



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Letter to Editor

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Car dealers should share vehicle repair technology with independent car workshops

Malaysian car owners are in a dilemma. They are unable to send their cars with computerised engines anywhere to repair except at designated authorised service centres. It becomes a monopoly and independent workshops are unable to compete. Moreover, car owners are unable to seek a 'second opinion' or choose a repairer of his choice.

In February 2019, Australia came up with a mandatory scheme for the sharing of motor vehicle service and repair information. With this, it is mandatory for car dealers to share vehicle repair technology with independent car workshops.

The Agreement on Access to Service and Repair Information for Motor Vehicles was signed in 2014 between industry bodies representing car manufacturers and independent repairers to ensure fair access to repair information on a voluntary basis. Subsequently a study by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) in 2017 showed that the voluntary system was not working and hence recommended a compulsory scheme.

If the mandatory scheme is in place, it will create a level playing field for more than 30,000 local car repairers in Australia.

We should emulate Australia because it has been too long that Malaysian car owners are forced to send to authorised service centres that charged more than independent car workshops and whose services may be deemed less than desirable. We, too, have many hard working independent car repairers who may be forced to close in the future as more cars are computerised, if they do not have fair access to car diagnostic tools, and if there are competition barriers that affect consumers' choice of car workshops. Currently there are more than 50,000 independent car workshops in Malaysia who do not have access to the same technical information of the estimated 500 car dealer workshops.

We urge the government, particularly the Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC), to seriously consider this approach to make it mandatory for the sharing of motor vehicle service and repair information with independent repairers.

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