



Internal Combustion Engines

IT'S NOT THE
END OF THE
ROAD JUST
YET

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



The humble internal combustion engine, while over 100 years old, continues to dominate the vehicle market in Australia — despite some countries having their sights set on 2030 as the end date for sales.

While 2030 seems a long way off, it's not in the vehicle development and manufacturing world. And it should be remembered that, in all likelihood, the politicians driving the ban will no longer be in power when the flag falls on this engineering masterpiece.

It's interesting that recent overseas policy moves will see engine manufacturers globally rethinking their production runs, when almost all new models generate efficiency gains each year and use less fuel for more driving miles.

Currently, the Australian Government is not giving anything away when it comes to policy on our own future vehicle fleet, and a much-promised report is yet to materialise.

However, out of the blocks early are Victoria and South Australia, the former deciding to start charging electric vehicles on a 2.5 cent/km rate from July 2021.

That may sound like a backwards move, but EV owners are road users too, so they should pay their fair share to maintain the country's extensive road network.

I wonder what will happen in countries that set a date for an electric vehicle fleet changeover. Many motorists may just hang onto their old cars for longer, the result being an ageing vehicle fleet due to insufficient EV supply or inflated prices because there's no alternative.

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
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I'm looking to replace my Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series with something for off-roading and towing a 2500kg caravan. What are your thoughts on the Toyota Prado, Ford Everest or Mitsubishi Pajero Sport? Is there a new Isuzu MU-X on the way? And do you think diesel has much of a future in Australia?

Brian Holland, email

Few compete with a 200 Series for effortless, torquey towing and off-road ability. That said, your next car will prove less cumbersome and cheaper to run. All on your list tow at least 3000kg and hold their own in all but the most challenging off-road routes. The Prado's a bit dated and pricey, while the Everest is a great all-rounder if you can score a good deal — I'd favour the 2.0-litre bi-turbo version over the 3.2-litre turbo: it's smoother and has a higher tow rating. The Pajero Sport's the value pick. The Exceed is loaded with luxury and kit for \$60,990 drive-away, while a new MU-X arrives (I'd guess) by the middle of this year. Based on the impressive new Isuzu D-Max, it may be the pick if you can wait. And diesel? It's out of favour, but in Australia it'll be with us for many years yet.

CRACKING UP

The infotainment screen on my daughter's 2015 Mazda CX-3 is starting to delaminate, which I've read is a common problem. The Mazda dealer service manager passed on my request for a replacement unit to Mazda head office, but it was refused.

Derek Lorenz, email

After checking forums and speaking to a specialist, I agree your case isn't isolated. Despite the car's warranty having expired, screens that damage in such a way after five years aren't fit for purpose. Mazda Australia refuses to comment on individual cases but I've since learnt they've re-evaluated your case, and have agreed to cover

the cost of a new unit plus fitting. Great outcome.

CZECH AGAIN

Re: Hen's Teeth, your wagon suggestions were all good cars, but Ford has dropped the Focus wagon (very sad) and your biggest omission was the Skoda Octavia. The manual is \$29,000 drive-away, so with two options packs it's still under the \$40k budget. It ticks more boxes than anything else.

Alan Williams, email

I usually get accused of over-recommending Skodas, and now I get called out for not doing so! Can't win. The Octavia is a good choice, but an all-new model is due by mid-year (the RS version arrives first) so I'd definitely wait for that. New Focus wagons are still available at dealerships for about \$35k drive-away, and worth grabbing before they disappear.

LOYALTY BONUS

I'm glad you advised the owner with a 430,000km Honda Accord to stick with Honda. Reliable cars are a dying breed so being brand loyal is important. Loyalty also helps if something goes amiss out of warranty.

Peter Lion, email

All true. My Honda motorcycle refuses to let me down, so I'd not consider a different brand. I've had five (old) BMWs and each cost a fortune to run and repair, but I kept going back. Misplaced loyalty?

BADLY SPRUNG

My Subaru Levorg's a brilliant car except for its suspension. It's great for normal driving but grounds out on speed humps and floats a bit when cruising. I'm tempted to update to the new model but won't if the suspension's the same. A WRX STI's an alternative, but I do like a wagon. Any suggestions?

Ian Bertram, email

A Volkswagen Golf R wagon. 213kW, 380Nm, all-wheel-drive (like your Levorg) and 0-100km/h in 4.8-seconds. It's a practical performance weapon, won't fracture your spine and costs \$57,990 before on-roads: same as a Subaru WRX STI



I'm looking at upgrading to an SUV. After lots of research my shortlist is the Subaru Forester 2.5i-S, Honda CR-V VTI-X or Toyota RAV4 Edge. Which would you recommend?

Maggie Forehan, email

Sorry to sound like a broken record, but it's the RAV4. Looks superb, good shove and the AWD Edge is the pick if you want a RAV4 that can handle getting its boots muddy. If you're planning more serious off-road hikes (not too serious, though) the Forester may pip it.

Premium. Don't expect the all-new Levorg until the second half of this year, but I'd wait to sample it to discover if the suspension better suits you.

BUNCH OF NUTS

Re wheel nuts, back when I worked at dealerships every mechanic had a set of "torque limiters" which limited the torque to the correct spec for that nut size. When used with a rattle gun it was impossible to overtighten wheel nuts.

Al Kenny, email

Re Mazda BT-50 wheel nuts, I had the same experience as the wheel brace would slip on the nut cover. The RAC had to hammer on a smaller socket to remove them. My Mazda dealer quoted one nut at \$33.50 — \$804 to do all 24 with labour charge. I visibly baulked. The nearby tyre outlet did the same size nuts — without offending covers — for \$2.50 each: \$60 to do all including fitting.

Edwin Holzheimer, email

Re Mazda BT-50 wheel nuts, I've measured the supplied wheel brace and it actually measures 19.5mm. The socket is 19mm. Perhaps this might be a reason BT-50 and Ford Ranger nuts round off?

Arthur Mumford, email

Interesting. Can anyone else confirm this measurement?

FIT FOR PURPOSE?

My 70-year-old husband and I would like a dual-cab ute. It will be our main touring vehicle for country trips. We're not interested in off-roading but want a smooth and quiet ride. Any suggestions?

Michelle Rose, email

First suggestion is not to buy a dual cab ute — smooth, quiet rides aren't their forte. If there's no off-roading required and no need for a ute tub, sedans, wagons or SUVs with on-road orientated suspension are far comfier. If your circumstances mean it's dual cab ute or nothing, the best on-road is the VW Amarok, though it's in need of an update. The Ford Ranger and Isuzu D-Max would be good to compare.

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