

## Acceptable quality for cars

**When you buy a car from a car dealer you're protected by the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA).**

What you buy must be of acceptable quality. Your car must:

- do what it's meant to eg, if you ask for a 4x4, you can't be sold a two wheel drive
- be safe
- at the time of sale be as problem-free as a reasonable consumer would consider acceptable.

### What is acceptable

This can be different in different situations. Consider:

#### Time

How long after buying the car something goes wrong.



#### Distance

How many kms the car has done — when you bought it and since.

#### Cost

What you paid.



#### Age

How old the car is.

Also take into account how you've driven the car and what your dealer told you about it.



**Tane's car**

Tane buys a car for \$15,000. The car is seven years old and has done 75,000km. The trader tells him the car has been treated well and is very reliable. Six months later the gear box fails. Tane has driven the car carefully, to and from work in the town where he lives. Since buying the car, he has done about 7,000km — the average distance a person might drive in six months. It may be reasonable for Tane to expect the gear box on this secondhand car to last more than six months.



**Ellie's car**

Ellie buys a car for \$3,500. The car is 17 years old and has 220,000km on the clock. The car's paintwork is scratched and there are some dents in the body. Six months later the gear box fails. Ellie's car is old and wasn't expensive. After six months a reasonable person may expect parts to fail through wear and tear. If, when Ellie buys the car her dealer tells her the car has a new gear box, it may be reasonable for her to expect it to last longer than six months.

**Note:** These examples are designed to show how the law may apply to real situations. Be aware, every case is different. The outcome of each depends on the unique facts.

If you are having problems with a car and can't sort it out with your dealer directly, contact the Ministry of Justice's **Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal**.