

My wife and I purchased a Skoda Yeti (1.2tsi with a 7sp DSG gearbox) from Wippells in 2015. All was good for a few weeks and then it started to randomly lose drive when trying to accelerate through a right hand turn at low speed. I told the service department about it when it went in for it's first (15000km) service however nothing was found. Each time it lost drive after that I would let them know and usually it would end up there for a day or so while they interrogated the computer for any stored faults; however there were never any there.

Eventually it was escalated to Skoda / VW Australia who had the mechatronics unit (gearbox computer) changed out (around Aug 2016). After this it still randomly lost drive in a right hand turn but then also started shuddering in first gear and randomly losing drive with no warning at low speed (usually when trying to drive up a slope, such as leaving a car park). It went back again and again and again to Wippells and eventually the entire gearbox (including mechatronics) and also the ABS module were changed out.

After this the brakes were not bled properly (they went straight to the floor) and it had to go back a couple of times for this to be re-done. Whereas the brakes had previously been firm with positive backpressure to the foot throughout their travel they are now excessively spongy and often unexpectedly "grab" when applied at low speed. They seem to behave as if there is air still in the system. The Yeti still randomly loses drive through a right hand turn. It still randomly loses drive at low speed on even a slight incline, it still shudders in first gear, but now it also has a variable delayed throttle response when accelerating from a standing start.

I went back to Skoda / VW Australia (who were running the show at this point) and explained the safety hazards present here and how I believed that the vehicle was unacceptable to drive. I requested either a replacement vehicle or a refund (I estimate that it has spent a total of 3 months or more off the road). They told me that everything that was happening is normal and that these things, (that I believe are hazards) are deliberately engineered into the design. The "customer service genius" also stated that this affects all DSG equipped vehicles. Because our Yeti was therefore operating within the manufacturers specifications they refused to replace it or provide a refund. They have also stated that they will not enter into any more discussion about the Yeti's hazardous behavior.

As a result I affixed a warning label to the rear of the car to warn other road users to remain clear at low speed in case it loses drive and they end up rear ending us or have the Yeti roll back into them. (so far the Yeti has rolled back with a vehicle behind it 21 times since the initial mechatronics replacement). I also sent Wippells Dealer Principal a letter asking for a replacement or refund citing the safety hazards involved. He sided with Skoda / VW Australia and stated that there was nothing wrong with our car. Signage covering both sides of the car from the front wheel arch to the rear of the car will also soon be affixed. Part of this signage will highlight the ongoing issues that I believe present significant safety hazards in normal everyday driving.

When my son dropped the Yeti off at Wippells for a service a couple of weeks ago the General

Manager had the mechanics remove the rear “Wippells Autos Skoda” number plate surround without my knowledge or permission. The mechanic subsequently told me that it had been thrown away. Removing property without permission with the intent to deprive the owner of its use.....sounds like the definition of something.

Anyhow the mechanic said that he was unable to give it back to me or provide me with another. I then spoke to the general manager who also refused to give it back; claiming it belonged to him. During our brief meeting he showed no concern for the safety hazards that the Yeti now presents to both its occupants and other road users. His only concern seemed to be for his business and its employees. To be blunt I left our meeting feeling like I had been arguing with a petulant child. Even when I went to the Toowoomba police station and they contacted him and told him that it belonged to me and not him, he still refused to return it. Skoda Australia later contacted him and later advised me that they could do nothing; it was an issue between the dealership and myself.

When we purchased the Yeti the sales guy Tom was awesome. He knew about the car and we were happy that we had made the right choice. The guys in the office area of the service department are also great, although I shouldn't have been there enough that they know me by first name. Looking at the reviews (prior to the “review” page being removed from the Wippells Facebook page on 05 Sep 17) the ratings were quite polarized. It seems that everyone rates the buying experience as awesome (as we did) however the subsequent dealership support seems to be less than appropriate when things go wrong with a vehicle.

The General Manager himself admitted to me that he has engaged in what I believe to be inappropriate behavior toward us and our vehicle while the Dealer Principal has declined to honor the dealership's consumer law obligations in relation to our vehicle. These behaviors seem to be diametrically opposed to the manner in which Frank Wippell is reported to have conducted business when he was at the helm. Therefore, thinking my thoughts out loud, perhaps Wippells' failure to meet customer expectations when it comes to problem vehicles is a systemic issue of poor culture, stemming from the attitudes of current Wippells Senior Management and they should give serious consideration to resetting their “moral compass” and begin actively demonstrating that they value safety and customer satisfaction above dealership domination and profit.

So in summary, they are awesome to purchase a vehicle from however, in our experience, if the vehicle has issues then the nightmare begins.