

27th of January 2021

By email: repairinfo@treasury.gov.au

RE: Response to the Motor vehicle service and repair information sharing scheme

We welcome the exposure draft legislation for the mandatory motor vehicle service and repair information sharing scheme. We also acknowledge the considerations outlined regarding our sector of the industry.

There are sections of the draft that we believe needs to be reviewed to consider the critical role of third party data providers in the market.

Overview

Autodata's business is creation of Service, Maintenance and Repair information for use in the aftermarket. Created from Vehicle Manufacturers original information in one consistent format that allows easy access and use for any workshop on any make or model. Therefore, the nature of our business defines us as third party data aggregators / publishers.

Our primary product is made available under subscription, which provides workshops with login credentials to an online portal. The user simply selects the information they require from a variety of categories, such as (but not limited to) wiring diagrams, service schedules and tightening torque specifications. Corporate users also consume portions of our data and integrate it with their own products, this simply would not be possible with so many different formats and styles from the various manufacturers. A typical example is parts companies and the integration with their parts catalogues. Being able to provide portions of the data to the aftermarket is critical to its future. It allows companies that require data to create innovative products to service the aftermarket in a way that is competitive with dealerships.

Cost of data

Australia has over 60 different vehicle brands in the market. Independent workshops can only operate and support the wider economy, if they are able to service and repair the clear majority of these. Being able to do this requires technical information at a cost that is sustainable to the independent workshop. This ensures market competitiveness and avoids unnecessary high data costs being passed onto the consumer. The cost of an annual Autodata subscription equates to less than subscribing to a single manufacturer over the same period. This is of course if the manufacturer has made the information available in the first place. Subscribing to only half of the manufacturers would be a completely unsustainable cost for the great majority of independent workshops. This illustrates the absolute need for third party publishers to be part of the overall directive in the supply of technical information from car manufacturers.

Overseas

Autodata Ltd (our parent company based in the UK) and Autodata Publishing Group (a subsidiary of Autodata UK, based in the USA) have both experienced a similar study into the car retailing industry in each of their respective countries. The result was a clear provision for third party publishers where the manufacturers must make the information available for reproduction at a fair and commercially viable cost.

In the USA, an act protecting motor vehicle owners and small businesses in repairing motor vehicles was passed. In the act section (2)(c)(iii) refers to third party data providers.

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter241>

Summary The majority, if not all workshops will have access to and regularly use data from a third party supplier. Whether it is an online portal, scan tool, parts catalogue, or wheel alignment machine, they all carry data which needs to be regularly updated. The supply of data to the aftermarket is paramount in allowing it to be competitive and providing the consumer with a confident option when having their car serviced or repaired. This is of critical importance in areas of our country where a vehicle manufacturer's approved workshop is many hundreds of KMs away. Third party providers fill this need to various degrees depending on their relationship with each manufacturer. Our request is to include a clear provision that allows the access to technical information to publishers on fair and reasonable terms.

Responses to the draft

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Responses to the draft

1.

In reference to the C2020-128989-explanatory_memoradndum

Data provider	An entity who runs a business that, to any extent, provides scheme information to any repairer or scheme RTO in Australia. This could include car manufacturers, owners or licensees of intellectual property, third party providers such as data aggregators and dealerships or workshops affiliated with a car manufacturer
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Placing third party “data aggregators” under the same definition of “car manufacturers” means both parties fall under the same rules listed in the draft. It is our view the draft was written for explicitly for manufacturers, therefore making some if not all of the proposed laws impossible for third party data aggregators to address.

2.

In reference to 1.44 Who can access scheme information – “Australian repairers” and “scheme RTOs”

Given the overview on the importance of third data aggregators, we believe mandating access should occur and should replicate similar terms as listed in;

(2)(c)(iii) of

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter241>

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