

Public Submission to the ACCC from Noel Harper, Drysdale Motors, relating to the market study into the New Car Retailing Industry.

1st March 2017

Q1) What are the types of repair/service information and car parts with barriers which cause the most issues/greatest harm for your business and your customers?

Technical Service Bulletins, Lubricant and Service Item Specifications, parts supplied in a state which requires software only available to Manufacturer's Dealers to make them work after installation, software updates for our electronic tools to enable them to interact with vehicle software and electronic components.

Q2) What are the barriers to accessing repair/service information and car parts?

Information available from Manufacturer's electronically or through their dealership networks is limited. We know this information must be available to the dealers because they can complete repairs that we cannot despite the fact we are willing to pay for information, tooling and software updates. Some car parts are now not available to us in the aftermarket.

Q3) What justifications are given by manufacturers/dealers for these barriers, and why do you think these reasons are/are not valid? What are the impacts of these barriers on consumers/your business?

Justifications, if given, generally amount to safety, security or voiding new car warranty. I think these are not valid in nearly all cases as our business is equally competent, equipped and honest as any business operating as a car dealer franchise. Every day we carry out competent service and repairs for our customers which do not compromise their safety or security.

The impacts to consumers of the barriers amount to inconvenience, cost and lack of choice as to who maintains their vehicle.

The impacts on our business amount to wasted time, inefficiency, and our reputation.

Q4) What work arounds to the barriers do you use? What is the effect on your business, independent repairers generally and consumers of these work arounds?

We use many different work arounds, accessing information and tools from overseas, trawling the internet, subscribing to services who have managed to access information overseas, online forums and member businesses within our network. Often a work around will eventually become common knowledge through industry networks and online platforms.

Q5) To what extent are these issues different/worse for regional repairers/consumers?

Many makes of vehicle have quite small dealer service footprints across Australia in comparison to independent repairers like us. This increases the problems of time wasted and money spent getting vehicles to dealership workshops, either by us or the consumer. I believe a consumer should be able

to choose between whether they use a business local and convenient to them or a dealer who may be located in another town or city.

Q6) What has the effect of the heads of agreement had on your ability to access repair and service information? Are you aware of any examples of where the heads of agreement and its dispute mechanisms are not working well?

There is greater access to manufacturer's websites but the information available is still insufficient. The information from companies who collate all available data and allow us to subscribe to their website for information, such as Repco Auto-Tech, is also limited because they seem to face the same barriers as us in obtaining data.

The dispute mechanism is not a practical way to address these issues.

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