

Submission to Productivity Commission Right to Repair Inquiry

Contact for this submission:

Robert Dyer

Date: 15/11/20

I am an Engineer and was previously employed by GM Holden (prior to the closure of GM Holden in June 2020) for more than 20 years in various design and product development roles.

Our household is currently looking at a new car. The Skoda range is appealing as the purchase prices are competitive, they are safe, have low fuel consumption and are fairly reliable.

Reviewing the maintenance schedule for the Skoda Fabia and Octavia it lists having to replace the alarm system every 5 or 6 years depending on the model. This alarm system replacement cost is around \$500.

This alarm system replacement cost can be found by selecting the 60month service for the 2020 Skoda Fabia in the link below.

<https://au.skoda.com.au/service-pricing/>

Also refer to Appendix A – Skoda Service Pricing (Alarm Replacement) Web Pages

A search of the internet found this scheduled replacement of the alarm unit is due to the back up battery requiring replacement with it not being possible to replace just the battery. The entire alarm unit must be replaced.

Designing and manufacturing the alarm unit in this way reduces the material cost of the alarm unit. This is same reason ipad batteries are not replaceable. While the material cost of the alarm unit is reduced it results in more cost to the vehicle owner and more waste. Skoda makes more profit from this arrangement through the lower material cost when the vehicle is assembled and each time the alarm system replaced where the vehicle owner pays for the alarm system replacement. It is a win/win for Skoda at the expense of the vehicle owner.

This is an example of planned product obsolescence and the proliferation of e-waste that places unnecessary costs on the vehicle owner.