to appeal to multiple market segments. I reckon the new Toyota RAV4 and Mazda3 have done so — they're hardly boring styles. I've got high hopes for electric car design. It's almost a clean slate for designers. Just check out the Tesla Cybertruck (love it or hate it) and the 2021 Nissan Ariya as examples.

ON THE LIMIT

We recently purchased a small caravan with an ATM of 1428kg. Our 2014 Mazda CX-5 Maxx has a towing capacity of 1800kg, but I've discovered it has a towball download limit of 120kg, while the van is rated 135kg. We don't want to sell the Mazda as we love it, but if we had to, what mid-range SUVs would you recommend for towing? We've been looking at a Toyota Prado, Isuzu MU-X and Ford Territory.

Ian McManus, email



First, the good news. I've checked with Mazda and your 2014 CX-5 actually has a towball download

limit (the weight your fully loaded van imposes on the tow bar) of 150kg. Careful not to overload your van, as your margin of error isn't huge. It would be a shame to sell a car you love, especially as most with higher towing capacities will be pricey and/or less car-like on sealed roads. Prados are ideal if you can afford one, while the Isuzu MU-X is a nomad favourite for reliability and towing talents, but it would be a step down in cabin finish and driving refinement from your Mazda. A Ford Territory I'd avoid for reliability reasons.

GOT SHAFTED

My 2014 Ford Focus suffered a broken right-hand drive shaft. Both the car's drive shafts were replaced free in 2015 due to a bad batch fitted at factory. I wonder did they replace mine with another bad batch? The Ford dealer blamed the way I drive for the failure — I know this is not true. The car's six years old and done 185,000km, but I wonder should I pursue a refund?

David Gall, email

It's worth asking the question. Call Ford's customer relations on 13 36 73 and ask for a goodwill repair. At least they could pay parts and you pay labour as this has been an acknowledged problem in the past: thousands of Focuses built between May 2013 and January 2014 were offered free fixes in 2015. It's not too unusual to see drive shaft failures at your age and mileage. I doubt yours were replaced with another bad batch — they'd have failed long ago if so. You could have an independent specialist inspect your drive shaft to determine if it failed due to a manufacturing fault, but this will no doubt attract a fee.

WORTH THE PREMIUM?

I've owned a Volkswagen Arteon since 2017 and am considering another. However, I'm now undecided after reading Richard Blackburn's article on the Mercedes-Benz AMG A35 sedan. What do you think?

Stan Gormley, email

Your Arteon's a beautiful, rapid liftback sedan that's sold in cruelly low numbers — some 1300 since its 2017 launch. It's currently not on sale while VW Australia awaits (and hopefully receives) an updated Arteon next year. Definitely test the AMG A35. It'll be rawer than your VW with its aggressive exhaust note and 0-100km/h time of 4.8 seconds (the Arteon takes 5.6 seconds). The Merc isn't as spacious as your VW, and at \$80,000 on the road will be about \$10k more than a range-



I need a small car for city driving, costing up to \$17,000. Some suggestions please?

Christine Cooper, email

The Kia Picanto holds 75 per cent market share in the city car segment, partly because there's minimal competition and also because it's excellent value. Grab a brand-new 'S' Automatic for \$17,190 on the road and you get seven-year warranty, decent safety kit and smartphone mirroring touchscreen. Price-rival MG3 can't compete on safety, but the recently refreshed Mitsubishi Mirage can and is worth a look. If you need larger, beg, borrow or steal another \$2000 and get a Suzuki Swift GL Nav Auto for \$18,990 drive-away. Great looking and a fun city drive.

topping Arteon, although you also get a prestige badge for the money. If you can, wait a year for the new Arteon before making a final decision.

QUIET LIFE

My 2014 Ford FG Falcon XR6 is due a set of tyres. Can you recommend a quieter tyre as I find road noise annoying?

Robert Turner, email

Anecdotally I've been told by numerous drivers that Michelin Primacy 4 tyres are excellent for lower noise.

GOOD ADVICE

I want to congratulate you for suggesting a reader shouldn't buy an SUV for safer rural driving. Your advice was heartwarming. I recently watched a Holden Captiva SUV have a very unpleasant tank-slapper after swerving to avoid a pothole. Well done.

Jeff Mason, email

Cheers Jeff. Your letter was nicer than the one I received from the Australian SUV Appreciation Society.

ART OR NOISE?

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