



Buying a car?

Buying a new or used car can be an exciting and fulfilling experience, but there are some pitfalls to watch out for along the way. This information pamphlet contains a few handy hints and tips to follow.

Do your research

Before buying a car, you should get as much information about it as possible.

Choose a car that best suits your *needs and budget*. If you are getting a loan, shop around for competitive deals and don't accept dealer finance just because it's quick, easy or convenient. It can often be more expensive.

Choose a car with the highest *ANCAP* or Used Car *Safety Rating* you can afford.

Check the logbooks. These can show you how often it was serviced and indicate whether the last owner took good care of it. *Ask* if it has been in any accidents or been modified in any way. This can affect your insurance, registration and may mean you need a roadworthy certificate.

Get it independently *inspected by a mechanic* and take it for a *test drive*.

Try to put any agreement you make with the seller in *writing* and get a copy and a *receipt*. Always *read* and be sure you *understand* an agreement before signing. You do not have to make an on the spot decision.

Take someone else with you to look at the car. Two sets of eyes are better than one!

Private Seller v Registered Dealer

You have a few more rights if something goes wrong when you buy from a registered car dealer as opposed to a private seller.

Cooling off period:

If you buy a car from a registered used car dealer you have 2 days from when you sign the contract to change your mind. A dealer may offer you a benefit for waiving this right such as lowering the purchase price. Be very wary of doing this.

Statutory warranty:

If you buy from a registered used car dealer you may be entitled to a special warranty which means the dealer will repair any defects or faults in the car within a certain amount of time of you buying it. These warranties do not apply to:

- Cars that cost less than \$3,000

- Defects in tyres and batteries
- Things which happen as a result of accidents or misuse
- Things you knew about before buying
- Cars that have done more than 200,000km before sale
- Cars first registered more than 15 years ago

General Consumer Law Protections:

When you buy anything from an Australian business, new or second hand, you have rights under the consumer law.

This means that if what you buy isn't up to scratch you might be entitled to a refund, repair or replacement. For more information visit: www.accc.gov.au.

Conduct Background Checks:

1. Do a PPSR Check

The Personal Property Securities Register (PPSR) is a national online register. You can search the PPSR to find out if:

1. Anyone has finance owing on the car (a security interest)
2. The car has ever been written off, repaired and sold again (a repairable write-off)
3. The car has been reported as stolen

What is a security interest?

If there is finance on the car this means that someone borrowed money to buy it and has not finished paying off the loan.

As long as the debt remains unpaid, the bank or lender has a "security interest" in the car and may have the right to come and take it from you to recover their money. This means you could lose the car even if you have paid for it.

When you search the PPSR, this information will be under '**registration details**' on the results certificate. You might also be able to see who holds the security interest and contact them for more information.

How do I search the PPSR?

To search the PPSR go to: www.ppsr.gov.au and click on '**Quick Motor Vehicle Search**'.

You will need to know the **VIN or chassis number**. This is usually found on the engine, the registration papers or inside of the car doors. If you can't find it, ask the seller where it is. The VIN or chassis number will be 17 characters long and include both capital letters and numbers. If the car was built before 1988 it may have fewer characters.

Searching the PPSR will cost **\$3.40** and you must pay online using Visa, MasterCard or American Express credit cards. You can view the results online and will also receive a copy via email.

2. Registration Check

Find out if the car is registered using the S.A. EzyReg free online service at: www.ecom.transport.sa.gov.au

If the car is unregistered, you will need to register it before driving. Driving an unregistered vehicle is against the law.

If the car is registered you will need to complete a Transfer of Registration and Disposal Notice within 14 days of purchase.

3. Written off, stolen or defect check

A **PPSR search** will tell you if the car has ever been written off and resold (called a repairable write off) and if it has been reported stolen. This information will be under the '**NEVDIS details**' on the results certificate.

You can also **call Service S.A. on 13 10 84** and do a **free check** to see if the car has been written off, stolen or issued with a defect notice. If it has a defect notice the car may not meet legal standards and may be unsafe to drive. It is against the law for someone to sell you a car that has a defect notice on it if you plan to drive it.

To do this check you may need the following information about the car:

- The number plate
- VIN number
- Make, body type and colour

Please note: This pamphlet provides information only and is not a substitute for legal advice.

