

RAA Member Panel

Vehicle Maintenance

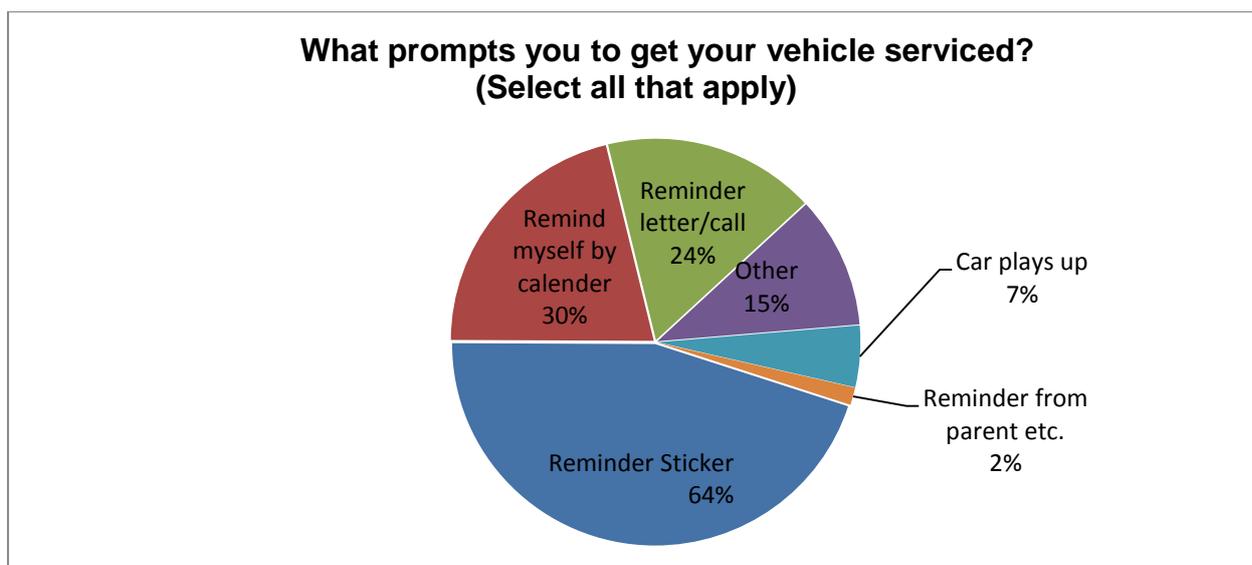
In September, we asked RAA's Member Panel for their thoughts on their ability to manage the ongoing maintenance of their vehicle.

The results were used during the development phase of a pilot program, which aims to provide RAA Road Service Members with independent advice for free. How it works is; RAA will contact OurCar participants to let them know when their car's due for a service, and if the mechanic finds extra repair work is needed they'll call our experts first, so that we can tell you if the work is necessary and fairly priced. To find out more visit www.raa.com.au/ourcar

The majority of survey respondents (88%) told us that they have a regular mechanic; of these 60 per cent stated their regular mechanic is an RAA Approved Repairer. Member's comments indicate price, reputation, reliability and developed relationships are important when deciding on a mechanic.

Vehicle manufacturers recommend that your vehicle is serviced at set, regular intervals. When asked, 88 per cent of survey respondents indicated that they have their vehicle serviced regularly, as recommended by the manufacturer. Of the 10 per cent who said they don't follow the manufacturer's advice, 26 per cent stated they don't drive the vehicle often enough, with a further 22 per cent not believing such regular service is necessary.

When it comes to remembering to have the car serviced, 64 per cent of respondents said they rely on the reminder sticker in their vehicle, while car computer systems and dash reminders rated high amongst comments from those who selected 'Other'.

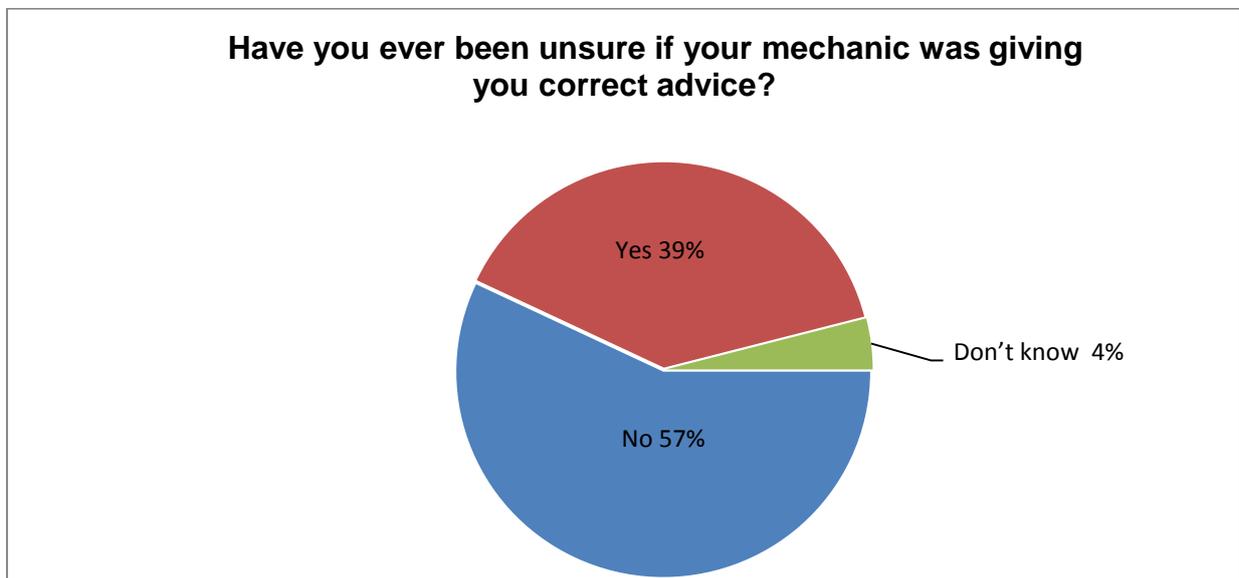


Three quarters of survey respondents are confident that they have adequate knowledge to discuss vehicle maintenance and repairs with their mechanic. If they require further advice, the majority of respondents (62%) had someone that they could talk too, with a friend (30%) and RAA (30%) being the most popular of choices.

Members indicated that in some cases repairers are trying to upsell vehicle servicing:

- *“I sometimes feel that the repairer is pushing more than the required service minimum”*
- *“I feel independent workshops that are RAA Approved Repairers give you more honest advice than OE Dealers”*

More than a quarter of respondents believe that they have been in a situation where they felt unsure about the advice received from their mechanic.

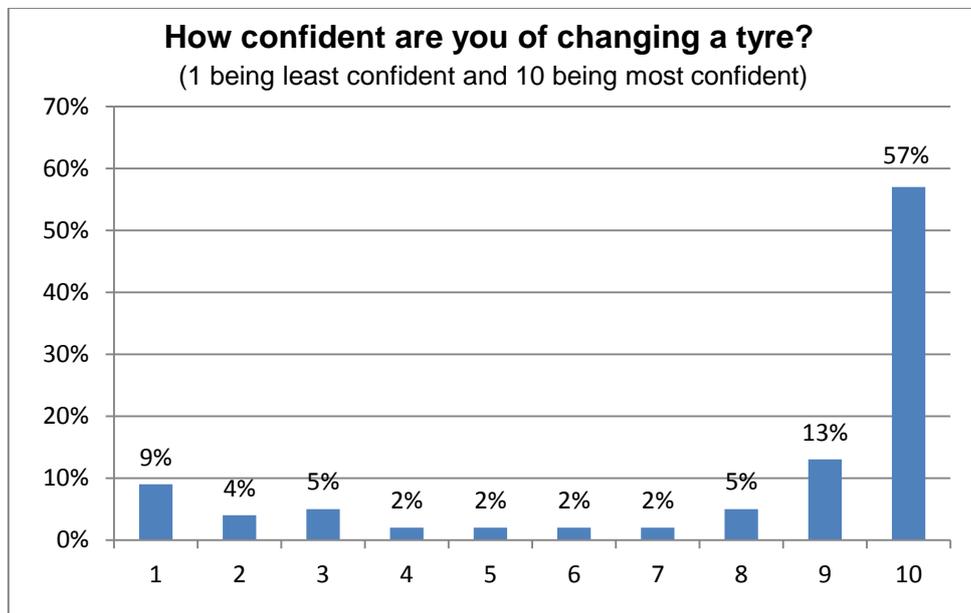
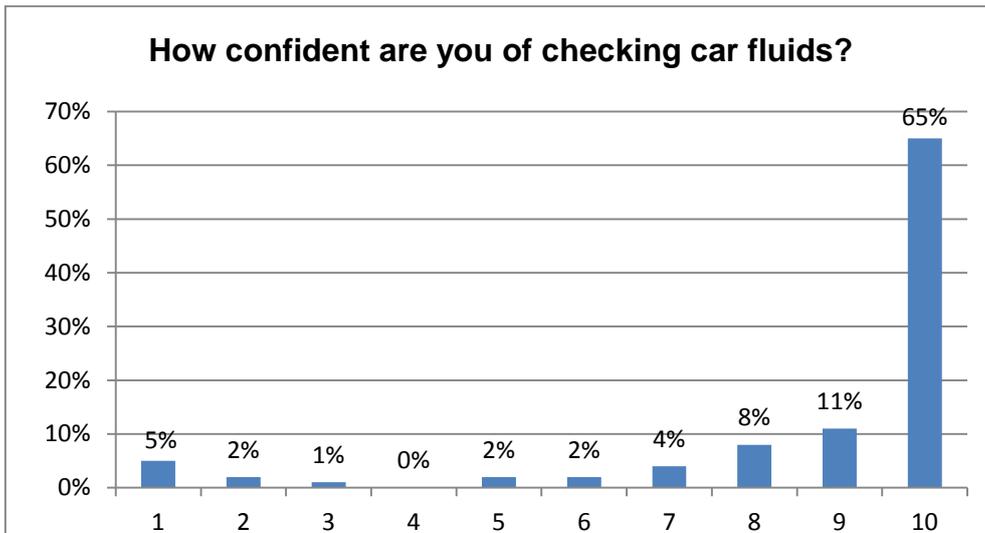


When asked what the advice related to, the main themes were: repairs that were not needed, being overcharged for work, timeframe for service and faulty diagnosis.

Using the internet to research an issue was a common reference point for survey respondents trying to diagnose a problem. While almost 50 per cent of respondents had used the RAA Technical Advisory Service, a free service for RAA Members to gain advice from our expert mechanics.

When asked a series of confidence questions on general car maintenance the response was generally positive. Most members are confident when it comes to checking tyre pressure, car fluids and ensuring all lights are working. A further 57 per cent of respondents were confident with changing a car tyre if required.

One respondent highlighted that the survey had provided an opportunity to reflect on their current skills regarding basic car maintenance and modern vehicles, with many indicating their RAA Road Service membership is very important to them.



The introduction of annual vehicle inspections was raised by a number of survey respondents. RAA does not support compulsory inspections. Members have previously been asked about this issue and overwhelmingly (99%) indicated they keep their vehicles in a roadworthy standard.

Appendix 1 - Member Panel Questions and Results

1. Gender

- Male – 75%
- Female – 24%
- Prefer not to answer – 0%

2. Age

- 56-77 – 63%
- 36-55 – 25%
- 76 and over – 6%
- 26-35 – 5%
- Prefer not to answer – 1%
- 25 and under – 0%

3. How old is the vehicle you most regularly use?

- 3-6 years – 36%
- 7-10 years – 22%
- 0-2 years – 20%
- 11-15 years – 14%
- 16 years and older – 8%
- Don't know 0%

4. Do you have a regular vehicle mechanic?

- Yes – 88%
- No – 12%

5. Is your regular vehicle mechanic an RAA Approved Repairer?

- Yes – 60%
- Don't know – 28%
- No – 12%

If no to 5, why have you chosen this mechanic?

- Cheap
- quality of service and will get second hand parts
- Reputation
- trust
- Family Member qualified mechanic

6. Do you get your vehicle serviced regularly as recommended by the manufacturer?

- Yes – 88%
- No – 10%
- Don't know – 3%

7. If you do not get your vehicle as regularly as recommended by the manufacturer, why not?

- Don't drive the vehicle often enough – 26%
- Don't believe it's necessary – 22%
- Other – 22%
- Too expensive – 22%
- Don't remember – 9%
- It is too inconvenient – 0%
- Too much effort 0%

Summary of 'Other' responses:

- Regularly checked every 6 months regardless of kms
- My mechanic recommend when the service is due
- Do it myself
- I don't trust garages to do it correctly

8. What prompts you to get your vehicle serviced? (select all that apply)

- Reminder sticker the mechanic places in my car – 64%
- I set myself a reminder e.g. calendar, phone etc. – 30%
- Reminder call/letter from my mechanic – 24%
- Other – 15% (37)
- Car starts to play up – 7%
- Reminder from parent, partner, friend etc. – 2%

Summary of 'Other' responses:

- The vehicle is serviced by me.
- Car's computer system reminds me / car dash reminder
- Per Service Manual
- Odometer reading every 10,000 km

9. Do you feel you have the knowledge to adequately discuss vehicle maintenance and repairs with your mechanic?

- Yes – 77%
- No – 19%
- Don't know – 4%

10. Are you confident in having conversations about vehicle maintenance and repairs with your mechanic?

- Yes – 88%
- No – 12%
- Don't know – 1%

11. Have you ever been unsure if your mechanic was giving you correct advice?

- No – 57%
- Yes – 39%
- Don't know – 4%

12. Have you ever been in a situation where you found your mechanic gave you incorrect advice?

- No – 62%
- Yes – 27%
- Don't know – 10%

13. If yes to 12, what did the advice relate to? (select all that apply)

- Repairs that were not needed – 56%
- Being overcharged for work – 41%
- Other – 20%
- Timeframe for service – 18%

Summary of 'Other' responses:

- Miss diagnosis
- Work wasn't actually undertaken
- We had issues with our handbrake. The mechanic questioned if I knew how to use a handbrake and photocopied the instruction manual for me. 18 months later there was a recall of all the Vetra's to have the handbrakes refitted due
- Vehicle was NOT actually serviced by the Dealers service centre
- The time for when the timing belt needed to be changed seemed to differ from one mechanic to another, even though the standard timeframe is 100,000km
- Warrantee work not being done correctly, problem persisted till I told them what was wrong. Info from Net.

14. When you get your vehicle serviced who usually discusses any repair work with the mechanic?

- I talk to the mechanic myself – 88%
- My partner – 7%
- Other – 5%
- A friend – 0%
- My parent – 0%
- One of my children – 0%

15. Do you have anyone who can provide you with advice on vehicle maintenance and repairs?

- Yes – 62%
- No – 36%
- Don't know – 2%

If yes to 15, who? (Select all that apply)

- A friend – 44%
- RAA – 44%
- Other – 18%
- My partner – 17%
- One of my children – 16%
- My parent – 7%

Summary of 'Other' responses:

- Website forums
- Work colleague
- Brother

16. In the event of a vehicle breakdown, what action would you most likely take?

- Call RAA for Road Service – 96%
- Other – 2%
- Call your mechanic – 1%
- Call someone for advice: family, friend etc. – 1%

Summary of 'Other' responses:

- BMW Roadside Service
- Call dealership road service
- Sort it myself
- Peugeot roadside assistance

17. Do you feel you would know what to do in the event of a car crash?

- Yes – 90%
- No – 6%
- Don't know – 5%



18. On a scale of 1 to 10 how confident are you at the following? (1 being the least confident and 10 being the most confident):

a. Changing a tyre – average rating: 8.04

- 10 – 57%
- 9 – 13%
- 8 – 5%
- 7 – 2%
- 6 – 2%
- 5 – 2%
- 4 – 2%
- 3 – 5%
- 2 – 4%
- 1 – 9%

b. Replacing a car battery – average rating: 7.25

- 10 – 50%
- 9 – 9%
- 8 – 5%
- 7 – 3%
- 6 – 2%
- 5 – 5%
- 4 – 3%
- 3 – 3%
- 2 – 4%
- 1 – 16%

c. Checking car fluids (water, oil, coolant etc.) – average rating – 8.80

- 10 – 65%
- 9 – 11%
- 8 – 8%
- 7 – 4%
- 6 – 2%
- 5 – 2%
- 4 – 0%
- 3 – 1%
- 2 – 2%
- 1 – 5%

d. Checking tyre pressure – average rating: 8.83

- 10 – 71%
- 9 – 8%
- 8 – 6%
- 7 – 2%
- 6 – 0%
- 5 – 2%
- 4 – 2%
- 3 – 1%
- 2 – 3%
- 1 – 4%

e. Checking car headlights and tail lights – average rating: 6.53

- 10 – 32%
- 9 – 6%
- 8 – 13%
- 7 – 6%
- 6 – 5%
- 5 – 7%
- 4 – 4%
- 3 – 2%
- 2 – 3%
- 1 – 22%

19. Have you ever used RAA's Technical Advisory service?

- No – 52%
- Yes – 46%
- Don't know – 2%

20. Any other comments

- I don't know what the RAA's Technical Advisory service is.
- Looking after and maintaining your vehicles properly, saves money and time in the long term and reduces running costs in the short term. It also ensures that the vehicles is always safe to drive.
- My present mechanic is honest and trustworthy not like many in the past.
- I would love a workshop to be run by the RAA on car maintenance
- It is important to perform regular checks ideally every time the vehicle is refuelled
There is a tendency these days for people to treat cars as appliances with little or no preventative maintenance
- Like many people, I am finding it harder and harder to pay the bills and keep up regular maintenance, meaning I am "stretching out" the time between repairs more than I have in the past.

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- In the last year or two we seem to be accepting problems for which a cause can't be identified and hence isn't fixed, even though we've described the problem to the mechanic and they've serviced the car over its life. For example, car not starting first time.
 - Servicing today is mainly to replace oils & filters as required, then check this item, check next item and so on. Times manufacturers set/allow are usually so unachievable a Speedy Gonzales mechanic on steroids would be required to complete all tasks in the allowed time frame, not possible! Therefore not all adjustments/checks are completed by the mechanic as the timeframes set are unrealistic! This is why after having my cars serviced I do thoroughly check that the work has been carried out as per the service schedule!!
 - I LOVE my car & the mechanic loves it too. I service it more often than the salesman (who sold it to me) recommended: every 6 months instead of every 12 months, because that is what the mechanic suggests.
 - I also believe that South Australia should adopt the policy that New South Wales has when it comes to car maintenance. All cars, regardless of age, must be examined for road-worthiness by an approved mechanic when being registered in NSW for the first time, if moving from interstate. All cars that are 10 years or older must be examined before the existing registration can be renewed. This reduces the number of "bombs" on the road, but unfortunately it doesn't stop the number of breakdowns, as I have seen more broken down cars on the side of NSW roads than anywhere else in the country. Perhaps every car owner must produce a certificate or receipt from a mechanic that says the car has been professionally serviced and tuned in the past 12 months before the registration can be reissued or renewed.
 - Some vehicles have been shown to have more problems than others. I would like to see an independent register (by say the RAA) of common vehicle faults. This would be a great help when selecting a replacement vehicle either new or used. For example, the volkswagen twin clutch gearbox problems would have become more widely known. Forums on the internet are not very reliable, but currently indicate that the problem may not yet be fixed.