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[VW cheats on Australian consumers](#)

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) is calling for urgent talks with the Federal Government to reign in the car makers' arrogant approach with software they build into vehicles and the data it produces.

The international vehicle manufacturing scandal following Volkswagen's admission to cheating on the diesel emissions tests of up to 11 million cars has driven home the point pressed by AAAA since its launch of the Choice of Repairer campaign in 2009.

AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity said the Association's message has consistently been car makers will tell us only what they want us to know – and will only tell us when it suits them. "Technology now allows car companies to communicate with their vehicles on the road or while sitting in your garage," said Stuart Charity.

"This ability of car companies to totally control all 'black box' elements of today's sophisticated computer managed vehicles is evidenced by this latest scandal.

"This cheat on consumers and the environment makes a mockery of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries' new 'genuine is best' catchphrase designed to attack aftermarket service, repair and parts suppliers.

"If car makers cheat when they build the car, will they do the same through their dealers' service and repair operations? This 'genuine is best' spin promoted by vehicle manufacturers is now seen for what it is . . . a sales slogan.

"The current VW computer software cheat was only discovered by chance. Recalls by car makers are now common place and have forced governments to introduce stiffer regulations and penalties. In 2013, VW recalled 2.6 million vehicles due to problems that could occur in the gearbox.

"This 2015 global VW recall will inconvenience more than four times as many trusting car owners, who thought they were driving a more environmentally friendly vehicle.

[2015/2017 AAAA National Council Announced](#)

The AAAA National Council for 2015/2017 was announced at the 35th Annual General Meeting, held Monday 19th October in Melbourne.

We would like to welcome Guy Nicholls from GUD Automotive to the National Council, together with returning National Councillors Greg Barker, David Fraser, Peter Martin, Adam Pay, Mark Pedder and Graham Scudamore-Smith.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank outgoing Councillor Margie Ryder for her contribution.

For the full list of National Council members and positions please go to <http://www.aaaa.com.au/board.asp>.

One of the signs of a healthy association is competition for spots on its board and this year we had 11 nominations for the 7 vacant positions from an outstanding field of candidates. Unfortunately, in any election some people have to miss out and we would like to take this opportunity to thank Dale Brittain, Hamish Murdoch, Gino Ricciuti and Jonathan Sampson for their nominations.

We're sure you'll join us in wishing the new Council well as they help set the future direction of the AAAA and ensure that we deliver new activities and services that are valued by you.

"The Australian Government must accept the reality of the global market place . . . vehicle data is a critical consumer and environmental issue. The AAAA wants the Government to put in place robust regulations to ensure that all matters relating to vehicle data are open and honest," said Stuart Charity.

Computers control vehicle safety

Vehicle data manages the safety, environmental and road performance of the family and work vehicles Australians drive every day. Software codes should open to inspection by authorities and independent industry experts, not kept secret by the manufacturers.

The objective of the AAAA Choice of Repairer campaign is to make car companies allow access to vehicle service and repair data by independent aftermarket workshops in Australia. This offers consumers a choice of who services or repairs their vehicle – the dealer or an independent workshop.

In Australia, five organisations representing key automotive industry and consumer groups (AAAA, Australian Automobile Association, Australian Automotive Dealer Association, Australian Motor Industry Federation and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries) signed the Agreement on Access to Service and Repair Information for Motor Vehicles on 14 December 2014.

This agreement provides for access to all information required for the diagnosis, body repair, servicing, inspection, periodic monitoring, and reinitialising of the vehicle, in line with the service and repair information manufacturers provide their authorised dealers and repairers. Independent workshops are required to pay a reasonable fee to access this data.

The agreement also mandates that car companies provide this access by December 2015. To date only nine out of 68 car companies supplying the Australian market have met the requirements of this voluntary industry agreement. Much of the data provided by those nine car companies falls well short of what is required by the Agreement.

"If the car companies do not meet the terms of the Agreement, we want the Australian Government to introduce a mandatory code of conduct. We have requested urgent meetings with Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer Kelly O'Dwyer and Minister for Territories, Local Government and Major Projects Paul Fletcher to discuss changes to the Motor Vehicle Standards," said Stuart Charity.

"Together with some other signatories to the Agreement, the AAAA is closely monitoring the performance of the car companies. To ensure this monitoring is open and honest, the AAAA has launched an online Incident Reporting Portal. This initiative allows independent workshops to

report their experiences – both good and bad – with accessing data from vehicles manufacturers.

"It is unfortunate that consumers have been subjected to this major international software cheat by VW. It is certainly a perfect example of what we have been telling the Government since 2009.

"To a degree, it taints the entire automotive industry. The AAAA launched the Agreement on Access to Service and Repair Information for Motor Vehicles and the Incident Reporting Portal to protect consumers and to help restore trust in the industry," said Stuart Charity.

The Incident Reporting Portal questionnaire can be used as often as required and takes only moments to complete. To report any incidents, please go to <https://www.research.net/s/incidentreportingportal>.

Holden leads in Sharing Repair Data with Independent Workshops

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) welcomes GM Holden leadership in sharing vehicle repair information with independent workshop operators.

The Agreement on Access to Service and Repair Information for Motor Vehicles – signed by five key automotive industry and consumer groups in December 2014 – set requirements for the type of information to be made accessible to independent repairers.

Parties to the agreement are the AAAA, Australian Automobile Association, Australian Automotive Dealer Association, Australian Motor Industry Federation and the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.

The agreement provides for access to all information required for the diagnosis, body repair, servicing, inspection, periodic monitoring, and reinitialising of the vehicle, in line with the service and repair information manufacturers provide their authorised dealers and repairers. Independent workshops are required to pay a reasonable fee to access this data.

AAAA Executive Director Stuart Charity said the Association recognises GM Holden leadership in the Australian market with respect to its action to share repair and service information. "By opening access for all Australian repairers to the AC Delco Technical Delivery System, which is now populated with Australian vehicle specific content, GM Holden has taken a big step forward," said Stuart Charity.

"Since 2009, AAAA has led the drive to create a level playing field for the service and repair sector. The 2011 Commonwealth Consumer Affairs Advisory Council (CCAAC) report recommended that the industry develop a code of conduct for data sharing. Bruce Billson, the former

Federal Minister for Small Business, facilitated the challenging negotiations between the parties.

“AAAA hopes that GM Holden’s initiative creates a precedent that will be followed by all car companies operating in Australia. This will achieve our aim to ensure all Australian vehicle owners retain their right to choose who repairs their vehicle – a dealer or an independent workshop.

“AAAA acknowledges that Toyota/Lexus, Ford, Audi/Skoda, Jaguar/Land Rover and BMW have also made some technical information available. But their current efforts all fall well short of what is required under the industry Heads of Agreement.

“Together with GM Holden there are now nine car brands out of the 68 sold in Australia offering some level of data access. That leaves a long way to go in ensuring competition and choice for all car owners,” said Stuart Charity.

Regulation Still a Real Option

All multi-national car companies operating in Australia already make data available to independent workshops in their European and North American markets and are members of the FCAI. Car companies have had nine months since signing the voluntary agreement to deliver effective access to this data.

Stuart Charity said all brands must quickly follow Holden’s lead to demonstrate that a voluntary agreement will work. “The Heads of Agreement set a 12 month timeline to review whether it has had a meaningful impact on the availability of repair and service information,” he said.

“If this does not occur as a result of this voluntary process, we will advocate strongly for the Federal Government to introduce a mandatory solution, as has been done in Europe and the USA.

“The time is ticking for all car companies selling vehicles in Australia to comply with the full requirements of the Heads of Agreement by December 2015.

“To fairly and comprehensively monitor how well vehicle makers meet their obligations under the Heads of Agreement, AAAA has launched an online Incident Reporting Portal.

“The AAAA encourages independent workshops to contribute their data accessing experiences – both positive and negative,” said Stuart Charity.

The Incident Reporting Portal questionnaire can be used as often as required and takes only moments to complete. To report any incidents, please go to <https://www.research.net/s/incidentreportingportal>

4WD Industry Council Networking Event Western Australia

On behalf of the 4WD Industry Council, we invite you to join fellow 4WD & AAAA members for an industry networking breakfast, on Friday 6th November at the South of Perth Yacht Club, prior to the opening of the Perth 4WD and Adventure Show.

Nigel Bishop - AAAA Membership Development Manager and Lesley Yates - AAAA Government Relations and Advocacy Manager, will be speaking on the current advocacy work of the 4WD Council, current issues including ongoing campaigns relating to suspension regulations/ESC (VSB14), VFPS (bullbars) and lights, but more importantly they will share their insights into what’s coming up – what will be the future issues for our industry and how do we have an impact, both together as an industry Association and as individual companies.

Lesley will also provide a presentation on the issues that are currently under government consideration. Importantly, she will share exclusive and confidential information on our techniques and how the AAAA has been so successful in influencing and changing government policy. She will also share her insights into what you can do to help shape government policy, particularly in the next 12 months during the lead up to the Federal Election. An opportunity will also be given to talk about any other issues that are important to our industry and to get these on the agenda for future work.

For further information on this event or to register your attendance please download a copy of the invitation by going to <http://www.aaaa.com.au/eventslist.asp>.

2015 AAAA Golf Day

We are pleased to announce that the 2015 AAAA Golf Day is to be held on Friday the 27th of November at Kingston Links Golf Course, Rowville, just 20 minutes from Melbourne CBD via the Monash Freeway.

This day is to provide members with an opportunity to network and enjoy the company of your industry colleagues in a relaxed and informal environment.

Registration will commence at 1.00pm with a light lunch provided. Play will then begin via a shotgun start across all 18 holes to conclude with a Dinner and Award Presentation.

Sponsorship opportunities are available for you to consider and this year we have introduced two new packages, Sunscreen Sponsor and Stubby Holder Sponsor. All packages are listed in the registration brochure so please make sure you add your package of interest to your registration form.

As numbers are strictly limited to 72 players, to guarantee your start, make sure you email Michelle Vizzutti at michelle@aaaa.com.au immediately to confirm your place.

Australian National Pavilion at Automechanika Frankfurt 2016

Following the continued success of trade missions to Automechanika Frankfurt, the AAAA is once again offering members the opportunity to exhibit as part of the Australian Pavilion at Automechanika Frankfurt to be held from 13 – 17 September, 2016. Automechanika Frankfurt 2014 included over 4600 exhibitors from 74 countries displaying the latest trends and developments in the automotive industry and attracted over 138,000 trade visitors from 176 countries.

Stand allocations will be offered on a “first in” basis, so please contact Michelle at michelle@aaaa.com.au or 03 9545 3333 for a copy of the contract ASAP.

Australian Consumer Law Compliance Review

For a limited time, Indigo Legal is offering all AAAA Members a free Australian Consumer Law (ACL) compliance review of their business. The point of the review is to actively assist AAAA Members to avoid potential breaches of the ACL which attract significant penalties (up to \$220,000 for individuals and \$1.1 million for corporations) and infringement notices (currently up to \$2,160 for individuals and \$10,800 for corporations (\$102,000 for listed corporations)).

The following will be reviewed against the requirements in the ACL:

- Any relevant policies (e.g. policies relating to guarantees, warranties, returns etc.);
- Any relevant agreements (e.g. agreements relating to sale of goods, lay-by etc.);
- Any supply/distribution contracts;
- Any relevant notices/signs (e.g. repair notices, consumer rights notices etc.);
- Any promotional/advertising material; and
- Website.

Please contact Indigo Legal today on **1300 369 703** to arrange a free ACL compliance review.

October Australian Automotive Aftermarket Magazine

The October Australian Automotive Aftermarket e-Zine, sponsored by Motospecs, includes feature stories on Terrain Tamer and Lucas Oil. We'll also keep you up-to-date with all the latest news, product information, and a

special focus on Servicing, and Towing & Vehicle Protection.

Now available for viewing from www.aftermarket.com.au
Happy reading!