



# STRAIGHT TORQUE

With Melinda Leyshon of Production Automotive

## How do you choose a good mechanic?

The automotive industry is not well-known for its reputation, yet a good mechanic is vital for ensuring the safety of your car and your family. So how do you find yourself a good, trustworthy mechanic?

### Ask for referrals

Ask friends, relatives and colleagues - word of mouth is one of the most effective marketing tools any business can use, so when someone you know and trust gives you a recommendation, you could be on the right track.

### Do your research

Is the mechanic a member of the NSW Motor Trader's Association (MTA NSW), adhering to a code of ethics and guaranteeing their work? Do they have a website you can check out?

### Interview your mechanic

There are a number of things you should ask to ensure that your mechanic is delivering the best possible service. Some of these include:

#### What is the warranty on their work?

A reputable mechanic should be able to provide you with a warranty on both parts and labour.

#### Are they qualified to stamp your log book?

If you have a new car, you should be able to rely on your mechanic to carry out the scheduled servicing as per the log book. In NSW, repairers must be licensed to work on your car. Ensure that the mechanic you choose is both qualified and experienced.

#### Is their pricing transparent?

Some mechanics will give you an invoice containing only the lump sum owing - you are entitled to ask for a breakdown into parts, labour and GST.

**How is labour calculated?** It is also important to know how the labour is calculated - do they have a set number of hours they charge out for various jobs regardless of the time it takes, do they track them via electronic methods or timesheets, or do they track it all in their heads? How is it recorded? It is vital to choose a mechanic with strong processes and procedures in place to know you are getting what you pay for.

**What kinds of parts do they use?** There are a wide variety of parts on the market, consisting of both genuine and aftermarket. Many mechanics use aftermarket parts to

keep pricing down, and if using reputable aftermarket parts you are assured they will be equal in quality to that of genuine (examples include Ryco for filters, and Bendix for brakes). You can, however, also get not-so-good aftermarket parts - find out if your mechanic is using reputable brands. If he wouldn't put \$20 brake pads in his own car, then why is it appropriate to put them in yours?

It is important to check about parts in relation to your warranty - vehicle manufacturers have specific performance requirements for parts, and it is vital your mechanic uses only those parts deemed suitable for your vehicle and that will comply with your warranty conditions.

**Can they translate a complex issue into simple language?** Is the mechanic friendly, helpful, and not irritated by your questions? A good mechanic should be pro-active in educating customers about their vehicles.

There are so many other elements to consider.

- Will they drop you off to the shopping centre or to home if you live locally?
- Will they let you watch while they work?
- Is the reception area welcoming and the workshop clean?



- Are they happy to give you back your old parts and show you the wear and tear?
- Do they quote and call for approval before proceeding with any major repairs?
- Are the mechanic's uniforms clean and well-maintained?

### Trust your gut instinct!

Always remember that a good mechanic should treat all customers - both male and female - with respect and common courtesy. Finding a quality mechanic is important to the life of your car and safety of your family - don't underestimate this, and take the time to find a good one.