

## [ ROADSIDE ASSIST ]

## KEEP ME POSTED

I've written a letter directly to Toyota Australia's CEO regarding the waiting time for my RAV4 Hybrid, hoping to highlight the work needed on customer service. I ordered the RAV4 in July 2019, the dealer insisting the wait time was no more than three months — five months later, Toyota's online order tracking still did not list a build date. The dealer claimed delivery would be the end of October, then Christmas, then scheduled for build mid-January, and finally, early March. The dealer blames Toyota's head office for lack of information. I'm not cranky about the wait time, as I know it's due to the unexpected popularity of the vehicle, but I and many others are cranky about the lack of accurate and timely information about the wait — and that's unequivocally head office's fault.

Nathan Zamprogno, email

Demand for the RAV4 Hybrid, plus two instances of "stop sales" due to brake problems and incorrect wheel fitment, have caused extended wait times and delays. Still, Toyota has a duty of care to keep customers informed. You and others have reported this not being the case. I've been assured Toyota's Guest Experience Team has given you a delivery update but I received no proper explanation or apology regarding lack of information to customers. A spokesman says: "There is significantly improved supply in the new year... we value our customers' feedback and are working diligently to improve the situation."

## DON'T GIVE UP

My 2015 Hyundai's radio would work for 10 minutes then cut out. On six separate occasions, I took it back to the dealer. They said it was fixed but each time the problem recurred. Head office eventually said a faulty batch of radios had been fitted and the dealer told me they'd fit a new head-unit free of charge. You have to persist with these people to get a result.

Peter Kossuth, email

You have entitlements as a consumer and you were right not to be fobbed off. If your demands are reasonable and you keep things cordial, you can achieve good results.



## THE MIDDLE GROUND

In Which Car, Toby Hagon's advice on medium sedans listed the Mazda6 (expensive at \$54,000), Honda Accord (will be outsold by Ferraris), Toyota Camry Hybrid (departure from the norm) and Holden Calais (soon discontinued). I'd like to add Skoda's Octavia to the candidates, with the range combining value, performance and, in the wagon, cavernous capacity.

John Kruger, email

It's all subjective. Toby's suggestions are all spot-on, as is your Octavia shout. They're all worth a try before you buy. I'd throw the VW Passat in too.

## DOWNSIZING

We're looking to replace our Toyota LandCruiser 200 Series. We no longer need a 4WD but want a vehicle that's easy to get into as we're in our 70s. We've been looking at the Toyota RAV4 Hybrid, Mazda CX-5, Hyundai Tucson, Honda CR-V, Nissan X-Trail and Renault Koleos. Price isn't a concern — we just want the best and most comfortable.

Lyn Rodda, email

All your choices are sound — if you have the time, test drive them all for your best fit. The RAV4 Hybrid was our 2019 Car of the Year for good



reason, but the waiting time is off-putting. From your list the CR-V's probably comfiest but I'd favour the polished all-rounder Mazda CX-5 — if you won't go off-roading, pick the 2WD Maxx Sport to save money. Add the VW Tiguan and Kia Seltos to your potentials list. If money's no object, how about a Volvo XC60 to spoil yourself?

## UNSIGHTLY PEEL

I bought my Honda Civic in 2012. Its paint is flaking off and Honda refuses to accept responsibility — I was told it was because I took it to a car wash. My request for assistance with repair was rejected. The car may be seven years old but I believe the paint is faulty.

Tony Scholtes, email

Photos of your flaking paint show the extent of the damage. I contacted Honda Australia regarding your case and am happy to hear you've been contacted by Honda with an offer to cover 75 per cent of repair costs. Great result.

## HEARTS AND MINDS

Re Jeep's global president Christian Meunier and local boss Kevin Flynn promising to improve customer care. In 2014, my daughter bought a new Cherokee and in 2018 it went into limp mode. Numerous fixes later and more problems resulted in us being told a new engine was required at the cost of \$20,000. A

## IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

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



goodwill request was refused just before Christmas. My daughter loves her car — but how could she consider buying another Jeep?

Gary Hoffman, email

In your instance it looks as if Jeep's new top brass and Fiat Chrysler Australia's director of after sales are implementing change — the update is that Jeep's reversed its goodwill rejection and will now replace your daughter's engine at no cost. Well done, Jeep.

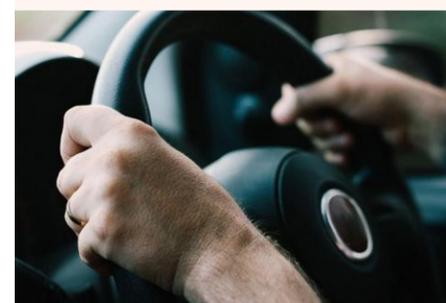
## WAYWARD CRUISE



My 2017 Mazda3 SP25 has cruise control issues. For example, on downhill curves, set at 60km/h, it will reach up to 20km/h over the setting. This could lead to a big fine, although I'm aware I'm in control of the brake pedal. I've raised the issue with the dealer, to be told "it's within tolerances" or "it's a factory setting." Do you think 20km/h over is acceptable? Can cruise control be adjusted?

Neil Power, email

Your SP25 has radar cruise control and I've experienced problems with it in the new Mazda3, especially on corners. Mazda Australia — unlike the vast majority of brands we deal with — refuses to comment on specific cases with its customers but 20km/h over should never be "within tolerances". The radar cruise control distance can be adjusted but I don't think it will help in your case. I'd limit the use of cruise control to highways only.



## What is the automotive industry?

HINT: IT'S MUCH MORE THAN CAR-MAKING

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Until 2017, when people — politicians and the media, mostly — talked of the 'automotive industry' they were usually referring to car manufacturing.

This always irritated me a bit because manufacturing was never the largest part of the automotive industry; that has always been the aftermarket: vehicle sales, service and maintenance, body repair, fuel retailing, parts and consumables retailing, tyre retailing, and specialty services like engine reconditioning and vehicle recycling.

The aftermarket sector is what remains of Australia's automotive industry. And lucky for us, it is in very good health.

Nationally, there are more than 70,000 automotive businesses, the industry employs almost 380,000 people, and this contributes \$37 billion to Australia's economy.

Whichever way you look at it, auto is very important to this country. But none of this means much unless it's important to you.

Well, the auto industry keeps you on the road and the wheels of business turning. Without it Australia would stop. Important enough?

From cradle to grave the auto industry is there: selling vehicles, servicing and repairs; it's batteries, windscreens and tyres, it's fuel and lubricants; and it's there even when your vehicle has reached the end of its useful life and needs recycling.

VACC represents all these auto providers through its advocacy and support services, and its many initiatives to raise standards in the industry.

What that means is that because VACC services its members, they are in a position to better service you.

It's how it all works and it's VACC's job to keep it that way.

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

Share your thoughts  
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