

# How to choose a mechanic for a logbook service

What a fair service costs, and how to keep a new-car warranty intact at an independent workshop

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A logbook service is not just an oil change - it is the list of checks the manufacturer specifies at each interval, and the record that proves it was done. Get it right and your new-car warranty survives at an independent workshop; get it wrong and you either pay far more at the dealership for the same work or risk the warranty entirely.

## What it should cost

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A minor or logbook service in Tasmania generally runs from about \$220 to \$400, depending on the vehicle and the interval. A major service - timing belt, fluids, filters and a full brake inspection - commonly lands between \$600 and \$1,200. Dealership prices for the same schedule are often 20 to 50 per cent higher, which is where the independent-versus-dealer question actually bites.

Expect a labour rate around \$110 to \$170 an hour, plus parts at a markup. A workshop that quotes a fixed price for the named logbook items is far easier to compare than one quoting "from \$X". Ask what is included: an oil and filter change is not the same as the full manufacturer schedule.

## What the law requires

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Tasmania does not license motor mechanics the way it licenses electricians and plumbers - there is no repairer's licence to produce. Motor vehicle repairers are licensed in New South Wales, Western Australia and the ACT, but not here, so what matters instead is the trade qualification (usually a Certificate III in Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology), public liability insurance, and a workshop that is honest about what it does and does not do.

If the workshop performs vehicle inspections or issues inspection certificates, the examiner must hold a separate approval as a Vehicle Examiner under the Vehicle and Traffic Act 1999, and each premises needs its own approval. A mechanic without that approval cannot legally sign off an inspection, so ask before you rely on one.

## Red flags

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Will not confirm the work meets the manufacturer's logbook, or cannot say what is in the schedule.

Quotes a "service" without listing what it includes.

Adds work beyond the schedule without calling you first.

Refuses to show you the old part or explain the fault in plain language.

No insurance, no fixed address, or a cash-only workshop that gives no invoice.

Claims a service is due earlier than the logbook says.

## What good looks like

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Tells you the logbook items and prices before the car goes on the hoist.

Calls before doing anything outside the agreed scope.

Shows you the worn part and explains the fault in plain language.

Records the service properly so your warranty stands up.

Says plainly when a job is not worth doing yet.

## What to ask

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- "Will you service to the manufacturer's logbook schedule, and record it so my warranty is protected?"
- "What is your labour rate, and is this a fixed quote or an estimate?"
- "What is included at this interval, in the manufacturer's list?"
- "Do you use genuine or OEM-equivalent parts - which, and what is the price difference?"
- "Are you an approved Vehicle Examiner, if I need an inspection signed off?"
- "Will you show me the worn part or the fault before you replace or repair it?"
- "What is the warranty on your labour and the parts you fit?"

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