

Podcast 159 – Motoring Organisations in Australia

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia,
with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 159 – Motoring Organisations in Australia

<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/slowenglish/podcast159.mp3>

(This podcast is 11 minutes long.)

Hi,

I've owned quite a few cars in my lifetime. As a car owner, one of the things you dread most is a breakdown. This is when something goes wrong with your car and suddenly it won't work anymore. This can be very inconvenient and even embarrassing, depending on where you are when your car breaks down, and what time of day or night it is. At such a time, you need help from someone who has the knowledge and tools to fix your car on the roadside, or you need a tow truck service if your car must be taken to a garage or workshop. This is where help from a roadside assistance service can be extremely useful. In each state of Australia, there are organisations which provide such a service, along with other services for drivers. These organisations are known as motoring organisations. When you become a member of a motoring organisation and buy a roadside assistance package, then you can stop worrying about having a breakdown. Someone to help you will be just a phone call away, in all populated areas of Australia. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about motoring organisations in Australia, and in Victoria in particular. (For full information about roadside assistance service in Victoria, you should visit www.racv.com.au).

I first learned about motoring organisations from my father.

I can still hear him saying that every motorist should buy a membership in their local motoring organisation so that you can buy a roadside assistance service from them. It's good advice which I have always followed. If your car breaks down, you will then be able to get expert help. I can think of nothing worse than having your car break down and being stuck alone out there on the road somewhere without help.



Sometimes a tow is needed, as the car cannot be repaired by the roadside.

Image by [Siggy Nowak](#) from [Pixabay](#)

My local motoring organisation is RACV, which stands for Royal Automobile Club of Victoria. Each state of Australia has a similar motoring organisation. In Queensland, it is the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, or RACQ. In NSW, it is the NRMA, which stands for National Roads and Motorists Association. There are also similar organisations in South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Northern Territory. Actually, all these organisations are closely connected. If you buy roadside assistance from any of these

motoring organisations, you will be covered for roadside assistance if you break down in any state or territory of Australia. This is a great service in my opinion.

The roadside assistance service is provided by special vehicles operated by the motoring organisation. In Victoria and around Melbourne, I often see these RACV vehicles parked at the roadside helping a motorist who has had a breakdown. RACV vans have a special colour scheme, yellow with blue stripes, with the RACV sign painted on it. Their emergency assistance telephone number is 131111. In fact, this telephone number is the same for each and every state motoring organisation. Another great idea. Wherever you are in Australia, just ring 131111 to get emergency roadside assistance.



After my battery failed with my car still in the garage, I

called the RACV Roadside Assistance. The RACV van arrived within 30 minutes, driven by Lucky. He put a new battery in my car.

Of course, the service is only available to those who are club members. For the RACV, when you purchase a roadside assistance service, you automatically become a member. I think the cost is quite reasonable. In Victoria, at the time of this podcast in 2024, it costs \$134 per year for the basic service, which applies to one car only. In return, you get an unlimited number of call outs per year for this car, no matter who is driving it. You get free towing for 20km if required, or free towing to the nearest service centre. There are other benefits too if your car cannot be driven. This includes assistance towards paying for a taxi, a hire car and even temporary accommodation if you are more than 100 kms from home.

There are also 2 more options for roadside assistance with RACV, if you want improved benefits, although they obviously cost more. For example, the top option allows you to be covered for whatever vehicle you are driving. This is the option which I have personally, as it means I am covered not only when I drive my car, but also when I am riding my motorbike. This option is more expensive, but I think it is worth it.

It's interesting to look at the statistics for the roadside assistance service. Using the RACV information here in Victoria in 2023/24, there were 1.6 million vehicles covered by the service. Furthermore, there were 813,000 call outs by drivers who requested the roadside assistance service. According to the RACV website, 8 out of 10 problems are fixed on the spot. Typical problems include:

- a flat tyre,
- running out of fuel,
- a flat battery,

- being locked out of your vehicle,
- replacing some minor parts such as a fan belt to get you going again,
- an electric car being out of charge.

Being a member of a motoring organisation brings other benefits too, including the option to buy car insurance, travel insurance, home and contents insurance, access to RACV travel resorts, travel packages, home maintenance services, etc. This list goes on. One useful benefit is the car inspection service, which allows you to get an expert report on a car that you are considering buying. These are called pre-purchase inspections, and can help to ensure that a second-hand car you are considering buying is in good condition.

These days, motoring organisations in Australia offer a wide range of products, benefits and services and you should visit their websites if you are interested. For me, the most valuable service is the roadside assistance service, and this is the reason I have been, and will continue to be, a motoring organisation member.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 159 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

- ☐ Play advice = information you have been told is useful
- ☐ Play assistance = help
- ☐ Play benefits = things of value
- ☐ Play call outs = when a person has a breakdown and calls RACV for help
- ☐ Play condition = whether something has been well kept or not
- ☐ Play considering = thinking about doing something
- ☐ Play covered = (here) when a problem will be fixed as part of a service
- ☐ Play dread = fear, how you feel when you don't want something to happen
- ☐ Play embarrassing = when you feel foolish or silly
- ☐ Play expensive = when something costs a lot
- ☐ Play extremely = very
- ☐ Play in particular = when talking about one thing or group of things amongst a bigger group
- ☐ Play inconvenient = when something happens at a bad time for you

- Play inspection = to look at something closely to see if it works correctly
- Play knowledge = useful information and understandings about a topic
- Play maintenance = when you repair small faults in order to keep something in good condition
- Play member = when you are part of group
- Play obviously = when something can be easily seen or understood
- Play operated = managed, looked after, controlled
- Play option = a choice which you have (usually from a list of choices)
- Play package = (here) a group of things put together
- Play personally = something which is about one person and not other people
- Play populated = when a place or area has a lot of people living there
- Play pre-purchase = something you do before you buy something (e.g. check the condition)
- Play provided = given
- Play range = a group of things of many types
- Play requested = asked for
- Play resorts = a place where people go to have a holiday
- Play scheme = (here) an arrangement of colours
- Play service centre = a place where service is given (in this case, the repair of a car)

- Play statistics = detailed numbers about something. For example, how many, how big, etc
- Play stripes = bands of colour
- Play temporary accommodation = a place to stay overnight, for a short time
- Play tools = things you use to help you do a job
- Play vehicle = a car, truck, motorcycle, van