

Consumer Awareness Guide for Car Repair

Don't get stung by shoddy repairs, ripped off by your insurance company, or taken for a ride by unqualified amateurs.



Read this guide and YOU will discover how to make an informed and intelligent decision when having your car repaired, retouched, modified, or repainted.



08 8362 7395

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Introduction

Car Repair Secrets Revealed!

Nobody likes having a dirty, dented, rusted car - and for good reason.

Having a car with a straight clean body, beautiful, even paint work, looking like it just rolled off the production line, allows you not only to drive around in style, but also helps your everyday drive hold value, and prevents costly repairs, and can EVEN SAVE LIVES.

Industry secrets and lies

Many car repairers make confusing and misleading claims about what they can do.

To avoid choosing the WRONG repairer to fix your car, costing you money, time and stress, it pays to learn some basics about what goes into repairing your car.

The “*Consumer awareness guide to Car repairers*” will teach you everything you need to know about having your car repaired the right way, so you can rest assured you are getting value for money while keeping your car clean, pristine, and prolonging its life.

You will get the inside information on:

- How to spot 3 common car repairing rip-offs.
- The most costly misconceptions about car repairs.
- Why washing your car could be damaging it.
- 6 mistakes most people make when choosing a repairer and how to avoid them.
- The importance of price and value.
- 5 Steps to choosing the right repairer for You.
- The 5 Questions to ask your potential repairer.

This guide has been written for you to better understand the car repair industry, so you can make an informed and intelligent decision.

We are passionate about the car repairing industry and have dedicated our business to educating consumers. If you have any questions on repairing your car, touching up paintwork or modifying your car please don't hesitate to contact us on 08 8362 7395



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Car Repair Rip-offs

When it's too cheap

We all like a bargain, but there's an old saying that if something seems too good to be true, it usually is. Some car repairers and panel beaters advertise price as the bait for their false and misleading advertising. They offer an unbelievably low price to get you to come in, and once you're in their shop, they pressure you into getting all sorts of upgrades and add-ons you're going to need in to have your car back on the road in near showroom condition. It's like buying a house, and then being told you have to pay extra for the doors and windows!

Repairing your car takes time and the right resources to do it right, so expect to pay a reasonable amount for a good quality repair.

This method of repair is best...

This is a common statement you will see in advertisements or hear from most car repairers.

REMEMBER: The best method of repair is the one that achieves your goal

For instance, if you just want a couple of paint touch ups done for a car show on the weekend, and don't want any major repairs, stripping the whole panel back may not be for you. So before you choose a repairer, identify your objectives and then select the method that best reaches those objectives.

Not only that, technology in the car repair industry evolves all the time, so what might have been a great method a couple of years ago might have been improved upon by now. For this reason, it pays to go with a car repairer that stays on the cutting edge of technology and doesn't make sweeping claims about having the "best" car repairing technique around.

When it "takes longer than first estimated"

Sometimes repairers deliberately underquote and under "estimate" the time that it takes to repair your car. While sometimes these are genuine problems the repairers face, especially when there is unknown structural damage, more often than not the repairer is trying to justify charging you more money. This is often similar to when they may add on charges once you've brought your car in for a quote, except this time they are holding your car hostage. This intimidatory method is more common than you might think, as the repairer may pressure you by telling you that they are about to start work that they didn't account for when you brought your car in initially, or in some cases go ahead and start unapproved work on your car and then charge you for it at the end.



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What a car repairer SHOULD DO is ANY time your car requires more work than originally quoted they should call you immediately and wait for your instruction. Sometimes they may just need to get the go ahead from you for small additional work, and sometime they will need you to come in and reassess the damage. By doing this a repairer is giving you full transparency to their work, which is always a good sign.



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Car Repair Misconceptions

Insurance Companies Know Best

Many people have the attitude that insurance companies will only send crash repair work to the best, most reputable repairers. More often than not, this is NOT the case. The theory most people make up is that their insurance company will refer you to a good repairer in order for you not needing follow up repairs should the repair work be subpar. The harsh reality is that most of the big insurance companies will send you to have the repairer that will cost them the least amount of money. After you have paid your premiums insurance companies are reluctant to pay any back, which is why so many send you to less than great repairers.

Quite often insurance companies will have their assessors come up with the lowest possible price to fix your car. This leaves the repairer no option but to cut corners with their repairs. This includes:

- Gluing broken parts back together
- Reusing worn parts
- Using cheap imitation parts

While this is the WORST POSSIBLE WAY to fix your car, often the repairer has no choice, otherwise they cease to get the insurers work. A real “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation. They take the risk that YOUR car won’t be fixed properly in order to save themselves an absolute bundle. Although that really isn’t fair to you (or your car).

If you have a “freedom of choice” option as part of your policy it means you have the choice of any repairer you like. Most people don’t realise this and are coerced by their insurers to go with whoever is recommended. This can be a costly mistake.

BE SURE TO FIND A INSURER THAT HAS FREEDOM OF CHOICE

It’s YOUR Car, and YOUR decision. Don’t let them pressure you into doing what is most profitable for THEM.

All repairs take multiple man hours

Sometimes the biggest thing holding us back from getting our little dents and scratches fixed is time. “I need to take my car in, but I just don’t have the time.” This tends to be the most common complaint people have about repairing their cars. While if you are involved in a collision and your car has taken significant damage, it is safe to say that it won’t be fixed in five minutes. However, for minor dents, dings, and “shopping trolley” accidents they can be fixed before you’ve finished your complimentary coffee. Don’t be discouraged by time constraints, as some repairs can be handled in your lunch break and prevent further damage taking more time, and costing more money to fix.



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Five Common Mistakes When Choosing a Repairer

Being Directed By Your Insurance Company

As mentioned in “Car Repair Misconceptions” your insurance company isn’t always going to recommend the best repairer for your car, often they just send you to which ever repairer can limit their expenses as much as possible. As we are all aware insurance companies make their money by charging us a premium, and when we damage our car, or someone else’s they help us out by paying for repairs, or at least part of them. So, as they already have your money, they obviously want to limit the money they pay back. As such, they are looking for the best deal for themselves.

So does this mean I can use any repairer *I CHOOSE*?

Absolutely, as long as you have “Freedom of choice” as part of your policy. If you don’t have this option it may end up being very costly. Be sure to check carefully when renewing your policy.

When you contact your insurance company and let them know exactly what happened it’s important to make it clear that you have a repairer that you wish to use, and will be going in to get a quote from them to get yourself back on the road as soon as possible. They will try and convince you to stay with their repairers; generally this will be a repairer that you’re unfamiliar with. Why should you have to go with someone you don’t trust, to save your insurance company a few bucks?

REMEMBER: It’s YOUR Car, and YOUR decision. Don’t let them pressure you into doing what is most profitable for THEM.

Choosing the cheapest option

We see all sorts of problems from people choosing the lowest bidder when it comes to having their cars repaired. More often than not we are called in to pick up the pieces!

You should NEVER choose a car repairer that offers an unbelievably low price to fix your car. The two most common problems are:

The company does not have the correct equipment or expertise to repair your car properly, and only ends up doing half the job, leaving all sorts of imperfections that will slowly destroy the metal work, paint work and possibly the overall integrity of your car’s structure and stability.



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The advertised price is just their “get you in the door” price. Once you walk through the door and have them look at your car it suddenly turns out that there are all sorts of other fees and charges required if you want your car repaired properly.

To ensure neither of these things happens to you, be sure to fully investigate what the price includes and what methods the company will be using to repair your car.

Not Seeking Positive Feedback

When we are involved in a collision, often the first person we call is a family member, close friend, or significant other. After we settle down a little and have had time to talk to our insurer and are thinking with a level head again we forget to consider the experiences of our friends and family members have had with repairers. It’s more than just the job they do to fix the damage on your car, it’s also the experience they had with the repairer as a business.

Any car repairer worth their salt should be able to provide glowing references from satisfied customers who’ve used their services. If this is lacking then alarm bells should start ringing. If they don’t have testimonials from satisfied customers it could mean several things:

1. They are just starting out in the business and don’t have any satisfied customers yet. Do you really want them learning the trade on YOUR time, money, and precious car? Or...
2. They are too lazy to have arranged some customer testimonials. If they cut corners here, what other corners will they cut when it comes to your car? Or...
3. They are actually not very good at their job and don’t have any satisfied customers who are willing to give a recommendation, because they weren’t satisfied. It goes without saying... steer clear.

A lot can be said by the reviews of people who have been in similar situations as yours. Be sure to check out a repairer’s webpage for testimonials. If they do a great job, and have excellent service they will want to brag about it on their webpage and even their Facebook page.

Choosing Someone With No Accreditation AKA “The Backyarder”

Most of us know someone who “fixes cars.” This is one of the biggest risks you can take with your car and even your safety. A car that is on the road having not been repaired properly is a hazard to the driver, their passengers and every other road user. Aside from that, having an unqualified amateur work on your car can mean having to take your car in to a qualified professional to fix not only the damage caused by whatever accident you were involved in, but also the damage done by the botch job costing you more money and more time.



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Choosing a Repairer That Doesn't Take Pride In Their Work

If you take pride in your car, and want it to look as good as it possibly can, so should whoever is responsible for repairing and restoring it to its best possible condition. If you see a repairer taking photos both before and after they have repaired your car (to ensure they are doing quality work, not necessarily for advertising), they are doing a wonderful job. A professional should take pride in the job they do for you and their other customers. If you search for a repairer on Facebook or online and their page is filled with pictures of the great restorations and repairs they have done you may be onto a winner.

Be sure to check out the work of your potential repairers if you don't find any, ***beware.***

Your repairer should be as proud of your car as YOU are.



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The Importance of Price and Value

Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.

There is a wide variety of car repairing methods, providers and prices to choose from. As your car and health are investments, its pays to also invest in quality car repairs.

Having a job done improperly because of being sold on price can, ironically, be the most expensive mistake you make when it comes to repairing your car.

When you are involved in a collision that compromises the integrity of your car's worthiness it should come as no surprise that in order to have it on the road again in its best and safest condition you cannot afford to cut corners. If the body of the car has been twisted or warped during an accident it is simply a matter of time before it either falls apart around you, or in the case of being in another accident, doesn't protect you and your passengers from harm. This has cost people their lives, all for the sake of saving a couple of dollars.

When it comes to aesthetics and having your car look its absolute best, spending those few extra dollars when you have to at the start can mean big savings down the line.

If a repairer cuts corners when they wash, buff, repaint, or seal your car before too long it's likely you'll have a paint job that looks like this.



This is what happens when a car has been washed incorrectly or the paint work has not been finished to the right standard.

Even if you wash your car regularly you may be damaging it by using the wrong sort of cleaners, brushes, sponges, or scourer pads.

PLEASE UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES USE A KITCHEN SCOURER OR STEEL WOOL TO CLEAN YOUR CAR



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Five Easy Steps You Should Take When Considering a Repairer

Follow these 5 simple steps before you hire someone to fix your car to be sure you have the right person for the job.

1. Take action IMMEDIATELY

The longer you wait to have damage repaired the worse it gets. Weather gets in, and the damage can get worse.

2. Take photos of the damage you plan on having repaired.

Documenting everything is important, especially if the collision wasn't your fault. Photos are especially important when dealing with insurance claims

3. Consider Your repairing goal

This step is often over looked. Consider whether you want to just repair the obvious cracks and dents and scratches, or whether or not you want to fully restore any paint work that has been damaged over time. Talk with your repairer to discover the most effective outcome for you and your car.

4. Ask questions

Below is a list of questions you should ask every potential repairer you consider. It helps you gain a clear understanding of what to expect.

5. Get a quote in writing

Getting a quote in writing is hugely important to give yourself written proof of what you should expect to pay and what is being done to your car. It also helps prevent repairers adding on extras after they have quoted you a price.



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Five Questions You Should Ask Your Repairer

- 1. What's the best method to repair the damage or replace the damaged parts?**
- 2. Are you using genuine parts?**
- 3. What if I'm not happy with the work?**
- 4. How long will it take?**
- 5. Will there be evidence of repairs?**



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Conclusion

By carefully considering the principles I've outlined in this guide, you'll have all the information you need to make an informed, intelligent decision regarding a car repairer.

If you want general advice on the latest repair methods, many resources are available online, or you can drop in or give us a call and chat to any one of our team members.

Or you can trust your insurance company and go with however they suggest. It's possible you'll be one of the few to see results from this - for example RAA and QBE insurers provide consumers with high quality repairers that use genuine parts, and guarantee their work.

But if you want to really take the very best care of your car—ensuring it is repaired properly, with great attention to detail and with great pride—then I invite you to call us.

We'll be happy to answer your questions—provide you with a ballpark cost estimate over the phone or email—or invite you in to our workshop and give you a free written assessment—without cost or obligation of any kind.

To reach me, call (08) 8362 7395.

And THANKS AGAIN! ...for reviewing my new CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO CAR REPAIRERS.

If you have any questions or comments—or if you'd like us to give you an exact written assessment—

Please call us at (08) 8362 7395.

I've dedicated my business to client education and service. I'll be pleased to help you in every way. I look forward to your call.

Thanks!

The team at Dynamic Paint N Panel



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