

Internal combustion engines

WHAT IS THE FUTURE FOR AUSTRALIA?



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

The UK has recently updated its instituted ban on internal combustion engines, moving it to 2030. This decision will have direct ramifications for Australian motorists and, unless the Federal Government comes up with a plan, the effects will be negative.

Banning internal combustion engines (the petrol and diesel engines used in cars and commercial vehicles) within 10 years means vehicle manufacturers will stop all forward programs for engine development now, if they haven't already.

In the UK, at least, this means all development will be directed towards electric or hydrogen powertrains. That's perfectly fine, but there is more at play here.

As production winds down on internal combustion engines, manufacturers will lose 'scale' and the price of their product will surely rise.

Also, as we wait for an electric or hydrogen-powered future, where will Australia's new generation vehicles come from?

We are a small market, globally, and are unlikely to be at the forefront of production plans from Europe, Asia and North America.

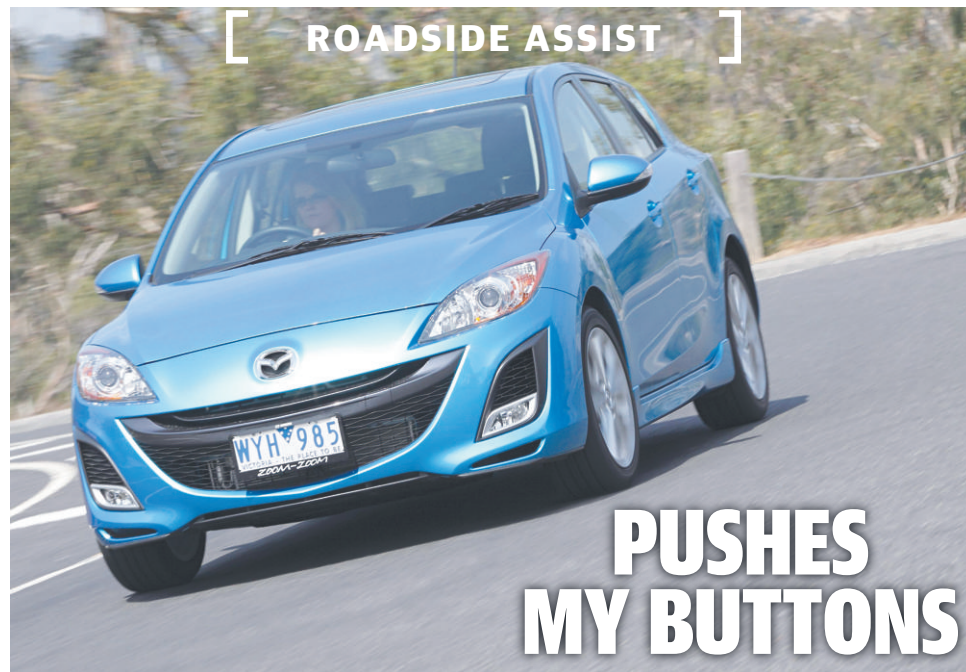
This may leave Australia in a difficult position where motorists may not be able to buy new internal combustion-powered vehicles at reasonable prices. At the same time, they may not have access to enough EVs and hydrogen vehicles.

If the government has no plan to transition the automotive industry, it's likely Australia will become a dumping ground for the world's leftover petrol and diesel-powered cars.

So, Scott Morrison, show us the plan you promised for delivery this year and prove to Australia's motorists that they will be catered for as we move towards 2030 and beyond.

Prepared by 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
CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR
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Recently my 2011 Mazda3 SP25's push-start button flashed red as if it wasn't recognising my key. Inserting the metal key didn't work either. I've spent more \$2500 having multiple things changed and the Mazda dealer told me it was fixed before the same problem reoccurred two weeks later. I can't keep pouring in money like this, so have started looking for another vehicle for around \$25,000. I've no children, and it's for short trips only. I'm considering a Kia Cerato hatch because of the warranty.

Yiota Panagiota, email
Electrical gremlins can be a nightmare, but it's mystifying why the Mazda dealer can't resolve it. Clearly it's more serious than just replacing the key fob's battery, but the dealer and other mechanic should be ashamed if they've charged you so much and the problem remains. I'm not surprised you're considering upgrading, but first you must get your Mazda3 fixed. The SP25 is a desirable model and still worth up to \$10,000 at ten years old. The Cerato Hatch is a value all-rounder with a seven-year warranty — pick a Sport manual with safety pack for \$25,990 drive away. A \$27,690 drive-away (auto) turbo Ford Focus Trend is a more rewarding drive if you want to compare.

IDIOT TAX

What's your take on the crazy tax South Australia and Victoria are planning to put on electric and plug-in cars? Countries like Norway and the UK are promoting electric, why aren't we? I'm very puzzled.

David Pym, email
Me too. Any form of discouragement to buying electric (EV) or plug-in cars while we have such low uptake seems daft, especially if governments are paying millions installing charging infrastructure. What's the point if very few people can afford an EV? A smart discussion is needed on how to tax

EV users in future, but for now, we should look at incentives, not disincentives.

HEARD IT BEFORE

I bought a new 2012 Ford Ranger. It suffered a catastrophic engine failure at 10 weeks and was replaced under warranty. Then it suffered a ruptured heater hose at 207,000km, dumping the coolant and cooking the engine. The temperature gauge didn't indicate a problem due to the sensor picking up the hot air where the water was. Ford sees no problem and advised me to talk to a lawyer. It cost \$13,000 to repair, and I've read of many similar instances. Is this a design fault or just bad luck?

Ken Wells, email
As good as the Ranger is to drive, you only need talk to a specialist or visit Ford forums to see you're not alone. You can seek help from the ACCC — I'm sure you won't be the first to report this issue to them.

RADIO SILENCE

In 2013 I bought a new Hyundai iX35. The head unit was replaced after just three months, and now this one has started playing up. The dealer said this was a common fault and would replace mine with a second-hand one for \$350 or a brand-new Panasonic for \$1800. Apparently it's a very common failure, can you help?

Angela James, email
Common problem indeed in Hyundais of this vintage. After advising you to contact Hyundai customer care I was pleased to hear they looked into your case and two days later agreed to replace your head-unit with a new one free of charge. Great result.

RELIABLY INFORMED

I always thought it was a good week when there wasn't a whinge about Jeep in your paper. My 2013 Grand Cherokee Laredo has had minimal problems, tows a 3200kg van and does a bit of off-roading when desired. They use large American disc brakes; no black dust and at 120,000km there's minimal wear. A BMW would be on its third set.



KEEP ME HANGING ON

Re Andrew Parish's letter about Suzuki Jimny delivery times last month, I live in South East Queensland and wondered how long I have to wait? Suzuki Queensland is separate from Suzuki Australia.

James Gulliford, email
Suzuki Queensland's Stephen Craig told me demand remains strong for Jimny, but stock has increased. "Whereas we were looking at an 18 months interval for delivery, that now is down to around six months." A year and a half?! Ferrari eat your heart out.

Trevor Trewin, email

By its own admission, Jeep's had a torrid few years, much of it self-inflicted. I'm hearing from some owners that this past year problems have been dealt with far more effectively. And like yours, get a reliable Jeep and they're impressive machines.

NASTY JERK

I own a 2013 Ford Mondeo diesel wagon with six-speed dual-clutch gearbox. Last year I took it to Ford as the car jerked at low speed, and was ultimately given a quote of \$10,890 to repair the transmission. It had only travelled 47,470km. A specialist did the work for \$5700 instead. Eighteen months later the mechatronics unit failed — reluctantly, I paid another \$5200 for the fix, refusing to give Ford a chance to quote. It's an otherwise impressive car, but why do manufacturers incorporate such technology? Other technology is cheaper to service and repair and has proven reliability.

Mal Fordham, email
Ford's Powershift dual-clutch transmission has been a plague for the brand, and you're correct to highlight the huge difference in what Ford wanted to charge compared to an independent. That's unforgivable. And you're right about often unnecessary technology, but some is there to meet strict emissions regulations, especially Europe's. Even so, if it now costs many thousands to replace a transmission, diesel particulate filter or even a windscreen (due to driver assistance tech), the consumer is a big loser. Favouring new cars with long warranties looks smarter than ever.



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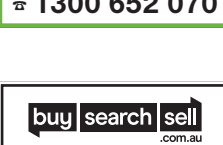
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