

CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Buying a New Motor Vehicle

A new vehicle is one of the biggest purchases people make during their lifetime so it is very important that you, the buyer, avoid the pitfalls that can make your purchase a nightmare.

Some useful tips include:

- **MAKE A CHECKLIST**

Decide what you want in a new car; make a checklist of what features you want. Include such things as your price range, vehicle size and configuration (sedan, station wagon, ute etc), fuel economy, resale value, warranty period and reliability. It is useful to check road tests in magazines and talk to others who have bought similar vehicles for their experiences.

- **TRADE-IN**

Consider what to do with your present vehicle, if you want to dispose of it. You may get a better price by selling on the private market but if you want to use it as a 'trade-in' you should check on the value of the vehicle using 'Redbook' at www.redbook.com.au.

You should be prepared to negotiate a good price for your vehicle with the dealer as he or she will have some 'room to move' on the new vehicle sale price. If you do not have a 'trade-in' you should be able to negotiate a discount on the advertised new vehicle price.

- **BUDGETING**

Prepare a proper budget. Check the full cost of your vehicle 'on the road'. This will include dealer delivery charges and other 'on road' costs, such as registration and any options you choose.

You will also need to take out comprehensive insurance on the vehicle, so quotes from insurance companies will be needed. If you require finance you will have to determine if you can afford the repayments in addition to the normal running costs of the vehicle.

- **FINANCE AND INSURANCE**

Shop around for the best deal on finance and insurance rather than relying solely on the trader. You may, for example, be able to access a personal loan from a credit provider such as a bank or credit union at a cheaper interest rate than a finance company.

- **WARRANTY**

Check the warranties on offer as the details and warranty period may vary across companies. Identify any faults with the vehicle as soon as possible and ensure they are corrected early in the warranty period.

When repairs are carried out under warranty, they should be carried out by a manufacturer-approved mechanic using genuine manufacturer's spare parts otherwise the warranty may be affected.

- **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Remember that an Order Form for a new vehicle is legally binding so do not sign it before you are ready, as there is no 'cooling-off' period for vehicle sales in the Northern Territory.

Clarify terms and conditions before signing and delete any sections you don't agree with, from the Order Form.

Don't sign any form or contract with blank spaces, rule through sections that are blank and/or do not apply to your purchase. Confirm the delivery date.

- **VEHICLE CHECK**

Check your new vehicle thoroughly before you sign to accept delivery.

Check that any extras you ordered are included and that the vehicle has a spare tyre, tool kit and jack. Check for any damage to paintwork or any faults in the electrics.

Once delivered remember that new cars have extensive warranty periods, so if you do have a problem take it back to the dealer and seek his/her assistance.

For further information contact Consumer Affairs

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