

THE TRUTH ABOUT

# VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

A WORKSHOP GUIDE TO THE FACTS

An initiative of the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association



# PROTECTING FREEDOM OF CHOICE

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) believes that fair and open competition in the service and repair of vehicles is critical to ensuring the aftermarket industry sector can continue to provide the Australian motoring public with affordable and high quality vehicle modifications, upgrades, accessories, parts and repairs.

Our aim is to protect choice and competition by addressing anti-competitive behaviour and technical barriers that impact on the Australian consumers' right to have their vehicle serviced, repaired or upgraded at competitive prices in the workshop of their choice.

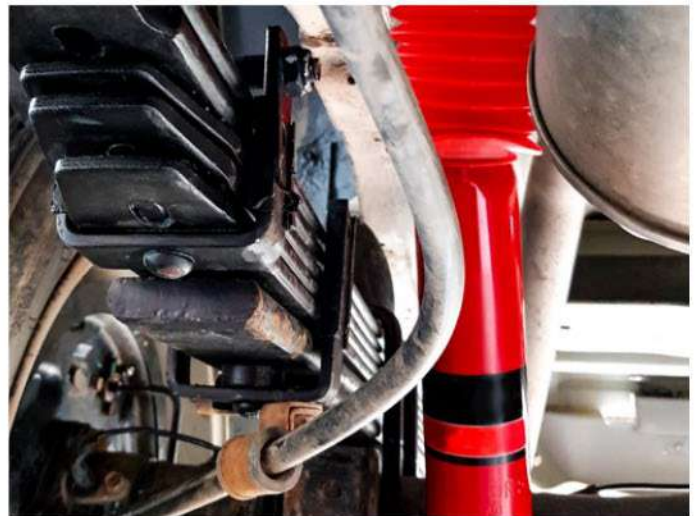
Our membership and stakeholders share a common concern and call into question the validity of certain marketing claims regarding vehicle modifications and warranties. We believe that in some cases motorists are potentially being misled over their entitlements under Australian Consumer Law.

The fact is modifying a vehicle does not, in itself, automatically void a manufacturer's warranty. This is confirmed by the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission under Australian Consumer Law.

## WHAT ARE VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS?

Changing a vehicle from factory standard with modifications like sports wheels, a sunroof, window tinting, or body enhancements is a popular way to personalise vehicles.

Functional accessories such as towbars, bull bars and additional lights can be useful for many business or recreational purposes. Improvements to vehicle performance can be achieved with changes to the suspension or engine characteristics.





# VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS AND NEW CAR WARRANTY

Car owners, especially those with new cars, are often confused by myths that are perpetuated regarding the use of so called Genuine Parts and Accessories and the requirements for maintaining a warranty. It is in the interests of every workshop owner, and the general automotive community, to provide education and information to ensure the motoring public are fully aware of their rights and are not being misled by myths or deception.

## CONSIDER THE FACTS ...

Fear of voiding the manufacturer's warranty on the vehicle may prompt consumers to purchase dealership 'preferred' accessories, despite the fact that, in many cases, this product could be identical to an aftermarket supplier branded product or that the aftermarket product may be of superior quality.

Inform your customers that car manufacturers are required to fix manufacturing faults on vehicles during the warranty period, and the fitment of quality accessories and vehicle upgrades does not affect this obligation unless the modification caused the fault.

Members of the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association are able to offer support to their customers with the AAAA Legal Assist hotline if they encounter unreasonable warranty rejections.

## ANCAP

Customers can be assured that any advice given to them regarding modifications effecting an ANCAP safety rating is unfounded, as ANCAP is not in a position to make specific assessments on the impact of aftermarket modifications. A vehicle's ANCAP rating once it has left the dealership cannot be affected at all by modifications as an ANCAP rating only applies to a vehicle at the time of original purchase from the car manufacturer, therefore modifications can neither reduce or increase an ANCAP safety rating.

## IMPORTANT

It's important to note that a new car warranty covers you against any inbuilt defects the car may have. It does not cover against failure of accessories that have been fitted by an aftermarket supplier, such as audio equipment, sports wheels, towbars or the like – the warranty on these products is supplied by the manufacturer or fitter. Workshops must ensure that any vehicle modification is done in a way that conforms to Australian standards, local road rules or the manufacturer's specifications.

## CUSTOMER FAQ'S

### **Will vehicle modifications affect my vehicle warranty?**

A car fitted with a fit for purpose part will not void a warranty. Should a problem result in the vehicle as a result of the modification, the problem will be covered under the part manufacturer or fitter's warranty.

### **Will a vehicle modification affect my insurance?**

It's recommended you advise your insurer of any modification made to your vehicle.

### **Are aftermarket parts of the same standard as car manufacturer's parts?**

Many products manufactured and sold in Australia are required to meet appropriate Australian Design Rules or Australian Standards. If you are concerned, request information on compliance to relevant standards from the supplier or manufacturer. It is also interesting to note that Australian parts manufacturers often supply products directly to car manufacturers which are then onsold to consumers as a genuine OEM part.

## JOIN THE CHOICE OF REPAIRER CAMPAIGN

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) believes in full and open competition in the vehicle repair, enhancement and replacement parts sector. If you are interested in becoming a member, please see the contact details below.



For further information contact:  
Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association  
Suite 16, Building 3,  
195 Wellington Road,  
Clayton Victoria 3168 Australia  
Ph: 03 9545 3333  
Fax: 03 9545 3355  
Email: [info@aaaa.com.au](mailto:info@aaaa.com.au)

