



# The best cars for today's families



## Our cover explained

James Ward

Just how much stuff does your family car need to carry? As we've said, every family is different and, as such, we all have unique needs of our cars. For our cover photo we've created an exploded view, known as the Tetris Challenge, of just some of the things you may have in your car, be it for a weekly shopping run, school sports event, for travelling, camping, eating or drinking. We've even thrown in a few members of the Drive family (including Minty the sausage dog) for good measure. The car is a Volvo XC90 and yes, almost everything did fit inside. There's a list of all the items we've used, plus a fun behind-the-scenes video to see how we did it, on the Drive.com.au website.

The motoring needs of today's family are as diverse as the definition of what is a family itself. Drive is here to help demystify the often-daunting road noise.

Rob Margeit

At Drive, we often get asked, "What is the best family car?"

And the answer we give is as diverse as the make-up of the modern family itself.

Families have undergone a profound change over the last few decades. Where once the typical "nuclear" family consisted of mum, dad, two kids and maybe a dog, today's family make-up is as diverse as the society we live in.

Whether it's same-sex couples with kids, single parents, the still traditional mum and dad with kids, a childless couple, or a couple with fur babies, today's definition of "family" has expanded to reflect broader society.

And that makes the notion of a "family car" difficult to define.

With so many different types of families, the car any given household needs can vary greatly.

Where once large sedans roamed our roads, today's family is more likely to be found inside some



There's no such thing as one-size-fits-all when it comes to a family workhorse.

type of SUV, which has become the default family hauler.

The medium SUV, typically with seating for five and a large cargo area out back for all the accoutrements of family life on the road, is now the top-selling class of vehicle in Australia, reflecting the shift away from large sedans – such as the Holden Commodore and Ford Falcon – that once ruled the roost.

The proliferation of SUVs on our roads has been matched by the

surge in sales of dual-cab utes which increasingly represent another way to move the family.

Tough enough for work duties during the week, the venerable workhorses increasingly are doing double-duty on weekends as go-anywhere adventure vehicles for the whole family.

Of course, not every family needs a seven-seat SUV or the rough-and-tumble nature of a dual-cab ute. For them, the humble hatchback is more than fit-for-

purpose, its compact nature ideal for smaller, inner-urban families.

Working out which vehicle type or model is the best car for your family can be daunting.

From budget-busters to luxury SUVs and sensible people movers, and no matter the size and make-up of your family, Drive's Ultimate Family Guide is here to help you demystify the process of what is, for most families, the second-biggest financial decision they will ever make.

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## INTERIORS

# How many seats do you *really* need?

Susannah Guthrie

Car makers might have phased out the rear-facing third row once found in nostalgic family station wagons, but it's been replaced by a plethora of much more practical seating options.

Six-, seven- and even eight-seaters are now commonplace on the new-car market, but each option comes with its own perks – and compromises.

A six-seat configuration, offered on cars like the Mazda CX-9 or Hyundai Santa Fe, sees the middle row swapped for a pair of captain's chairs, providing improved ease of access for all occupants, but often at a price premium.

Seven-seat SUVs have ample space for the school run, but not all are created equal. Options range from medium SUVs like the Mitsubishi Outlander or Nissan X-Trail – which offer a third row that's more of a stop-gap for short trips – to extra-large SUVs like the Audi Q7 or Kia Sorento.

Typically, opting for that extra row will result in reductions to boot space and leg room, although some seven-seaters, like the capacious Kia Carnival, do manage to offer the best of both worlds.

Eight-seaters, like the Land Rover Defender 130 or Lexus LX, are harder to come by, but are able to squeeze two rows of three into a manageable footprint. Finally, a nine-seat layout tends to be the domain of people-movers and vans like the Volkswagen Caravelle.



In a six-seat configuration, the middle row is swapped for a pair of captain's chairs, improving ease of access.

If you've got young kids, be aware that child seats pose their own challenges.

For a child seat to be installed in a seating position, Australian regulations require the seat to be fitted with a corresponding top-tether attachment point – and most cars on the market only offer a maximum of three.

Thus, not all seven-seaters can accommodate multiple child seats at the same time – particularly in the third row – and the locations of the child-seat attachment points can pose their own problems.

(You don't believe us? Try installing a baby capsule in a cramped third row without acquiring a back injury.)

However, unicorns like the Mazda CX-8, Volkswagen Multivan or Jeep Grand Cherokee L can take up to five child seats at once, but this will likely make it challenging to access the third row. If you're regularly taking three or more kids in and out of child seats, we'd strongly advise making the shift into people-mover territory.

## Six is the new seven

James Ward

If you want the flexibility of three rows but don't need to count seven seats, why not consider a six-seat layout that offers three rows of two seats?

In many instances, the middle row provides individual captain's chairs that offer a more spacious and luxurious environment with integrated cup holders, footrests and reclining backrests.

These make the interior easier to move around while still retaining the configurability and practicality of other three-row cars.

If six feels like the new seven for your next new car, consider these models which offer the option:

**Mahindra Scorpio**

from \$41,990

**Hyundai Palisade**

from \$65,900\*

**Toyota Granvia**

from \$67,940

**Hyundai Santa Fe Hybrid**

from \$69,550

**Mazda CX-8**

from \$72,010

**Mazda CX-9**

from \$74,400

All prices noted before options and on-road costs.

\* Hyundai Palisade is a seven-seater in a two-two-three configuration

## Yes, station wagons are cool now



The Mitsubishi Sigma (below) was functional – but daggy. The electric Porsche Taycan Cross Turismo is anything but.

James Ward

The humble station wagon, once a staple of Australian carports and driveways, was many things to Australian drivers with families, but it was rarely cool.

Whether it was a Holden Commodore Vacationer, a Mitsubishi Sigma or even a Volvo 240, the wagon was the workhorse of the family long before anyone had even heard of an SUV.

They were big and functional, but they were rarely exciting and, for the most part, were considered quite daggy. But in the mid-1990s, something changed.

In 1994, Audi, in collaboration with Porsche, revealed the RS2 Avant, a five-door station wagon with a 232kW turbocharged five-cylinder engine and all-wheel drive. To this day, Audi's performance flagship, the RS6 Avant, is a wagon. There is even an all-electric RS6 e-tron Avant in development.

Volvo followed suit in 1995 with the 850 T-5R, a machine that even raced at Bathurst.



Today, BMW now offers a high-performance M3 Touring wagon, and Porsche offers both the luxurious Panamera and electric Taycan as high-specification Sport Turismo and Cross Turismo wagons.

Even the most affordable wagon on the market, the Mazda 6, is a stylish machine.

Sadly only 12 brands continue to offer station wagons as part of their showroom line-ups, and of those, we're expecting to see a few models drop off in 2024.

So, if you want to get on the cool wagon trend, there's no time like the present!

## Best cars and accessories for pets



Susannah Guthrie

While there are plenty of dog-friendly car accessories and pet-compatible cabin features on the new-car market, the safest car for your dog is one in which it can be safely restrained, with access to fresh air and room to stretch its legs without interfering with your driving ability. Under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, it is illegal to put dogs in the boot of a sedan, leave an animal unattended in a car for more than 10 minutes when temperatures are at or above 28 degrees, transport a dog in the back of a ute or trailer if it's not properly tethered or caged, or put a dog in the metal tray of a ute if the outdoor temperature is 28 degrees or more. While it's not compulsory to restrain your dog, authorities strongly advise doing so to improve the safety of yourself and your pet. Additionally, all of the states and territories have penalties in place for people who drive with a dog on their lap, or people whose



The Nissan Dog Pack for the Qashqai, X-Trail and Patrol is an accessory range that can be customised to suit small to large dogs.

attention or control of their vehicle is affected by their dog.

Dog owners should consider pet-proofing their cars with rubber floor mats for the boot, non-slip dog water bowls, partitions to prevent their pooch from jumping into the back seat and even specially designed "pet access ramps" offered by brands like Land Rover or Nissan – with cheaper alternatives also sold at Kmart and Bunnings.

BIG DAY OUT

# A fun day for the family? Hit the road.

James Ward

Entertaining a family of any size has become a costly exercise. Even if we look at a nuclear sample of two adults and two children, a day at the zoo will cost over \$90 for admission, and an AFL game will cost about the same.

Even a movie, on a special family ticket, costs about \$50, and that only lasts about two hours.

While there are some good value family entertainment options out there, Melbourne Museum will set you back about \$30 and a walk to the park or the beach will still cost you nothing, we think there's another good value option sitting in your driveway.

Ask yourself, when was the last time you bundled the brood into the car and just went for a drive?

Not a drive to the shops. Not a drive to the park. But a good, solid run out into some of the most beautiful countryside the world has to offer?

A day trip to a country town or regional landmark can present a whole new world of interest and opportunity out the window. There are some amazing places within a few hours of your home that I'd wager you've still not visited.

What's sometimes better though, is to draw on the memories of the past and head to places



Road trips are an affordable family outing and why not entertain the kids with a game of Spotto?



where you were taken on a family day out in the car, and give your family the same experience.

Sure, fuel prices are up, but a modern car is operating in its premium efficiency zone on a touring drive. What may look like a daunting 250-kilometre loop could turn out to require only a quarter of a tank of fuel. Even at prices over \$2 per litre, that's probably less than \$50.

For this, you get to show the family something new, breathe in some fresh air, and maybe indulge in a local treat while you're at it. On a recent run to Mansfield in the

Victorian High Country, the Hyundai Palisade I was driving averaged an even 8.0L/100km on the roughly 400-kilometre run.

That's just over 30 litres of diesel, which at \$2.22 per litre, cost me about \$70.

For less than a day at the footy, we had a great run through the Yarra Valley where we passed hot air balloons floating in and above the early-morning clouds.

We toured along the Melba Highway, through the lush and green "valley of a thousand hills" to the historic town of Yea, where we

walked the dog along the rail trail, enjoyed a burger for lunch and just took a moment to wind down.

The drive to Mansfield, to drop Miss 14 at school, was a pretty run and offered a final bakery stop, before waving goodbye and heading back to town.

The run home took in picturesque Strath Creek and the twisty climb up Murchison Gap, before returning to Melbourne along the Hume Freeway.

A nice day out, with full tummies and stretched legs in the fresh air, for what isn't a huge amount of cost, is pretty hard to come by these days. The best part is, if you start doing this on a regular basis, you don't ever need to go to the same place twice.

We've created 50 episodes of Drive TV with scores of great road trip ideas that originate from Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane and Canberra, and have plenty more episodes to come.

Basically, there is no shortage of national parks, state forests, rocks, trees, beaches, and wide expanses of sky to see, on a day trip that can involve every member of your family for little outlay.

So if you are looking for something to do this weekend, just hit the road!

For a full list of all our Drive TV routes, head over to Drive.com.au.

## The official rules of Spotto!

Entertaining a young family on a road trip can be a thankless task.

One of the most popular road trip games the family can play is Spotto, a game that dates back to the 1600s and the harvesting and transportation of rapeseed.

### Rules of Spotto

- 1 The vehicle needs to be mainly yellow: at least 50 per cent. The yellow pinstripe on a black sports car does not make it yellow.
- 2 Any shade of yellow is allowed, from metallic yellow to pale sunflower.
- 3 Gold is not yellow.
- 4 Lime is not yellow.
- 5 Vehicles "in uniform" do not count, like school buses and taxis in the US. Yellow-branded company vehicles are acceptable.
- 6 Double points are awarded for spotting a pink car and yelling "Super Spotto!"
- 7 Triple points are awarded for spotting a purple car and yelling "Super Dooper Spotto!"
- 8 The car must either be driving or have a driver inside it. Parked and unattended cars are not allowed.
- 9 If you spotto a car and it turns out that it doesn't meet the criteria, you lose a point.
- 10 If a spotto-ed vehicle is no longer visible to other players for confirmation, rely on the Honour System. Be trustworthy or the whole thing falls apart.

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## BEST VALUE CARS

# Electrify your hip-pocket savings



The cost of having a car can vary wildly between brands over the first three years of ownership. A smarter approach to choosing can save you up to \$5600 per year.

Are electric vehicles really cheaper to own? Can larger cars be cheaper in the long run? We crunch the numbers to find out.

Glenn Butler

It's official: electrified vehicles may not be the cheapest new cars to buy but they are the cheapest to own.

Drive's exclusive 2023 Best Value Cars survey has confirmed what hybrid and electric vehicle owners already knew: electricity is not only better for the environment, but also easier on the hip pocket.

Midway through the year, Drive crunched the ownership costs on every new passenger car, SUV and light commercial vehicle under \$120,000 to reveal the most affordable cars across the first three years of ownership. The results will save thousands of dollars for Australian new car consumers.

Pressures on the finances of everyday Australians are intensifying with every passing month. Interest rates are at a 10-year high, inflation is running rampant at more than double acceptable levels, and wages are not increasing anywhere near fast enough to offset all of these financial pressures.

Haggling with the salesperson is an obvious way to save money on a new car purchase, but did you know that choosing smarter could save you up to \$5600 per year? That's the difference between the cheapest new car to own (Toyota Yaris hybrid) and the most expensive (Nissan Patrol 4WD).

That's an extreme example, but even if we filter by vehicle class, the savings are considerable.

The difference between the cheapest and the most expensive Medium SUV – which is Australia's most popular vehicle type – is \$1700 per year.

In the Small SUV class the savings are a potential \$2000.

Passenger cars also offer savings to those willing to buy wisely rather than emotionally. Buy a Corolla hybrid instead of a Kia Cerato GT and you'll save \$1000 a year.

As for the increasingly common dual-cab utilities, buying an entry-level Mazda BT-50 will save almost \$2000 a year over a full-fruit VW Amarok Aventura.

Electrified vehicles dominate the higher ranks of Drive's 2023 Best Value Cars survey, securing eight of the top 10 places, driven by low servicing fees and fuelling/charging costs compared to their internal combustion rivals.

But electrified cars are generally more expensive to buy, so saving money by buying electric is not always the answer.

#### HOW WE CALCULATED

Drive.com.au gathered comparative data on the four biggest ongoing expenses new car owners face in the first three years of ownership: vehicle registration, comprehensive insurance, servicing fees and energy costs.

In terms of use, the Australian Bureau of Statistics pegs the average distance driven by Australian passenger vehicles and light commercial vehicles as 11,864 kilometres. We've rounded it up to 15,000 kilometres to cover a greater percentage of Australians' mileage.

For fuel and electricity costs, we used each manufacturer's independently tested claim.

For our ownership costs formula, we used Motormouth's average Sydney fuel prices on May 22, 2023 and electricity has been priced at 22c/kWh. This is at the lower end of the spectrum for NSW domestic tariffs and mid-range for Victorian domestic tariffs.

**ULP: 165.9c/L**

**PULP (95): 180.8c/L**

**PULP (98): 188.0c/L**

**Diesel: 180.8c/L**

**Electricity: 22c/kWh**

Registration fees, including the compulsory third-party personal

insurance and the comprehensive insurance quote, were all obtained for a 35-year-old male with a clean driving record residing in Chatswood NSW and garaging the vehicle every night.

And for servicing, we obtained vehicle servicing intervals and costs for every eligible vehicle from that brand's website in May 2023.

If a three-year or 45,000-kilometre capped price plan is offered, we used that figure.

#### THE RISING COSTS OF CAR FINANCE, AND WHY WE EXCLUDED IT

Rising interest rates and increased cost of living pressures have made some car finance and loan repayments the biggest challenge for many Australian families. But while these figures are important to any vehicle running costs, they are difficult to estimate.

There are so many ways car finance can be structured, with most figures calculated on individual circumstances, that two people buying the same car can have totally different finance structures. To that end, we have left the cost of the car out of our ownership calculations.

We have included list price (noted predominantly as MSRP before options and on-road costs) as a key reference point.

We will also be rolling out more information in terms of resale prices and operational costs as a percentage of purchase price in the coming weeks.

#### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST DRAIN ON MY WALLET?

If you think the overwhelming focus on fuel efficiency at the time of purchase is unjustified, you would be wrong.

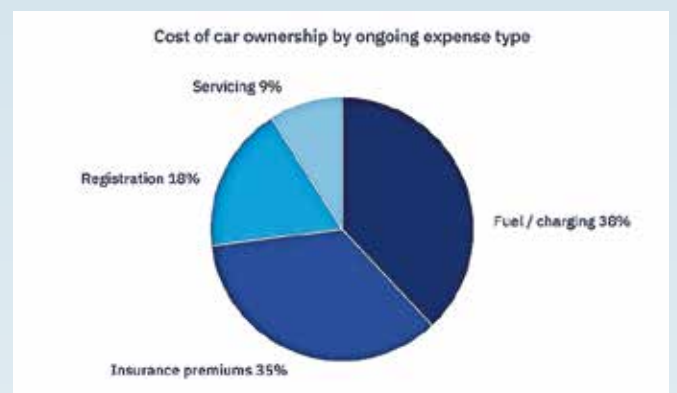
The amount of money you'll spend fuelling or recharging your vehicle is the single biggest drain on your wallet.

Fuel and recharging accounts for almost 38 per cent of the four major expenditure line items, followed by insurance premiums (35 per cent), registration (18 per cent) and servicing (9 per cent).



## Australia's Best Value Cars TOP 10 RANKINGS

- Toyota Yaris Hybrid:** from \$258 per month
- Hyundai Kona EV:** from \$261 per month
- Toyota Yaris Cross Hybrid:** from \$262 per month
- Suzuki Swift:** from \$263 per month
- Toyota Corolla Hybrid:** from \$267 per month
- Suzuki Ignis:** from \$274 per month
- Kia Picanto:** from \$276 per month
- GWM Ora EV:** from \$281 per month
- Cupra Born EV:** from \$282 per month
- Hyundai Ioniq 6 EV:** from \$283 per month



To read all the results and see where your car (or next car) sits in the value stakes, scan the QR code to visit Drive's Best Value Cars on the drive.com.au website

# Family buyer's guide

## SMALL

### Toyota Corolla

The quintessential hatchback that now blends legendary reliability with style and the option of hybrid power.

Priced from **\$29,270** to **\$64,190**

**OUR PICK** - Corolla SX Hybrid hatch @ **\$35,260**

### Nissan Qashqai

A small SUV that is bigger than it looks, the new Qashqai offers a high level of safety technology across the range and will soon be available in an e-Power hybrid. Priced from **\$33,890**

to **\$47,390**

**OUR PICK** - Qashqai ST+ @ **\$37,890**

### Skoda Kamiq

Practical and functional with good warranty and service support, the Kamiq offers European style and finish at an affordable price. Priced from **\$37,990** to **\$44,990**

**OUR PICK** - Kamiq 110TSI Monte Carlo @ **\$43,490**



### Hyundai Kona

With a fresh face and the option of hybrid, and soon full-electric power, the new Kona is a funky and well-rounded urban SUV. Priced from **\$32,000** to **\$46,500**

**OUR PICK** - Kona N-Line Hybrid @ **\$40,000**

### Toyota Yaris Cross

One of the top-ranked winners in our 2023 Best Value Cars survey, the Yaris Cross (particularly in hybrid form) is a very cost effective compact SUV to own. Priced from **\$28,000** to **\$39,000**

**OUR PICK** - Yaris Cross GXL Hybrid @ **\$33,000**



### MG MG4

Like a Corolla, but electric! The MG4 brings decent range, plenty of equipment and a solid urban driving experience to EV buyers on a budget. Priced from **\$38,990** to **\$59,990**

**OUR PICK** - MG4 Excite 51 @ **\$38,990**

### Chery Omoda 5

New to the market, the Chery Omoda 5 offers funky looks with a long list of standard equipment that positions it sharply in the value stakes. Priced from **\$32,990** to **\$35,990**

**OUR PICK** - Omoda 5 EX @ **\$35,990**

## MEDIUM

### Nissan X-Trail

Drive's Car of the Year Best Medium SUV, the new X-Trail provides great space, excellent touring ability and the choice of either petrol or hybrid power. Priced from **\$37,250** to **\$57,690**

**OUR PICK** - X-Trail Ti e-Power Hybrid AWD @ **\$54,690**

### GWM Haval H6

Our best-value mid-sized SUV megatest winner, the GWM Haval H6 provides a stack of room and features, as a wagon or stylish coupe. Available as a hybrid. Priced from **\$33,990** to **\$46,490**

**OUR PICK** - Haval H6 Lux Hybrid @ **\$42,490**

### Mitsubishi Outlander

This is the car that owns the plug-in hybrid space. The 2023 Drive Car of the Year best Hybrid SUV, the Outlander (and Outlander PHEV) deliver a stylish and well-featured family SUV. Priced from **\$37,240** to **\$70,990**

**OUR PICK** - Outlander PHEV Aspire @ **\$62,990**



### Kia Sportage

The overall winner of the 2022 Drive Car of the Year, the Sportage is a very functional, capable, and well-featured SUV. Priced from **\$32,795** to **\$52,720**

**OUR PICK** - Sportage SX+ AWD Diesel @ **\$47,250**

### Hyundai Tucson

With a striking and modern design, plenty of features and a choice of petrol or diesel power, the Tucson has plenty to offer mid-size buyers. Priced from **\$35,150** to **\$54,650**

**OUR PICK** - Tucson Elite N-Line AWD @ **\$46,650**



### Honda CR-V

With a fresh look, a more upmarket cabin, and now the choice of a hybrid, the new Honda CR-V is another step in the right direction for Honda. Priced from **\$44,500** to **\$59,900**

**OUR PICK** - CR-V VTI-L @ **\$48,800**

### Toyota RAV4

Harder to get your hands on than a Ferrari, the Toyota RAV4 is a funky and practical SUV that, with hybrid power, is one of the most cost effective. Priced from **\$39,760** to **\$58,360**

**OUR PICK** - RAV4 XSE Hybrid @ **\$48,910**

## LARGE

### Kia Sorento

The winner of the 2021 Drive Car of the Year is still a brilliant family hauler. It's available in petrol, diesel, hybrid and plug-in hybrid and is due for a facelift next year. Priced from **\$50,790**

to **\$81,080**

**OUR PICK** - Sorento GT-Line Hybrid @ **\$66,750**

### Toyota Kluger

Always a top seller, the Toyota Kluger is a very practical, full-sized family SUV that with hybrid power, costs about the same to run as a mid-size SUV. Priced from **\$51,790** to **\$80,230**

**OUR PICK** - Kluger GXL Hybrid @ **\$67,810**

### Kia Carnival

Possibly the most functional family car on the market, the Carnival proves people-movers are a solid option, and even a cool option for larger families. Priced from **\$51,690** to **\$71,890**

**OUR PICK** - Carnival Platinum @ **\$69,890**



### Skoda Superb

We've said that wagons are finally cool (see page 3), so why not buck the SUV trend and drive a big family wagon! The Superb is good looking, full of features and even all wheel drive. Priced from **\$71,990**

**OUR PICK** - Superb 206TSI Sportline @ **\$71,990**

### Hyundai Santa Fe

A brand new Santa Fe is here next year (see page 7) but the current car still has plenty to offer family buyers at all levels. Available now as a hybrid. Priced from **\$46,050** to **\$69,550**

**OUR PICK** - Santa Fe Elite Hybrid @ **\$63,000**



### Hyundai Palisade

The winner of our best family SUV megatest earlier this year, the Palisade is as big on features and practicality as it is on outright size. Priced from **\$65,900** to **\$78,370**

**OUR PICK** - Palisade Highlander @ **\$74,965**

### Ford Everest

While it could sit happily in our Adventurous list on page 7, for urban buyers the Everest is still a comfortable and practical family wagon. Priced from **\$53,490** to **\$78,530**

**OUR PICK** - Everest Sport V6 @ **\$70,590**



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DRIVE FAMILY

83% of families with kids are looking at medium and large SUVs for their next car\*

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DRIVE  
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Drive Annual Consumer Study, August 2023. Platform one

# Family buyer's guide

## ADVENTUROUS

### Ford Ranger

Yes, the current Drive Car of the Year is a ute, and yes, utes are family cars. Welcome to 2023! The Ranger is an accomplished and refined work and play vehicle and redefines the double-cab benchmark. Priced from **\$42,780** to **\$87,990**  
**OUR PICK** - Ranger Sport V6 @ **\$68,890**

### Isuzu MU-X

A rugged and capable go-anywhere, tow-anything wagon, the MU-X is ready for adventure at the drop of a hat. Priced from **\$48,900** + ORCs to **\$65,990** drive-away  
**OUR PICK** - MU-X LS-T 4x4 @ **\$65,990** drive-away



### GWM Tank 300

Another strong value player, the funky Tank 300 blends rugged charm with plenty of equipment and even the option of a hybrid driveline. Priced from **\$46,990** to **\$55,990** drive-away  
**OUR PICK** - Tank 300 Lux Hybrid @ **\$55,990** drive-away

### Mahindra Scorpio

The best-value three-row off-roader on sale today, the Scorpio offers buyers low-frills, all-terrain capability with decent equipment levels and plenty of comfort. Priced from **\$41,990** to **\$45,990** drive-away  
**OUR PICK** - Scorpio Z8L @ **\$45,990** drive-away

## PRESTIGE

### Mercedes-Benz GLC

Technology and style are front and centre in the new GLC, which provides plenty of practical family space in an urban-friendly footprint. High-performance AMG variants join the range in 2024. Priced from **\$103,370**  
**OUR PICK** - GLC300 @ **\$103,370**

### Land Rover Discovery

The big Land Rover is a brilliant big-distance tourer, but also a plush and comfortable urban shuttle. Choose from petrol or diesel and a huge list of options to personalise your own. Priced from **\$108,670** to **\$129,020**  
**OUR PICK** - Discovery D300 SE @ **\$122,920**

### Volvo XC60

Not the newest kid on the block, but Volvo's plush interior, modern technology and strong equipment levels makes the XC60 hold its own in the prestige stakes. Priced from **\$73,990** to **\$101,990**  
**OUR PICK** - XC60 Ultimate B5 @ **\$80,990**



### Maserati Grecale

One of the world's most prestigious brands just became more attainable with the mid-sized Grecale SUV. Stylish and sporty, the Grecale presents a compelling alternative to other European brands. Priced from **\$109,500** to **\$165,000**  
**OUR PICK** - Grecale GT @ **\$109,500**

## ELECTRIC

### Kia EV9

The first fully electric, full-size seven-seater to hit our roads, the Kia EV9 lands this month and gives Australian families another option on the electric highway. Pricing isn't confirmed yet, but expect to pay between **\$100,000** and **\$120,000**  
**OUR PICK** - We drive it soon. Stay tuned!

### Tesla Model Y

Australia's best-selling car that isn't a ute, the fully electric Tesla Model Y has been a runaway success on a global scale. Priced from **\$65,400** to **\$92,020**  
**OUR PICK** - Model Y RWD @ **\$65,400**



### BYD Atto 3

The winner of the 2023 Drive Car of the Year best EV under \$70,000, the Atto 3 proves that a compact, electric family car is not only possible, it can be fun too. Priced from **\$48,011** to **\$51,011**  
**OUR PICK** - Atto 3 Standard range @ **\$48,011**

### Mercedes-Benz EQE SUV

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**Mazda CX-80** - late 2024 • **Mini Countryman** - late 2024 • **Mitsubishi Triton** - early 2024 • **Nissan Ariya** - late 2024 • **Peugeot 3008** - late 2024  
**Polestar 3** - mid 2024 • **Porsche Macan EV** - late 2024 • **Renault Megane E-Tech** - early 2024 • **Skoda Kodiaq** - late 2024 • **SsangYong Torres** - early 2024  
**Toyota Prado** - mid 2024 • **Volkswagen ID.5** - mid 2024 • **Volkswagen ID.Buzz** - late 2024 • **Volvo EX30** - early 2024



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\*Drive Car of the Year Consumer study, August 2023, Platform One.



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\*\$59,990.00 is the manufacturer's recommended drive away price for the MINI Electric Hatch with no optional extras. Cannot be combined with any other offer available from BMW Australia LTD (Trading as MINI Australia). Available for vehicles purchased and delivered between 08/09/2023 and 31/12/2023 or while stocks last.

^Use of the Chargefox network of electric vehicle charging stations is subject to Chargefox's terms and conditions of usage, which are subject to change from time to time.



## SKILLS &amp; HABITS

## I'm 56 years old and redid my licence test

After 38 years of blemish-free driving, Rob Margeit resat his practical driving test. It did not go well.

Driving is a serious undertaking, one that requires a plethora of skills and qualities, all working in harmony to ensure you reach your destination safely.

But years of driving, while instilling us with confidence, can also make us complacent behind the wheel.

As a 56-year-old man with a perfect driving record, I consider myself a good driver. Doesn't everyone?

But, like all "good" drivers, 38 years on the road without any ongoing formal testing is a recipe for complacency, forming the habits of a lifetime behind the wheel that can, in the right (or wrong) circumstances lead to big consequences.

It was this complacency I was keen to have assessed.

To find out, I enlisted the services of a local driving school, LTrent, who would take me through the practical test required to obtain a NSW driver's licence.

To be clear, this was a mock test and I wasn't in danger of having my licence revoked. Instead, it was an eye-opening exercise.

Having an instructor ride shotgun made me all too aware of my bad habits. We all have them. Things like taking your hands off the steering wheel while stopped at traffic lights (instant fail), or



The author, Rob Margeit, hears the verdict on his driving after taking a mock test with a professional instructor.

steering with one elbow resting on the centre console or on the window ledge (also instant fails) are habits I'd wager we have all developed. Your hands must – unless you're changing gears in a manual car – be on the steering wheel at all times.

In NSW, a driver must score 90 per cent or higher and record no "fail items" on their driving test to obtain a licence. That's not a huge margin of error when you consider there are over 100 hundred items being assessed. Additionally, there

are 19 "immediate fail" items, including "disobeying traffic signals or road markings", "failing to give way", "exceeding the speed limit", and "not parking to the required standard".

Despite initial nerves, the test itself went smoothly. I was picked up on a number of items that I would call bad habits but didn't result in failure.

I also lost a couple of points for not completing over-the-shoulder checks, relying instead on my mirrors and, I hate to admit it,

blind-spot monitoring to complete my merges.

Testing assesses you on six key areas of driving – speed management, road position, decision making, hazards, response to hazards, and control issues.

After almost an hour behind the wheel, I achieved perfect scores in speed management, decision making, hazard perception and response to hazards, but lost points for blind-spot checking (2) and a signalling error (1).

My overall score of 97 per cent

should have seen me pass with flying colours.

But...

Parallel parking. Let's be clear. I'm a good parker of cars. So, when my instructor asked me to park his Mazda 3 in a generously-sized spot on a suburban street in Sydney, I felt pretty confident.

And so it proved.

Angle of entry? Tick. Closeness to kerb? Perfect. Distance between car in front and car behind? Solid pass. However, in my eagerness to position the car perfectly within the designated spot, I had used one manoeuvre too many. I didn't even know there was a manoeuvre limit.

The perfect park should be completed in three manoeuvres, but licence testing allows for a fourth just to fine-tune your car's position. But I made a fifth adjustment in that strive for perfection. Instant fail.

I learned valuable lessons by retaking my licence test, and not just about the number of parking manoeuvres you're allowed to make.

The most telling is that the habits we develop over decades of driving can make us sloppy drivers. And that sloppiness can have consequences. Certainly, since taking my mock test, I have become more aware of the things I did, and do, incorrectly and have actively sought to change my habits.

I'd actually recommend every driver take a mock driving test. We all have bad habits and having a professional remind us of those habits can't be a bad thing.

Call it a mid-life tune-up, a reminder of the differences between what we "believe is", and what "actually is", good driving.

## Meet the 'modern family garage' of the future

James Ward

Gone are the days where mum's wagon and dad's sedan sat under Australia's figurative Colorbond carport. Today, we see Australia's families manage shared use of multi-talented vehicles, and while many households make do with just one, according to the 2021 Australian census data, 53 per cent of Australian households have access to more than two cars<sup>1</sup>.

In terms of sales, medium-sized SUVs make up 22.4 per cent of all new cars delivered so far this year, but four-wheel-drive utes aren't far off the pace, contributing 16.3 per cent of sales year to date.

This would suggest that the current "average" Australian two-car driveway features a ute and an SUV. All it takes is a drive down any suburban street to see that this largely rings true.

It won't take long to find a Ford Ranger tucked up next to a Kia Sportage in one garage, then a Toyota Hilux sitting next to a Mazda CX-5 next door.

But the Australian car buyer is still evolving.

A recent survey by Drive<sup>2</sup> indicates that 58 per cent of respondents aged 17-34 years, and 49 per cent of respondents who have children, will definitely buy a

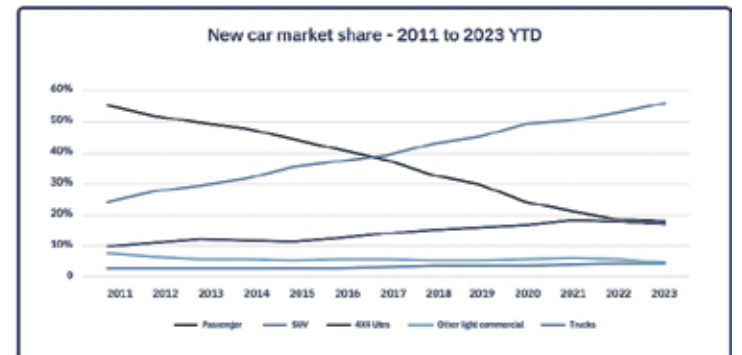


Increasingly, electric vehicles will fill the 'average' family garage.

hybrid (either plug-in or closed-loop) as their next car. Pair this with 46 per cent of 17-34 year olds committing to buying a full-electric vehicle, and we may see some change ahead.

In that hugely popular medium

SUV segment, 63 per cent of models offered to Australian buyers will, in 2024, have either a fully electric or hybrid variant to choose from. Ford has already announced a plug-in hybrid Ranger ute, and electric car sales



have topped 8 per cent of deliveries so far this year.

New energy is here and buyers are keen, so what does the Australian family garage of the future look like?

The SUV sales trend shows no sign of slowing, and with the growth in hybrid and electric options, expect to see this continue to be the most appealing type of car for family buyers.

Sales of four-wheel-drive utes are still strong, but the share has tapered somewhat, as buyers look at electric solutions in the shape of the traditional passenger car.

The swoopy sedans and modern hatchbacks that deliver an affordable form for an EV are more aerodynamic than an SUV, which is a crucial capability for buyers.

There are currently three electric cars available under \$40,000, and while they are well suited to urban living, the pairing with an SUV, hybrid or not, lends itself to being a more popular choice moving forward.

Whatever the case, if you're building or renovating and are fortunate enough to have off-street parking, then look at installing an electric charger at home, as an ideal way to future proof your driveway for the next generation of motorists.

1. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016 and 2021  
2. Source: Drive Consumer Study, August 2023. Platform One. Sample 1522

In an ever-developing automotive marketplace of technological advancements in the quest for autonomous driving, it is easy for potential car buyers to get lost in a sea of terms and abbreviations for electronic driver aids.

If you're looking to buy your next car, here is your essential glossary of safety terms explained.

**What do ABS, TCS and ESC mean?**

These three are the standard electronic driver aids that you will find on most modern vehicles.

ABS stands for Anti-lock Braking System, a driver aid that prevents the wheels from locking up by oscillating the application of the brakes and keeping the driver in control during emergency braking.

ESC stands for Electronic Stability Control – a system that prevents loss of control during high lateral loads by individually and selectively applying brakes on each wheel to stabilise your vehicle.

Finally, TCS stands for Traction Control System, which is a secondary function of the ESC. It is a technology that detects a loss of traction on any or all of your car's wheels and prevents wheel spin during hard acceleration by modulating throttle inputs and further preventing loss of control.

**What does FCW mean in a car?**

FCW stands for Forward Collision Warning, a system consisting of a series of sensors in the front bumper of a vehicle that is able to detect and identify stationary or

# What does AEB actually mean?

## Car safety features explained by Rahni Ong.



A range of modern sensors can make driving a safer proposition.

slow objects in front of the car and warn the driver of the hazard with sounds, vibrations or visuals.

**What does AEB mean in a car?**

Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) is a safety feature in cars that, like a Forward Collision Warning, can detect objects in front of the car. The distinguishing factor, however, is that AEB systems automatically apply the brakes in emergencies to prevent collisions.

According to the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP), AEB has been proven to reduce police-reported crashes by 55 per cent, rear-end crashes by 40 per cent, and vehicle occupant trauma by 28 per cent.

**What's the difference between Lane-Keeping and Lane-Trace or Lane-Centring?**

Lane-Keep Assist is an electronic aid that identifies the boundaries of

the lane in which you are driving, and stops your vehicle from leaving the lane by occasionally providing assistance when you veer close enough to the lines.

Lane-Trace or Lane-Centring has the same detection technology, but it actively keeps you in the middle of the lane by constantly providing a small degree of steering assistance.

**What is a five-star ANCAP safety rating?**

ANCAP (The Australasian New Car Assessment Program) is an independent program that provides safety ratings to cars based on four key assessment areas: Adult Occupant Protection, Child Occupant Protection, Vulnerable Road User Protection, and Safety Assist Systems.

To receive the maximum five-star rating, cars must achieve the highest standards across the four key areas.

However, don't go driving *Fast and Furious* style right after seeing five stars next to your vehicle's make and model name.

To achieve five stars, a car must receive a minimum score of 80 per cent, 80 per cent, 70 per cent and 70 per cent respectively for the aforementioned categories.

Previously, the minimum allowed score for the Vulnerable Road User Protection area was 60 per cent.

But, this has now been increased to 70 per cent due to the recognition of limited to no protection for pedestrians.

To see how your car compares to others regarding safety it is worth taking a look at your car's rating on the ANCAP website.

**What is Blind-Spot Monitoring or BSM?**

Blind-Spot Monitoring is a system that uses sensors near the wing mirrors to detect traffic in a car's

blind spot and alert the driver when it is unsafe to change lanes.

According to the Transport Accident Commission, blind-spot monitoring systems have been estimated to reduce lane-change crashes by 14 per cent.

**What is a Safe-Exit Warning?**

A Safe-Exit Warning is a system that detects approaching traffic on either side of the vehicle to advise the driver or passengers if it is unsafe to open the door and exit the car.

**What is Active Cruise Control?**

As the name indicates, Active Cruise Control is an evolution of standard cruise-control systems.

Like regular cruise control, Active Cruise Control uses a combination of throttle and brake inputs to maintain a set speed.

However, Active Cruise Control can also use radars to detect slowing traffic ahead and, in turn, slow your vehicle and adjust its speed based on changing conditions, while still maintaining a set distance.

**What is Parking Assist?**

Parking Assist is an automated parking system that can detect a parking space and, if the space is suitable, manoeuvre the car into the space for the driver with minimal intervention.

Depending on the manufacturer's system, Parking Assist can often control any or all functions involved in parking, including throttle input, braking, gear selection and steering.

VOLVO

# Introducing the all-electric Volvo EX30

Our smallest-ever SUV that benefits from 96 years of Volvo safety innovation.

Overseas model shown. Australian specification and features may vary.

# The future of car safety, with Volvo Car Australia



David Pickett (above, right) says autonomous shuttles are on the way, but self-driving cars for everyday driving are “a long way off”.

## Trent Nikolic

If one car brand is synonymous with safety, it's Volvo.

To learn more about how the Swedish brand earned that reputation, and what lies ahead, we spoke to David Pickett, Head of Technical & Warranty at Volvo Car Australia.

## Trent Nikolic, Drive

When I think Volvo, I do think safety, but I also think of things like innovations within that, like three-point seatbelts. What are some of the developments and inventions that you think Volvo is synonymous with?

## David Pickett, Volvo Car Australia

The seatbelt obviously, the fact that the patent was left open, so it became something everyone uses, but also the development of the seatbelt as well. You know, we've gone from just having a belt now to pyrotechnic devices, electric motors and things like that.

**Trent** A lot of what we're talking about now is avoiding an accident, so preventing it from happening, and there's a lot of discussion where we reference active and passive safety without really diving into the differences. Is there a simple way to differentiate that, for the reader who's got no idea what we're talking about, what the difference between active and passive safety is?

**David** From the passive safety point of view, you're talking about the structural integrity of the car, the crash safety that's in it, airbags, seatbelts and things like that.

When we talk about active safety, you're talking about a system that may intervene to assist the driver or just warn the



driver beforehand, because now we want to stop the crash from happening as opposed to having the driver survive the crash.

In terms of technology, it's the ability to now have cameras, lidar [Light Detection and Ranging] and radars in the cars that has changed the system because now the car [is] aware of its surroundings. It can detect the difference between a pedestrian that is about to go across the road or one that doesn't go across the road.

You need the system to make sure they don't falsely activate, because that'll be the thing that turns people off and starts turning them off.

**Trent** For me, the sign of a really good safety system comes from the background of someone who drives effectively and ... for work.

The sign of a good system is one that you don't know is there. Is that the way that you see it from Volvo's perspective? That the best systems are the ones that do what they need to do, but [aren't] intrusive?

**David** Yes, and the point from Volvo is that the driver is always in control. That's the sort of number-one fundamental. There's nothing

that will take control ... from the driver, but there are some situations where you think maybe the driver is not concentrating enough. That's when the [driver] will feel the systems come in.

One of the classics is probably the emergency brake assist, where you've hit the brakes very fast and quite unannounced, but you haven't pressed as hard as you can.

So the car thinks, well, hang on, you're trying to stop this thing, so we'll apply more braking into the car, and the car will pull up at the maximum amount of pressure and the driver doesn't really feel the difference.

**Trent** Is it Volvo's position that an autonomous car is inherently safer than one that's being driven by a human? Does Volvo have a position on that?

**David** I think yes. From the point of view of, you know, we've said that if a car is running autonomously, it has an accident, we'll be responsible for it.

And that seems to be the way the industry is heading as well. The real issue people are challenged with is whether an autonomous car is safer than a driver.

**Trent** I've said broadly that if you're around 50 years of age, I think you're unlikely to see driverless cars mixing it up in general traffic in Australia in your lifetime. So in the next 30 to 40 years, I accept that we'll see them in controlled environments and in certain situations. Is that a position that Volvo agrees with?

**David** Personally, I think that's where we will be. We will end up with shuttles that are running autonomously, but from a manufacturer's point of view, we need to provide a car that you can basically get in here in the office and drive anywhere in the country, and that is a long way off with a fully autonomous car.

And every road, especially in Australia where we've got so many thousands of kilometres of dirt road as well.

**Trent** I suspect I know what your answer is going to be to this one. But can a car ever be perfect in terms of safety, or will there always be something that you're working on to make it better?

**David** I think you'll always try to improve because there will be different requirements, different things that people want and different needs. So, there'll be things that'll come into play with that as well.

You know, future mobility for people, when they start getting into it, and this is from a Volvo point of view, but when you start talking about mobility assistance ... that's something that's going to be looked at.

So people with a disability can actually get transport from A to B if they can't drive.

That's ... exciting ... for people who [can't] drive now, the ability to get in the car and go somewhere.

## TOWING PETITION



Help us make towing safer with a nationally recognised towing endorsement for drivers.

## James Ward

Road safety is an issue that impacts nearly all Australians. For the 12 months leading up to 31 July 2023, the national toll stood at 1234, an 8 per cent increase on the previous period. While there are many theories as to what action can be taken to help stop this alarming trend, very few result in action.

We know that speed, alcohol, drugs and fatigue all contribute to fatalities on our roads, and not for a minute are we suggesting that enough has been done to combat these elements. We'd like to broaden the conversation to what we strongly believe is an overlooked area of driver education, one that is particularly relevant at a time when caravan and other trailer sales are at record highs.

This is why we feel that implementing a nationally recognised towing endorsement for Australian drivers' licences is a crucial step on the path to safer driving for all Australians.

There is currently no required training or limit for towing with a full licence in Australia. This means you can have zero experience with an articulated vehicle and trailer combination, that is of a total mass limited only by the vehicle rating, and head out on the road, anywhere in Australia.

Correctly configured weights of both the tow vehicle and trailer are critical for safe towing, but there is no requirement for formal training of any kind for drivers to undertake before they tow.

While not all drivers engage in towing-related activities, a recent survey by Drive.com.au showed that 67 per cent of nearly 15,000 respondents felt that the implementation of a towing endorsement should be compulsory for all drivers towing a heavy (braked) trailer.

This does not solve the entirety of the road safety issue, but we at Drive.com.au feel this is an actionable step that will help create a more aware and responsible attitude for drivers on the road.

Help us turn thoughts and ideas into action, as we propose the implementation of a nationally recognised towing endorsement for Australian drivers' licences to the National Office of Road Safety.



To sign the petition, scan the QR code or visit [drive.com.au](https://drive.com.au)

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