



Be prepared

SAFE HOLIDAY
MOTORING
TAKES EXTRA
THOUGHT



Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO

It's school holiday time and for many families that means taking a road trip.

It's an economical and fun way to create a memorable holiday but, whether you're going off-road or living it up, things will not always go to plan. So, here's my tips to help get you where you're going safely.

Before leaving, ensure you have a roadworthy spare tyre and wheel on board and can use the necessary tools for changing it. If your car has run-flat tyres make sure you're equipped if things go wrong.

Never change a tyre on the side of the road if there is traffic moving around your vehicle, call a breakdown service.

Inspect all tyres for wear and ensure they're inflated to the recommended pressure.

You can find this information in your vehicle's manual.

Fill up your tank and, if going off main roads, carry spare fuel in a safe container.

A first aid kit should always be in your vehicle, as should a portable phone charger. Take some cash, a torch and spare batteries, a blanket, and some water. Carrying jumper leads is also a good idea.

If towing a caravan, trailer or boat, ensure you connect it properly, checking to make sure all lights are working, driving mirrors are correctly positioned, and that you know how to safely manoeuvre your vehicle.

Importantly, tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back.

There are lots of people sharing the roads during the holiday break. Be patient, be courteous, and take regular rest breaks. That way you will have a fun and safe holiday.

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

Share your thoughts
ceo@vacc.com.au



IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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

I'm 14 years old and saving for a car. I want something with a petrol engine, Apple CarPlay, auto emergency braking, blind spot monitor and parking sensors. My budget is \$20,000. Heated seats and a sunroof would be great but not deal breakers.

Darby Harrison, email

Love your forward planning. New cars costing about \$28,000 now should meet your budget by the time you get your L-plates. I'd look at a VW Polo 85TSI Comfortline or 85TSI Style with optional driver assistance package or a Mazda2 G20 Pure — both have your non-negotiables and are excellent drives. Try a Kia Cerato Sport+ if you want leather heated seats.

BRAVO, SIR!

Re high-kilometres, I owned a Mazda Bravo that I sold with 720,000km on its original engine. It ran almost entirely on gas and only ever needed a valve stem replaced. Bravo!

Gary Mahoney, email

We can only hope the current crop of commercial vehicles show such longevity.

EXPENSIVE LEAK

My 2007 Nissan X-Trail has been serviced by the Nissan dealer since new. At its last service I was told the radiator hose leading to the reservoir tank had a leak. There was a powdery substance on the tubing. I was quoted \$340 to repair, including a radiator flush. I thought they were joking so have used silicon tape to repair where the leak may be, even though I can't spot it. Is there a cheaper alternative?

Greg Kroll, email

If your hoses are as old as your car, replacing them would be a good idea. If they've hardened they can have cracks invisible to the naked eye. Also check

the clamps aren't loose — another cause of leaks. Your dealer bill is high due to the labour they'll charge to flush your system. Have a local radiator specialist inspect your system and get a quote from them too, but they'll also recommend a system flush if your coolant is contaminated.

POOR STANDARDS

Re only NSW having annual roadworthy checks, I recently purchased a car from a NSW dealer that had passed its safety inspection a few weeks prior. When submitted for the Victorian roadworthy test it failed miserably. Major faults included nearly worn-out front brake pads, brake rotors worn past their limit, shot shock absorbers, clouded headlights and washer jets not working. If this is typical of the safety check it's frightening.

Ken Price, email

Terrible to hear, but sadly to be expected. Dodge car? There'll be someone out there who'll take your money to issue a safety certificate. There's no point having these laws if they're not enforced, and the mechanic who passed your car should have their licence revoked. It gives honest testers a bad name.

MANY DEFECTS

NSW may do annual roadworthy checks, but that doesn't mean the cars are then kept roadworthy. Brake pads and tyres may just pass for example, so the vehicle may be "unroadworthy" a short time after testing. Proof would be how many defect notices NSW Police hand out. I'm sure it won't be none.

Frank Basile, email

Annual check or not, it's up owners to ensure cars are roadworthy.

CLUTCHING AT STRAWS

I cannot understand constant criticism regarding the jerkiness of double clutch gearboxes at low speeds. If the driver understands it's an automatic clutch and waits a millisecond before applying too much



WAITING IN VAIN

I own a 2016 Honda CR-V and am considering a new one. I've inquired with Honda Australia about a hybrid version as there's one on sale in the USA. Is the hybrid coming to Australia this year?

Jeff O'Sullivan, email

I'm afraid not. Honda's Justin Lacy told me they "intend to introduce a hybrid version for every new full model change," but as the CR-V's midlife update happened only a few months ago, an all-new CR-V is some years away. The UK has a right-hand-drive CR-V hybrid, but we don't get it. If hybrid's your thing, check out the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid: it's an excellent all-rounder.

throttle, until the clutch fully engages, it's as smooth as silk. I own a 2016 Skoda Rapid with seven-speed DSG (dual-clutch auto) and before that a 2008 Skoda Octavia with six-speed DSG. Both transmissions have been faultless and gear changes almost imperceptible.

Con Greenwood, email

Forget the horse whisperer, you must be the dual-clutch whisperer, Con. It's been over a decade since dual-clutch transmissions (DCTs) became commonplace and my experiences — and that of many other road-testers — have been mixed. With two clutches these gearboxes preselect your next gear, allowing superfast shifts for performance driving. DCTs have improved over the years to reduce low-speed jerkiness, but we have to report as we find. In certain situations — three-point turns and hill starts spring to mind — some DCTs get the shudders, no matter what techniques our testers have tried.

TOTALLY NUTS

After a flat tyre on my Mazda BT-50 I couldn't remove the wheel nuts. My research showed it's well known through the tyre industry that the outer cover on the nuts distorts so a spanner or socket won't fit. It's the same on the Ford Ranger, and I've endeavoured to have Mazda and Ford recognise the fault. How can two major car companies fit parts unfit for purpose and not take responsibility?

Dave Leversha, email

Wheel nuts really should be the simplest part of a car. As you say, owners on forums have reported the problem, and I spoke with my local tyre shop and they'd seen Ford Rangers with damaged caps over the nut. They suggested buying a completely new set — aftermarket, of course — for peace of mind. A \$60 hassle, but worth it.

buy search sell
.com.au

To place business advertising
13 11 13 or buysearchsell.com.au

Motoring

Caravans & Motor Homes

Brand New Caravan
for sale



Used, Excellent condition.
1 x Roma 2020 19 x 6
Razor Sport Brand New (3
months old) Caravan.
Includes: Queen Bed,
Separate Shower, Toilet,
Washing Machine, TV and
Solar Panels.
Registered Victoria
\$55,000.00
0412716711

CARAVANS WANTED
Any condition. Anywhere
0417 373 338

Sell it at Buy Search Sell

buy search sell
.com.au

Stay connected

Find the tech you're looking
for at Buy Search Sell.

buy
search
sell
.com.au