

# We tested 4WD Škoda Octavia Scout 2.0 TDI

**Added practicality and style makes the Škoda Octavia Scout 2.0 TDI an excellent all-rounder available in Australia.**

You've got to admire Škoda. In the last few years, it has completed a remarkable turnaround, completely reinventing itself with some excellent family cars, with magnificent comfort.

View the Scout for the first time, and it's clear Skoda has spent plenty of time getting the newcomer's appearance right. With chunky black bumpers, extended side skirts and wheelarches plus front and rear protective metal skid plates, it looks much tougher than its stablemate.

There are lots of neat touches, too, including sporty 17-inch alloy wheels, roof rails, large spotlights at the front, and twin chrome exhausts at the rear. Classy Scout badges complete the look.

Inside, the off-road inspiration continues. There's an aluminium grab handle on the dash, hard-wearing cloth trim, and aluminium kickplates on the door sills. The standard of equipment is excellent with dual-zone climate control, a six-disc CD changer and cruise control, plus useful netting in the back to help you make the most of the vast boot. Škoda draws the line, though, at adding complex off-roading mechanicals. And while the Scout initially appears to be a cut-price alternative to the Allroad, there's no adjustable air-suspension or locking differentials.

However, in common with the Octavia 4x4, a clever Haldex clutch shares the drive between the front and rear axles when traction is lost. And, on a snowbound test track at the model's launch, the system proved very impressive indeed. Providing 17mm more ground clearance than the

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Written by Administrator

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regular Octavia 4x4, the Scout breezed over deep ruts, proving that it has all the off-road ability most owners will ever be likely to need.

I hate when I open the door of car in a hot day and I have the feeling that I am crawling into a sultry red-hot oven! So what I love is, when I am walking towards my Škoda Scout on a hot Australian day, from a distance I am able to hold the button on the key ring to not only open the door, but with an extended push, I am able to open all the windows of the car so before I sit in the car all the hot air has gone. Fantastic!

Driving on a dry highway, it's equally pleasing and quiet. Despite the jacked-up body, the Scout doesn't roll much more than the regular estate and, thanks to that clever clutch, 98 per cent of power goes to the front wheels in most conditions. As a result, it behaves like a standard Octavia with accurate (if rather numb) steering, a comfortable ride and decent grip.

Škoda estimates that nearly 90 per cent of Scouts bought will be diesels. The 138bhp 2.0-litre TDI unit is certainly strong on torque, with a beefy 320Nm making light work of overtaking manoeuvres. It's frugal too, returning 44mpg on the combined cycle. In fact, its only downside is a lack of refinement, with too much engine noise entering the cabin.

So is the Scout worth the extra money over an Octavia 4x4? Just about. Most buyers will be delighted with the regular version. However, if you want something that stands out a bit more than the average estate car and offers plenty of off-road ability, the Scout is undoubtedly a very appealing package.

What is for me most important is what I left on the end of this review - the very low fuel consumption. I have driven fully loaded (2 adult plus 3 teenage children) from Sydney to Young (NSW) and back and we used just 4.5 litres of diesel per 100km!

In the city it's just 4.7 to 5.2 litres per 100 km, although that just depends on whether the traffic is heavy or not.