

TUNING UP OUR WORLD-LEADING DATA SHARING LAW

Every day since July 1, 2022, the Motor Vehicle Information Scheme (MVIS) has given our members and independent repairers across the country access to full vehicle manufacturer information at a fair market price

The law, one that we championed, has transformed the ability of independent repairers to compete on a fair and level playing field and ensures consumers have a choice of repairer. Importantly, if you are an automotive workshop, this law is future proofing your business.

I'm very proud of what this law has achieved for our industry, as legislation that is rightly seen as a world-leading example of a right-to-repair law. However, no law is perfect, and this was never going to be a "set and forget" situation.

The great thing about our law – and we campaigned to ensure it was the case – is that it is designed in a way that allows for amendments and tweaks to ensure its application is best practice.

And two years since its introduction, we have had enough time to analyse the real-world application of the law. Although feedback on the scheme has been overwhelmingly positive, and thousands of workshops are now accessing full OEM repair information – many via the AASRA Portal – there are a few areas that need to be amended and tightened to ensure all workshops can fully leverage the benefits of the law.

The number one challenge workshops are finding with the new law is the lack of uniformity in obtaining information from the various OEM portals and the lack of access to use a universal pass-through interface, such as J2534, for diagnostic software or programming files.

The current design of the MVIS suits repairers that specialise in one brand or a family of similar brands. As it stands, if you are an all-makes-and-models workshop, you have to subscribe to and access more than 60 different car company information portals. Learning how to navigate each unique OEM portal can be time-consuming, and managing multiple ad-hoc short-term subscription purchases can be burdensome.

The AASRA Portal, which allows a single credential

to login to more than 30 OEM portals, has simplified this process for subscribers. However, it does not address the challenges and expense of having to purchase specific diagnostic hardware for every brand.

Because each car manufacturer has its own proprietary tooling for connecting and downloading updates to their vehicles, this requires small workshops to purchase or rent these specific scan tools, which are prohibitively expensive. I know of one particular brand that is charging \$510 for a one-day rental of their scan tool!

To solve this problem for independent workshops, the AAAA will formally seek to amend the law to compel all vehicle manufacturers to use the SAE-J2534 protocol. This would ensure that diagnostic software from any vehicle manufacturer can be accessed on any scan tool or VCI that utilises J2534 hardware.

By standardising the protocol, independent workshops would no longer need to purchase expensive, brand-specific scan tools, making it easier and more cost-effective to service a wide range of vehicles.

The J2534 amendment is crucial – it will ensure the law works as intended and delivers real, impactful change for independent workshops across Australia.

Another challenge our members are providing feedback on relates to data aggregators. These businesses play a critical role in supporting multi-brand repairers by providing high-level service and repair information for every car brand operating in Australia in a standardised format. However, under the current scheme design, car brands are not compelled to licence all of their repair and service information to data aggregators which includes technical service bulletins and other information that assists technicians in their daily work of service and repair, effectively excluding the majority of the industry from accessing this important information.



As a result, we will also seek changes to the scheme to compel car companies to licence all of their repair information to data aggregators for the benefit of the entire industry.

I will soon bring representatives from the industry together to talk in more detail about their experience with the scheme to solidify the above areas of concern and address any other issues with the law.

I've recently written to Andrew Leigh, who is the Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities, and Treasury, asking for a formal review of the scheme, and soon the AAAA will follow up with a comprehensive submission detailing the changes we are requesting.

Rest assured, the AAAA team and I will not rest until this important scheme is tweaked to ensure our members and workshops across the country do not face any roadblocks restricting their ability to service and repair customer vehicles without restriction, undue complication, or prohibitive costs.

As always, your voice is essential in shaping the future of our industry, and we encourage you to share your experience of how the law is working for you and your business as we seek to refine this groundbreaking legislation.

To provide feedback, please email advocacy@aaaa.com.au



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