



## Two good

### TAKING PERSONAL TRANSPORT SERIOUSLY

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



As most Victorians head back to work once again after lockdown 5.0, the inevitable will occur — gridlocked roads, crowded public transport and to a degree, an end to the social distancing that has been keeping most of us safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to these problems.

When Australia's workforce is largely back in the office, the workshop, or worksite, tens of thousands more people will be packing into buses and trams and trains and driving down previously quiet roads.

But one piece to the puzzle that seems to have been forgotten is the positive role motorcyclists and scooterists can play in keeping some semblance of social distancing in place.

There are almost 900,000 registered motorcycles and scooters on Australian roads. And they are used in different ways — on farms, off-road recreation, and for weekend escapes.

But there is also a dedicated core of motorcyclists and scooterists who use their vehicles to commute to and from work — and for the numerous meal delivery services that are so popular right now.

I think we should be grateful for motorcyclists because the alternative — having tens of thousands more cars on our peak hour roads — is not viable.

Motorcycles and scooters keep our roads, streets, and carparks clearer than they otherwise would be, while being cost-effective compared to four-wheel vehicles.

So, as far as forms of personal transport go in our country, there's a lot to be said for the two-wheeled — or three-wheeled — kind.

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

Share your thoughts [ceo@vacc.com.au](mailto:ceo@vacc.com.au)



# SELLER'S MARKET

[ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

### IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTURING AT [CARS@NEWS.COM.AU](mailto:CARS@NEWS.COM.AU) OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

**I've been offered \$20,000 more than I paid for my near-new Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series. Should I sell it, hold out for more, or keep it?**

Harrison Smith, email

That's a tidy return. Prices are crazy for LandCruisers right now as buyers snap up the last of the V8s. Dealers are asking \$160,000+ for ex-demos, and one ambitious private seller has a 2020 Sahara grade, with a recommended retail price of \$124,000, up for \$200,000. You could cash in and get a Nissan Patrol to suit your needs. That \$20,000 will buy plenty of petrol — and with a V8, you'll need it. The new LandCruiser 300 Series should arrive late this year, and should be a better thing in every regard, with a twin-turbo diesel that has more grunt than the current V8. Will the appetite for the 200 Series then drop and prices normalise? I reckon yes, but I've heard from many who disagree.

### HOT PROPERTY

**I've read in the newspaper that in the past five months, 95 cars were stolen in the ACT for their catalytic converters. Seems there's a black market for recycling rare metals and catalytic converters are a good source.**

Les Lyons, email

Precious metals values have surged in recent years, and the palladium, rhodium and others in catalytic converters are worth a tidy sum. Rhodium is about ten times the value of gold. Hybrid cars' catalytic converters are most desirable as the metals in these are less likely to corrode due to infrequent use. Older hybrids are more desirable again as they contain more precious metals than newer ones — it seems a thief can flog one for \$1000. Lock up your Priuses!

### SAFE TOWING

**We want a new or near-new SUV and can't pick what to buy. Budget's up to \$70,000 and it may need to tow a small caravan. I like the Skoda Kodiaq, but reliability and resale are a concern. My son has a VW Tiguan Allspace, which is great but I worry about parts cost. I've**

also considered the Toyota Kluger as I'd feel safe with its reliability and ease to get parts when touring. We're close to retirement age and this will probably be our last car, so reliability is key.

Danny Ward, email

All are very accomplished SUVs, so the weight of your caravan is important. The Kodiaq and Kluger's braked towing limit is 2000kg; the Tiguan Allspace's is between 1800kg and 2500kg. Ensure your van's weight is well under these limits. The VW appeals for its tow rating and not feeling quite as cumbersome as the others, but the Toyota's a brand-new model with bang-up-to-date features, very cheap servicing and a rock solid reputation for reliability. Look at a Kia Sorento too. Your budget buys the range-topping GT-Line, which oozes luxury, has a 2000kg tow rating and a seven-year warranty.

### RISKY BUSINESS

**I own a 2004 Mitsubishi Lancer showing just under 150,000km. Its timing belt was changed in 2012 at 75,000km. I'm 85 years old and money is tight. Should I have the timing belt replaced or is it worth taking the risk?**

Long trips are rare.

Jack Muller, email

Mitsubishi says the belt should be changed every 100,000km, so in theory you've another 25,000km in hand. But time wears them down as well as mileage. My mechanic suggested a new one every five years — with a new water pump — is best practice. This should cost just shy of \$1000 — not cheap, but far cheaper than a new engine. If you choose to roll the dice and stick with your current one, at least have a mechanic check it over for damage or excessive wear.

### WHERE TO GO?

**Our 2012 Mazda CX-5 has been very good, but its satnav maps are out of date and next to useless around Melbourne. My Mazda dealer advised me they "no longer support that product" and no software update was available. I asked what options we had and was told there were no alternatives. I've ended up buying a satnav unit to stick to the windscreen.**

Gerry Hanily, email

Updating sat nav maps is a necessary evil in many cars. The 2013 Mazda CX-5 had a TomTom unit (an update is \$85), but yours predates this and it appears an update isn't supported. Hopefully your windscreen mounted nav will suffice, but an aftermarket head-unit supporting smartphone-mirroring — Apple CarPlay/Android Auto — is another option. This way, your satnav will always be up to date as it uses your phone's maps. They cost about \$400 at auto stores, but the cost of fitting varies.

### CASHING IN

**Re: Kerry Malone's Holden Astra, I also have a 2017 R+ model. It's been great, but I'm worried about resale and parts availability long term due to Holden's closure. Should I sell now while the used market is hot?**

Isaac Rollinson, email

Kerry's Astra was bought in late 2017, so came with an excellent seven-year warranty as Holden fought for survival. If your Astra has the same, I'd keep hold of it. When General Motors shuttered Holden it promised to provide servicing and spare parts for at least ten years. The new-car market is also hot with no bargains to be had. I'd wait for the new-car market to cool before trading your Astra — it's a damn good car.



## TRAVEL PLANS

**We're looking for a second-hand SUV and our budget is \$15-\$20,000. We're a couple in our early 70s. It needs to tow a small 12-foot caravan, launch and retrieve a tinnie and have some ground clearance to enter gold field tracks. Any ideas?**

Kevin and Coll, email

Demand is very high for lifestyle/adventuring SUVs in that price range — no overseas holidays

means plenty want to go exploring locally. If your van is about 1000kg, and it'll just be the two of you travelling, look at a 2011-15 Subaru XV. Its 1400kg towing capacity, all-wheel-drive and ground clearance of 220mm (more than a Toyota Prado) will suit your needs, although it's small inside. Need more space and up to 1800kg towing? Try a Subaru Forester of similar vintage and it should just sneak in budget.

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