

RESPONSE TO THE
AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION & CONSUMER COMMISSION

THE TYPE AND SCOPE OF BARRIERS TO ACCESSING REPAIR AND SERVICE INFORMATION AND CAR PARTS



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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WHO WE ARE

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) is the national industry association representing manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, importers and retailers of automotive parts and accessories, tools and equipment, and providers of vehicle service and repair, and modification services in Australia.

2,250



Member companies represented by the association in all categories of the Australian automotive aftermarket

Members include major national and multi-national corporations as well as a large number of independent small and medium size businesses

\$1b



AAAA member companies export over \$1 billion worth of Australian-manufactured product each year



The parts and maintenance sector is a large and critical component of Australia's \$200 billion automotive industry

40k



AAAA member companies employ more than 40,000 people



Member companies are located in metropolitan, regional and rural Australia

AAAA MEMBERS MANUFACTURE, DISTRIBUTE AND FIT MOTOR VEHICLE COMPONENTS THAT:

Are replaced regularly throughout the life of the vehicle because of normal wear and tear – e.g. oil, filters, tyres, wiper blades, spark plugs, bulbs, batteries and brake pads.

1

Last the life of the vehicle or are replaced irregularly during the life of the vehicle, usually as the result of a crash or a major mechanical failure – e.g. seats, instrument panels, engines, and transmission.

2

Are manufactured and distributed to service and maintain or enhance the appearance and performance of vehicles, including accessories, safety, comfort, appearance, entertainment and information, functional performance, body components, tools and equipment, mechanical, lubricants, additives and chemicals.

3

INTRODUCTION

Commencing July 2015, AAAA offered all independent repairers an online facility to record experiences accessing technical and diagnostic information, subscription services and other issues that may represent barriers to consumer choice.

Initially we were interested to collect this information in order to determine if the 2014 Heads of Agreement was producing any meaningful reform; and if the access issues were universal or specific for some vehicle brands or models.

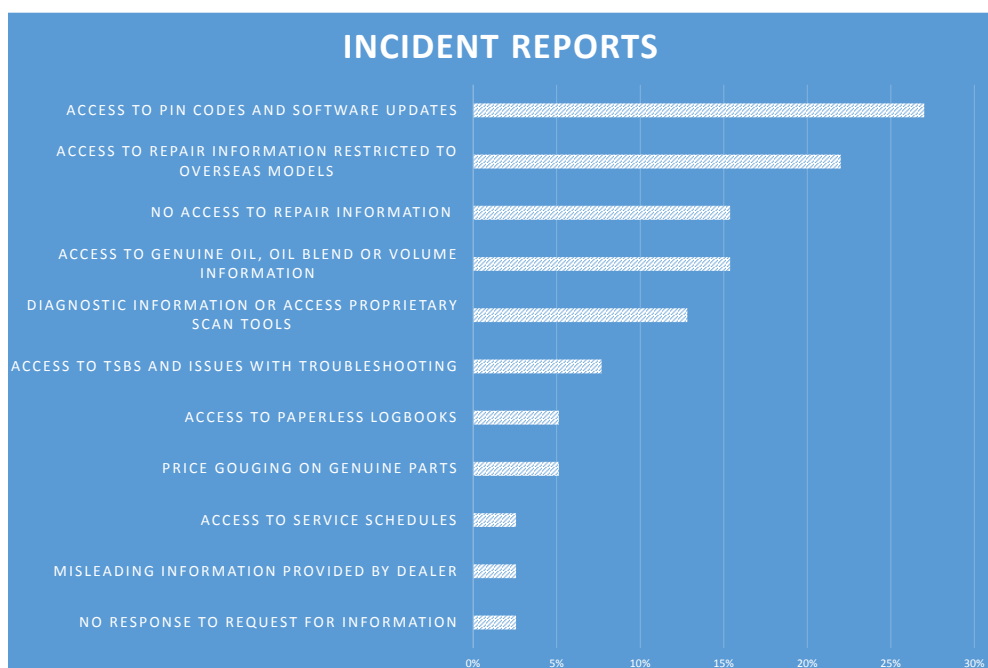
The portal was one means of collecting this information – In addition to the online forum, AAAA field staff speak directly with repairers and regular update meetings have been conducted Australia-wide with 60-80 repairers in attendance.

In each conversation or email regarding this issue, every auto repair and service technician is encouraged to contact the auto manufacturer. Most do not. This is because the first level of refusal to disclose information is generally from the local dealership. Independent repairers rely on personal relationships and in some cases, goodwill from the dealerships. Complaints about the dealership refusal to provide information are likely to result in further deterioration of the relationship and a withdrawal of the (limited) service currently being delivered.

We have some sympathy for the dealership service department. We acknowledge that the dealership and the independent workshop compete for business and is not reasonable that dealerships are now assumed to be the 'help desk' for the supply of manufacturers' repair and service information.

We do however, have some concern about the lack of data and codes that occurs when independent repairers purchase parts from local dealers. It would be reasonable to assume that the dealership, as the point of sale for auto parts, would also provide the codes for re-initialisation of that part. Surely when the part is sold there is an understanding that the part is to be fitted to a vehicle and that this fitment cannot occur without re-initialisation codes.

However, outside of the issue of parts sales as a general rule, the responsibility for the supply of repair and service information rests with the vehicle manufacturer and not their franchised dealerships. Independent repairers try to have a good relationship with the local dealerships of every brand. It is reasonable that repairers do not want to complain about dealerships for the manner in which they are undertaking a role that should not have been abrogated to them in the first place.



PART ONE: VEHICLE OR SITUATION SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

It is not possible to comprehensively aggregate all of the examples¹ that we have collected in the past 24 months. There are as many examples as there are vehicles on the road. Whilst some patterns emerge the issues that have been reported are subject to many variations including the widely differing attitudes between dealerships on any given day.

This is certainly not an exhaustive list – these examples have been selected because these particular cases were easier to capture or were the most appropriate for a document that would be publicly released.

There are many more examples – but in some cases the issues are very technical and require a great deal of background to understand and in some incidents identifying information could not be removed and hence the workshops that reported these issues would not be protected from any potential reprisals.

In small number of the incidents below – information that could identify names and places have been removed or replaced, whilst maintaining the essence of what happened and why. The cars used as examples, may not be the same – they did not occur in the same location and to the same brand or model. But what you can see from this evidence provided is that each of these repairers is exercising due diligence and pursuing every avenue to repair and maintain their customers' vehicles. In each of these cases it is likely that our international counterparts do have access to this information on fair and reasonable terms. In all of these cases there is small business and consumer detriment.

Jeep Grand Cherokee

I recently purchased a tool that will allow me to program many different vehicles (CarDAQ-M).

I had a Jeep Grand Cherokee in the shop last month. It had a fault and the check engine light was on and fault codes for oxygen sensors.

I went to the Chrysler website and purchased a subscription for 1 day. I logged in and entered the VIN number and was excited to find that the VIN was recognised. That means that this exact vehicle was supported and I was able to search for technical service bulletins, look at service information, wiring diagrams, etc. I found a TSB that addressed the exact problem that this vehicle had. Chrysler had released a new software update (calibration file) to resolve this exact problem with the oxygen sensors.

Great Stuff! With my one day subscription I can download the necessary software that will interface the CarDAQ with the vehicles computer. I search and find the calibration file and see a warning notice on the webpage. The notice warns that once the update is performed that the immobiliser (SKIM) will need to be reprogrammed and a PIN code will be required. Oh, great...So I get on the phone and speak to the nearest Chrysler dealership service manager and get the typical response 'we cannot give you that information and besides you need a special scan tool to do the programming'. I explained that I had the scan tool and I was willing to purchase the code but that didn't help. No joy.

Very frustrating. I was so close. I had the scan tool, I had the subscription, I had the software and I had the calibration file. But I couldn't go any further because I couldn't get the code.

Mazda 6 Diesel

Must be connected the factory computer via internet and have software updates for the ECM. Must be completed by the dealer – access to software update denied. Consumer requested access to the update to be provided to their repairer – access denied.

¹ Significant detail containing documentation of evidence has been provided to the ACCC. Refer to supplementary AAAA submission 4932 Access to Repair Information Market Study (1).pdf – this document provides detailed information on the nature and frequency of events regarding failure to disclose repair and service information to 325 independent repairers.

Mazda 3 2005

Power steering module failure, needs to be connected to the factory tool via the Internet to get the new module initialised. Repairer installed power steering module according to manufacturer's specifications - final step required dealership involvement and payment of an unnecessary fee which was set at an arbitrary amount because the repairer wanted to get the vehicle returned to the customer.

Mitsubishi Triton Diesel

Has had issues where dealer internet updates direct to the car are the only fix (diesel injectors learned values, poor performance).

Mitsubishi Rosa

Bus- passenger door actuator, (wiring diagram) unable to source wiring information. Warranty issue with module.

Jeep XJ Cherokee

Unable to get information, wiring diagrams pertaining to engine management. Car came in not running - no fault codes. Car had to be returned to the dealer to have it diagnosed. (A faulty injector) which could also only be programmed via the dealer.

Jeep

A customer came in with a Jeep and had a intermittent issue with the head light and we requested the electronic diagram from Jeep the first person told us they can't provide that information, so we tried another dealer and was told they don't allow this but they would this time, we provided our fax number and contact and we have never received the information so we followed up but were told that guy isn't around and they can't help. So once again we were unable to fix the problem and needed to have the customer return to the dealer.

Jaguar S Type 1999

This car has four body control modules. One front, two middle & one rear. We found information and could communicate and read fault codes from the BCM's and diagnosed a faulty rear body control computer. We could order the computer, however, we had to return the vehicle to the dealer to have the computer reprogrammed with the vehicles specifications so it would operate.

VW Beetle 2003

Brake bleed procedure if it has air in the system (not just a normal flush) is specific to this model. Had to buy a factory manual from

USA to get the instructions on how to perform. Also required a scan tool. A function which our scan tool performed, however, we needed the procedure information to go with it. This car is 12 years old and the local dealership did not want to do the procedure and did not have the staff qualified to fix this model.

VW Golf

I was servicing a Volkswagen Golf. When I contacted Volkswagen to advise them we have serviced the vehicle and to please make a note of it and could you clear the service reminder I was told that it cannot be done as it was not serviced at Volkswagen and thus there is no way of logging the service, our solution for this was to purchase quite expensive equipment to clear this service reminder an expense adding service I think you would agree. The same request came from the customer, to a dealer, and was offered a flat refusal, (no proof of service or cost to clear the reminder was discussed). The customer said, they don't own my car how can they have that power?

VW Caddy

One example. We had to replace the ignition barrel, cylinder & key on a VW Caddy, parts the dealer happily sold me, when it came time to commission the new ignition cylinder with our scan tool, the 4 digit code required was not accessible for me from the dealer. Four phone calls and the promise that the service department will get back to me never eventuated.

Ford Territory Ghia

Steering angle sensor failure. Whole steering column needs to be replaced. Once replaced the steering angle sensor has to be programmed to suit the vehicle. (Not just calibrated) It needs to be programmed first after it's been replaced and then calibrated. We had to return the vehicle to the dealer to have it programmed. (They also calibrated it) We can calibrate, but cannot program it.

Ford FG Falcon

We had a FG falcon with an air bag issue from the crash shop that our scan tool diagnosed a faulty air bag module. Sourced a new genuine module from local Ford dealer and had to get it programmed by local dealer. Car was mobile so we drove this to the dealer. They said could we leave it with them, they took 2 days and charged us excessively to programme vehicle, client not happy and we nearly lost contract with crash shop over delays even though we told them it

was at dealer being sorted. We can tow truck vehicles in the city, not sure what you would do in the country to get them to a dealer?

Ford Focus | Ford Mondeo | Ford Transit

These vehicles require special tools to replace the timing belts/chains and cannot be purchased locally through the dealer network. We are prepared to purchase the tools as a group – but they specifically stated that we cannot buy these tools. Many of our staff were trained in the Ford network and have a lot of experience in the dealer network. Without the tools, it is impossible to undertake testing or replacement.

Ford Ranger 2012

With regard to companies not sharing/releasing bulletins on known faults, an example occurred on a 2012 Ford Ranger with 47000 km where a coolant hose wore through on a fuel line, the local dealer made mention that they are looking out for that potential fault when THEY service the vehicle. Fixed price servicing is another issue and without going on and on, again I have examples of a not so level playing field.

Renault Megane II 2007

We are unable to reset the service due indicator. The manual procedure (Autotech/Autodata) doesn't work. G-scan doesn't have that special function. Unley Renault say the vehicle needs to go to them! I know the Renault is a bit obscure but we actually have it here today.

Mercedes Sprinter

Unable to purchase work shop manual or specific wiring info from dealers in Adelaide. Ended up purchasing on line from states. Some of the above concerns we eventually get around but for example the Mercedes w/shop manual took 8 days. I know I don't have to tell you that's 8 days of a customer calling (2 times a day) 8 days a bay is blocked up.

Mercedes A190 2009

We had a 2009 Mercedes A190 towed to the workshop from another repairer. The Steering lock was faulty and would not turn the steering wheel or start. Mercedes once sold you the new Steering lock and Green program key to program the steering lock into the vehicle. As of this year they will not sell you the steering lock or supply the green program key. They want you to tow the vehicle to a Mercedes workshop and for them to fit and program the part. It will cost a minimum \$500 just to install the part and tow the vehicle before the cost of the part is added. Ignition Switches and keys come under this rule

now too. This is costly for the client and time consuming.

Nissan

Bought a diesel particulate filter from a Nissan dealer and after fitting new filter needed to go back to dealer for force burn. One dealer charged \$110.00 incl GST another dealer charged \$280.00 inc GST

Nissan X Trail

Power windows must sometimes be reset to ensure the anti-pinch function operates. Resetting power windows is impossible without having the process to reset them, or the location of the hidden reset button. Safety then becomes an issue as children and adults with small fingers can experience severe pinch injuries.

Nissan

The Nissan dealer replaced a Module (I think it was an engine module) and this module needed to be programmed to the car. Nissan fitted the module and could not communicate with the module and told the customer he had to take his car to an auto electrician because he had a wiring issue.

It did not take John very long to discover the problem which happened to be a blown fuse. This is really the very basics and it shocks me that any repair shop could miss such a basic cause. Anyhow John now has communication but he lacks access to Nissan software and therefore cannot initialise the module. When the customer was told his car would have to go back to the dealer, he got upset, because this was the last place he wanted to take his car due to their incompetency. Besides he had just forked \$350 in a tow fee, he did not want to have pay another \$350 to take it back to the dealer.

Nissan Patrol Diesel

We were recently testing a Nissan Patrol Diesel at our XYZ store and needed the manufactures vacuum reading which we requested from the dealer but they wouldn't release the information so we we're unable to complete the work and had to send the customer to the manufacturer - this impacts the customer and our business.

Toyota

Toyota dealer refused to give repairer a copy of Automatic transmission wiring diagram so repairer sent customer to Toyota Dealer to get fixed. Toyota reconditioned transmission at a cost of \$5000.00 and two weeks later fault returned. It was a faulty solenoid not found on first overhaul.

There are other instances of Dealers not releasing information and wanting vehicle back for repairs and special tools not available to aftermarket.

I know programming is a bit specialised but we have invested in training and equipment that gears us up to perform these tasks and are held back by lack of resources.

Toyota Camry

Window motors need to be 'timed' when refitted. This information is not provided by the manufacturer or the dealer.

Toyota Hiace 2011

Came from a Toyota that they fitted a new Air condition compressor the bill from Toyota was more than \$2500 but the air con still did not work so Toyota told the owner that it needed a new ECU and they had to programed in but they has no ECU in Australia and the car owner had to wait for more than 4 weeks for it to come. It was one of Britz Australia vans that we do work for so was ask to have look.

This car did not need a new ECU or the new AIR con compressor in fact it did not need any parts to get the air con to work??

This car had GPS tracker fitted to the can low can high wires had communication interference so I cut the GPS system and rewired it and the AIR con work again

I did ph the Toyota and ask then why did they put a new AIR con compressor and why did they order a new ECU when it was GPS communication interference? But they did not want to say anything?

Fleet customer did not need to take this car to Toyota but they are the only ones that can Programme a new ECU that it did not need.

Toyota Prado 2012

This is an 80,000 km logbook service which includes the diff and transfer oils to be replaced. When I look up Valvoline or Castrol for the right oil specification, I am told dealer only oil. When I call up my Toyota dealer I am told they do not

sell this oil, they only have it in bulk and the car will need to go to their service department.

I have spent a good part of the day working out what oil to use, and it turns out that it is unlikely the dealer is actually using the correct recommended dealer oil, as I have discovered this particular dealer buys their oil in bulk from Castrol and Castrol do not sell the dealer specified oil for this car. So the plot thickens. I see this as a deception not only to the public but also to the aftermarket repairer, it is also very restrictive on the consumer's choice of repairer.

Also since upgrading the software on a few of my aftermarket scan tools, I have lost the level of ability that I use to have with my Toyota platform. It is like I have a very basic level and I can no longer carryout the diagnostic tests and readings that I had before my update. (I actually had this happen to 2 of my many aftermarket scan tools that have). There has been a fairly resent court case with a well-known Chinese scan tool manufacturer Maxisys who has been sued by some manufactures for reveres engineering factory scan tools. I have a feeling this may have sent shock waves throughout the Aftermarket scan tool manufactures and this may be the reason for the downgrade we are now seeing.

Isuzu

Isuzu uses factory codes that differ from generic OBD2 compliant codes, resulting in diagnostic issues when using aftermarket scan tools. Technical information from Isuzu is not available in Australia and Isuzu's overseas website uses different diagnostic codes.

In the end I now know the code I had P0122 converts to the factory code P02E8 and this code points to the IAF position sensor, once I knew this, my job only took one hour to fix, had I known this at the beginning my job would have been done and dusted in one hour. Instead this job took 6 hours including the time spent in research and accessing the US Isuzu technical web site. Had I had the correct info on this fault code the job would have only taken 1 to 1.5 hrs but without this info it has taken 6 hours.

Isuzu NPR 200 2009

I am sure this is no surprise but Isuzu trucks will not sell me or for that matter Autodata technical information needed for the repair and diagnostics on a 2009 Isuzu NPR 200 small truck.

I have accessed the US Isuzu paid site and unfortunately the wiring plug to the engine ECU is different to our Australian model. Autodata, VACC all have the same story - Isuzu Australia refuse to sell them technical data.

Volvo

Volvo advised an independent repairer to access a repair information portal for overseas models, to which the independent repairer already had a subscription. As it is not possible to choose an Australian address, the independent repairer had registered as a UK user and consequently their account was suspended. Even with access to the UK site, information does not cover Australian variations.

A customer brought in their Volvo in that had the ABS light on dash, after some diagnosis it revealed that it needed a new ABS module (Anti-Lock Braking system). We purchased the correct part directly from the manufacturer and installed it for the customer however the manufacturers neglected to let us know that the ABS module needed to be programmed in and we wasted hours of non-billable time trying to get it to work. Finally after multiple phone calls and stuffing around we were told it need to be programmed by the dealers only. We had to re-book the customer in and drive her vehicle to the dealer who kept her car for 2 days (as they would fit us in when they could) and cost an additional \$300+ which we could not charge out to our customer and also had to provide the customer with a loan vehicle. The customer was extremely inconvenienced without a car for days and we were out of pocket around \$500.00 for the job as we tried to keep the customer happy by keeping the price as close as possible to our estimate, but in the customers eyes she felt that it is necessary to resume using the dealerships because she feels that we don't have the equipment to repair her vehicle properly. This is just one example we endure from vehicle manufacturers every single day. This costs my business an exponential amount of money each year and seriously hinders our ability to offer a fair and competitive service in my trade.

BMW 520D 2012 Diesel Auto

BMW manufacturer are not providing there customers or us with the vital information as to where to find a simple engine number. I have been asked for a quote on a 68,000 kms service but I am not able to access the factory recommended service schedule.

2013 Land Rover Discovery 3.0 Ltr Turbo Diesel

These vehicles do not have a hard copy log book, rather the service must be logged with Land Rover on their database, when I contacted Land Rover to advise them we have serviced the vehicle (according to the factory recommended service schedule) and to please make a note of it I was told that it cannot be done as it was not serviced at Land Rover and thus there is no way of logging the service, our solution for this is to either purchase or manufacture hard copy log books for the customer to keep for services no longer done by the dealer, a sub-par and unnecessary expense adding service. The log book should be controlled by the car owner and not the dealership - if the owner would like us to register that the service was completed by qualified staff, using fit for purpose parts and according to the specification, then this is what should occur.

Suzuki Vitara

Suzuki Vitara has an issue with the ESP light coming on. The owner has been to several workshops, two Suzuki dealers and an auto sparky. The dealers both came to the same diagnosis.

Wow. Both dealerships technicians came to the exact same diagnostic conclusion, they must be very well trained! No, not really. There was a document released within the dealer network of a known fault within the ABS unit that causes the ABS and ESP to shut down as a result of any small voltage fluctuations. He has been quoted \$3,500.00 for the repair with a revised ABS module. I think that it is wrong that Suzuki have discovered a flaw in the control module and addressed it with an upgraded module but even when it is a design flaw the customer still has to pay for the repair of a known manufacturing fault.

Suzuki Vitara 2008

We recently had a 2008 Suzuki Grand Vitara that has an issue with EGR Valve, we purchased the part from local dealership and then was told that after the fact that it needed a connector set , then to have to try and get technical information that was not forthcoming from that dealership . Contacted another dealership through Repco connections and they sent to us information that should have been originally supplied with parts.

The vehicle went to local dealership eventually leaving us with footing the cost for their diagnostic recoding when they could have

informed us originally the procedure for this vehicle. This has left us greatly out of pocket as owner paid dealership and not us.

Audi q5 2011

We needed to drain and refill engine oil on an Audi q5 2011 with a CGLB engine. Audi don't give out the fill quantity and there is no dipstick. The owner's manual says take it to Audi.

Audi A4 Petrol

A recent example was servicing a 2014 Audi A4 Petrol, we completed the service items as per the service schedule and ticked these items off as being serviced in the service book. These vehicles have a Long Life Service reset that no generic scan tool can reset. The vehicle was returned to Audi to reset the Long Life Service and Audi refused to reset the Long Life Service Reset because they did not do the service. The customer offered to pay to have the Long Life Service reset but the Dealer still refused.

Kia Cerato 2006

Ok the OEM's are blocking us from security codes and pins, but surely the customer has the legal right to this info. I suggest your proposed code should reflect that sensitive information that we the repair cannot access should be made available to our customers on their request and proof of ownership of their car.

Needing to replace a faulty ECU I began with the usual scan tool process of handshaking the ECU to the body control and immobilizer system. I then found a 6 digit pin being required.

I went to the owner's booklet and found the place for the code had been left blank. I then contacted XYZ Kia for assistance on retrieving the code. I was informed that by "law" that they would never hand that over to an independent workshop.

I was then told that the only way they can give that code was to the owner. The owner would then have to show proof of purchase and show identification before this would be allowed. I passed the information over the owners of the vehicle.

They rang the same workshop, of which the story then changed. They were told that the vehicle would have to come to them, they would enter the code (at a cost to the customer of course) themselves and not let the owner know what the code was.

I suggested that they contact the place of purchase and try a more subtle approach. I told

them to say they needed a key replaced and that they required the pin. They were given a Sydney number to call, of which they kindly told the owners, all you need to do is drive to the dealer, prove you're the owner and show ID and that number should be handed over.

Seems like a different set of rules from dealer to dealer. I believe if you purchase the vehicle, then all information of the vehicle is yours as well. Shows that this battle is far from over. This only allows the dealer to have an unfair advantage of equally equipped workshop like ours. We are have to have a criminal check and pay a license fee to access this information which is rightfully the customers anyway.

Toyota Australia Subscription Service

There are a number of issues that repairers encounter when working with the Toyota subscription service: download speeds can be slow, some comments about missing information – particularly wiring diagrams but this could be due to the slow speed. The following is an example of a complaint from a repairer that regularly works directly with OEM subscriptions:

The following is the sequence of events relating to my attempt to access Toyota information:

Tuesday September 27, 2016

- At 9:28 am, purchased a 24 hour subscription on the Toyota SRM site [receipt attached]
- [Receipt shows that the subscription commencement date is 26/9/2016 & expires on 27/9/2016 – this could be the problem but unable to talk to anyone.
- Could not access any information
- Tried phoning Toyota Customer Service only to be told I could only email the relevant department
- Sent email explaining that I could not access any information

Friday September 30, 2016

- Having had no reply to the first email I sent on 27/9/2016 I sent another email requesting help

As of today (17 October 2017) I have had no reply to either of my emails

It's obviously not the cost that worries me [as I am quite prepared to pay for the information],

but the total lack of support that comes with the subscription. I use the GMH site regularly and it works very well

Toyota Australia Subscription Service

I was surprised that Toyota Australia recently replied to the editor of a trade magazine article that was shown in a recent Australian Workshop Manager bimonthly magazine.

Toyotas replied stating;

“I just wanted to let you know that Toyota (and Lexus) actually do make all of its repair manuals available to independent repairers and have done so since 2013.”

Yes this is true, but from its conception there has been very annoying problems. In the early days and up until recently the Toyota manual site did not support internet explorer versions after version 11. So therefore I was not able to access the wiring diagrams and most images on the Toyota manuals website due to the version of browser I am using, which needs to be updated for security.

Now let's move forward to recent times and we now see that the Toyota manual web site has been updated to be more compatible to our later internet explorer versions, I still find there site very frustratingly slow to load. But there are still several manuals that don't open correctly, particularly the earlier vehicles from 2000-2008.

As I have stated the Toyota Australian site is painfully slow, it feels like they are hosting the server on a 56k modem. I just opened the European Toyota TIS website and tried loading the same items on both websites. The Australian website takes more than twice as long to load the same pages.

Toyota Australia Subscription Service

Add up the lack of technical information, the high subscription costs and the slow speed, it really doesn't seem like Toyota Australia are giving us a fair deal. Come on Toyota Australia you can do better.

I had a Technician friend once say to me “before I saw what Autodata Australia had to offer, I did not think I needed it.” I say until you see what the US and Europe TIS Toyota web sites offer their aftermarket repairs you may not think you need it.

These days it is fast becoming the full time job for one dedicated staff to spend the days

researching and collecting information so that our technicians can focus on servicing and repairing the modern day car. It should not be like this and nor does it have to be.

If Toyota Australia were serious in leading the way in sharing technical data, sharing their updated car software, the selling of scan tools and Tectstream software licences, Technical service Bulletins (the same TSB's their dealer networks have access to) and factory level video training, then I would praise them and thank them.

All this is available to the independent repairer in America and Europe, so why shouldn't we also have it and why not our New Zealand neighbours as well. Why are we so behind the rest of the world?

I want to give GMH credit for their initiative and thank them as they have lead the way and to this day are far more accepting to our needs. Thank you GMH, you do not only give us access to your manuals, but also update software for all GMH vehicles, Scan tool software, TSB's Training and much more.

Toyota Australia Data Subscription

We paid for access over a specific time period and basically gave up trying to download some material. Didn't have the right configuration so stuffed around and had no support we gave up

I have been having issues with accessing some of the manuals on the website, particularly the wiring diagrams. It can be a little annoying when you pay for a subscription and cannot access the information that they advertise as having available. The information is there, I believe, but the design of the website and the old manual format makes it impossible to access them.

I have spoken to Toyota several times about this and their response is that they are not responsible for the material that is on the website and it is controlled by a third party. The latest update by email from them yesterday is that we cannot use any computer other than Windows 7 or older 32 bit machine with Internet Explorer 8.0 installed.

Now, I have no idea how they expect us to operate a secure computer system and run a web browser that was released in 2009 on our computers. This is a ridiculous response in my opinion and indicative of the general attitude towards this half-assed attempt at sharing information.

So, I would recommend that you be careful and do not purchase any more than a one day subscription.

Chrysler

Chrysler is one manufacture that has shocking spare parts sales service. I often call Chrysler genuine to get put onto an answering system and forced to leave a message and then I have to wait several hours if I am lucky to get a call back from spare parts. Do you know how frustrating this is if I am trying to organise a quote especially if the customer is waiting in my office, little lone the inconvenience of a vehicle being tied up in my shop.

VW Polo

My customer took her 2012 VW Polo 30,000 km to the dealer because of a flashing warning light on her dash. There is a problem proving service history so the dealer said no warranty and quoted her \$5000 to fix. While we are still in the early stages I am starting to doubt the dealer's diagnoses. So I am not saying they are wrong just that I cannot understand how they came to their conclusion. So yesterday I called up the dealer and I had to leave a message. After 2 hours of no call back I called them again, still I had my call diverted to a message bank. So this morning I finally got through, only to be told the service advisor that was handling this job is tied up and he will call you back after 10.00 am. It is now 1.00 pm and I am still waiting for their call back.

Toyota Landcruiser VDJ79 2013

I recently had to service a Toyota Landcruiser VDJ79 2013. As part of this service the Diff oil is changed. According to Penrite in warranty it MUST be genuine Toyota oil. When I rang the local Toyota dealer to obtain some. They told me they had never sold it and do not use it in the workshop! I guess this means they carry out the service not using the genuine parts that Toyota set down must be used.

Renault VAN

Renault VAN (with faulty hydraulics in a electronic Clutch) that came on the back of a tow truck. The Automated Clutch system needed to repaired since it the Hydraulics was leaking However, before the unit was attended to, a quick search for the 'Special oils' were carried out and John was soon told that it was a 'SPECIAL oil' and could only be obtained from Dealer! However, dealer informed John that they did NOT have any in stock (nor the other dealers) and was not getting to the shelf (in the near future) either! So, John's call was promptly

transferred to the dealer's service supervisor where (oddly enough) he too said same thing' we have it in big quantity (Drum) and cannot sell to public (since they had no means to do so)!

John decided to ring 'Bulk oil suppliers' to see if they knew or could help with 'some oil'! They too could not help. Info was relayed to the customer and SADLY the vehicle was towed to (suburb withheld) (x dealership) Later we found out that the work carried out amounted to \$7K (yes, seven thousand dollars)! And whilst they had it, they did rotors and pads (front and back) on top of the \$7K

PART TWO: MAJOR PROBLEM AREAS

Diagnosis

When a vehicle is booked in for a repair or service, the auto technician will commence a checklist for the work and the list begins with 'Information'. All mechanics will look first to see if there are any bulletins or articles already covering the subject. The mechanic will use available diagnostic equipment - a universal or a brand-specific scan tool.

Common Issues: the functionality of the scan tool has been 'downgraded'. Scan tools work with subscription services (either directly from the OEM or via a third party provider). In the past 12 months, repairers have noted that functionality of some scan tool access has been 'downgraded': previously available data is now 'greyed' out and no longer provided.

Also since upgrading the software on a few of my aftermarket scan tools, I have lost the level of ability that I use to have with my Toyota platform. It is like I have a very basic level and I can no longer carryout the diagnostic tests and readings that I had before my update. (I actually had this happen to 2 of my many aftermarket scan tools that have).

Technical Service Bulletins (TSBs)

A TSB is distributed to all dealership based service departments and often instructs service personnel to fix problems and known faults. TSBs are also issued to update part installation and repair instructions, among other general items. In some cases the TSB actually corrects misinformation in the vehicle's repair and service manual. The official manual may have included the wrong torque settings for tightening the bolts when replacing the when. The TSB will provide a correct to this error ensuring that the wheel nuts are not under or over tightened. These are not to be confused with warranty claims.

In Australia, TSBs are not made available to independent aftermarket repairers. Some TSBs can be obtained from overseas websites however they are not VIN specific and the information may not be accurate for the Australian model.

Access to TSBs saves time and effort. It is not necessarily the most prevalent issue - but it is one of the most frustrating. The 'known' fault is conveyed to dealerships but not the consumer's

repairer of choice and it can add hours of time to the repair job that the independent workshop is unlikely to pass on the consumer.

Disclosure of Technical Service Bulletins is actually a very clever tool to gauge the level of repair and service information disclosure. Whilst all manufacturers purport to disclose, the devil is in the detail. A reasonable question to ask every car brand in the Australian market is - 'do you disclose Technical Service Bulletins to independent repairers/third party data providers in Australia?' The answer to this question is actually the most useful to divide a line between genuine discloser of repair and service information and window dressing. There is simply no good reason to withhold TSBs. The usual arguments of security, safety and intellectual property are clearly not relevant. But most importantly, TSBs are made available in America by the very same car brands that operate in Australia.

I just had an interesting talk with my local Isuzu dealership, surprisingly he was helpful and gave me some advice. But he was not happy that I had accessed the US Isuzu service information website, he told me what I have done is illegal.

I replied how can it be illegal I did not even hide the fact that I was from Australia, and he told me he knows. He told me Isuzu Australia are in the midst of having this closed to Australia, he justified this because Isuzu Australia pay more for what he says is the same info I have accessed in the US and it is not right we can access this info at what he believes is too cheap. He told me Isuzu Japan sell this info to Isuzu Australia for a lot more then America pay for the same rights. (I do not believe this but I do believe because of the population in America the cost can be more evenly spread out therefore making the end cost more affordable). I was also told that in Australia they use different factory DTC (Diagnostic Trouble Codes) then overseas and they change all the spare part numbers to stop people going on the net and buying their parts overseas.

Software Upgrades

Increasingly, as service difficulties and faults are recognised from in-field experience, vehicle manufacturers are able to correct these by providing software to enable microprocessors to be re-programmed for in-service vehicles. These upgrades are not made available to independent aftermarket repairers in Australia by most vehicle Manufacturers (including Ford, Honda, Toyota, Mazda).

Unlock or Re-initialisation Codes

After major repair work has been completed, the independent repairer often requires a code or specialist equipment to re-learn or re-establish the link between the various computer operated components. In most cases these codes can only be obtained from a dealership for a fee. In some cases the vehicle is required to be towed to the dealership.

Every time an independent repairer replaces a battery, they need a code to get the car going again. In fact, the replacement of any part that is connected to the car's electronics will require a PIN code to enable re-initialisation – even the car radio. Whilst in Europe and the United States manufacturers are required to supply these codes to registered repairers, in Australia they are allowed to be withheld. Sometimes our members have to pay the dealer \$200-\$300 to get that code – a cost that must be passed onto the consumer. Some dealers require that the car be towed to a dealership simply to have the PIN code entered and the vehicle re-initialised, further exacerbating this cost.

2003 Mitsubishi: While working on a customer's car the battery was disconnected and the radio code was lost, no log books in car as it is 13 yr old and 300,000 + Km old, Rang service department and was told the customer had to bring car in to dealership to get code will cost \$70. Rang the parts department was told couldn't help. To resolve this I posted on a closed mechanics Facebook page for some help and a Mitsubishi mechanic contacted me and helped me. I don't believe this should be so hard especially when we are a registered business and an account holder with this particular dealership with over 25 years dealing with them. After all who is going to steal a base model radio out of a 13 yr car and fit it to their new car??

Service Schedules/Labour Times/Lubricant Specifications

Many vehicle manufacturers withhold this information which limits the independent aftermarket repairer ability to provide servicing choice to the vehicle owner. While some manufacturers do provide this information many (including Ford, Mazda, Hyundai, BMW and Mercedes) do not.

I have been, for the last month, pushing hard to obtain the current schedules and importantly service times from Mitsubishi Australia. After a month of deliberations they will not provide such data, which other marques such as Audi freely provide. Nissan continue to be closed shop as is Kia, Great wall, Honda, the list goes on. I find it remarkable that Mitsubishi withhold information that is critical to the aftermarket servicing workshop that is required to maintain currency of the owner's warranty of their vehicle. It seems that the OEM "hand" will have to be forced to see real change in this country, an outcome my UK counterparts said would be the inevitable resultant of these actions.

Log Books

Trend analysis indicates that the vast majority of vehicles over four years of age are repaired and serviced by an independent repairer, and so vehicles under the 'online-only' logbook regime are now increasingly being brought to the independent sector for maintenance and servicing. Independent repairers who seek access in order to understand the vehicle's history and to record the service have been rebuffed by dealers. They have been told that they may not view the vehicle's service history, and were advised to "leave a receipt for the service in the vehicle's glovebox". There is no method of allowing a registered and licenced independent repairer to update the online logbook.

The owner of a 2015 335i F30 BMW is a client of ours who trusts our experience when it comes to BMW. This issue was regarding the in dash service book entry. Unfortunately the problem has not been solved but my client is patient and for the time being we have supplied him a traditional paper service book. We have been told by Auto logic our scan / programming tool provider that there is nothing they can do at this stage to enter the date of service into the (CID) central information display. We can of course reset the services required but in the future the CID will show that the vehicle has never been serviced and what services were actually done. It will however show the services completed by the BMW Authorised Dealer.

Preventing independent repairers from updating an online logbook following vehicle service within the manufacturer's warranty period is likely to have a detrimental effect on consumers should they later seek recourse from the vehicle manufacturer for an issue or fault within warranty period. In addition, the logbook is the document that millions of Australians rely on to sell their cars with the proof that it has been serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. An incomplete record of service history is highly likely to have a detrimental impact on the resale value of a car.

We expect that online logbooks will be rolled out more widely in the coming years as they provide yet another effective tool that vehicle manufacturers can utilise to compel car owners

to go back to the dealership for all services for the life of the car. This is not fair to the consumer, nor is it conducive to free and open competition.

Access to Manufacturer Special Tools

Many vehicle manufacturers withhold the sale of special tools to the independent aftermarket which makes it impossible to complete certain types of repairs. We also understand that BMW are moving away from scan tools for their later models. It's just an interface that a technician plugs into the car which is connected to a server type scan tool database in Germany via the Internet which runs the diagnostic process on the car. Volvo is similar to BMW. We also understand that other marques may be moving in a similar direction.

Other Issues

Other issues raised by repairers in the past 24 months include wheel alignment (on vehicles fitted with Electronic Stability Control), tyre rotation (on vehicles fitted with Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems), rear brake pad replacement (on vehicles fitted with electronic handbrakes).

