

THE AUSTRALIAN VEHICLE DEALER'S

NEWS SOURCE

autotalk

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ROBERT BARRY
EDITOR **AUTOTALK**

Hello everyone,

In spite of the global pandemic, the semi-conductor shortage, the disrupted shipping timetable and congested ports, the Australian (and New Zealand) new vehicle markets continue to thrive.

The new vehicle sales result in July 2021 for the Australian market was remarkable for its 16% growth over the same month last year.

Sales of passenger vehicles continue to fall, but SUVs, Light and Heavy Commercial vehicle sales continue to grow.

This pattern reflects the consumers growing preference for SUV and the strength of the Australian economy for the demand for the light and heavy commercial vehicles.

But continuity of supply is an ever-changing situation for many. Many brands are now operating in a forward order scenario, which is a new situation for many mass market manufacturers, who in the past have relied upon fairly large stock holding, unlike the prestige brands which have always run leaner.

Thanks to the ever-changing position of the supply chain in this global environment, national sales companies such as Volkswagen Group Australia (VGA) are now launching supply information pages on their websites to keep buyers fully updated on vehicle availability.

While the semi-conductor shortage is one issue, so too is WLTP testing and demand from markets closer to the factory says VGA managing director **Michael Bartsch**. It is for these reasons he says that VGA decided to set up the supply page to keep customers better informed.

In Volkswagen's passenger vehicle range, there is secure supply of the Polo, T-Cross, T-Roc and Tiguan Allspace. The Arteon, which shortly will have ample supply of both sedan versions, but little availability of the two new Shooting Brakes, until the New Year.

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles' primary issue relates to the Amarok, with numbers reduced by logistical delays. It expects that large numbers will become available shortly.

Software provider VNC Automotive founder and chief executive **Tom Blackie** says the global semiconductor shortage will have far-reaching and long-lasting effects that are likely to have a greater impact on the automotive industry than the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In conversations with clients and suppliers, it's become clear that the effects of the semiconductor shortage will long outlast the pandemic and will potentially have a far more serious impact on sales and future development," Blackie says.

Blackie says United Kingdom-based VNC Automotive is even seeing vehicle buyers and fleet operators having to consider purchasing models that aren't on their preferred lists because that's all that's available.

It is more than likely that the same scenario will play out here in Australia, if it hasn't already started.

Communication with customers and being open and transparent about the supply chain is going to be paramount to maintaining relationships as vehicle dealers head towards the end of 2021 and the beginning of 2022, and possibly a continuation of more of the same.

Holding your nerve in these testing times will be paramount in surviving market turbulence.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Best regards

Robert Barry

EDITOR **AUTOTALK**



IMPLEMENTING TECHNOLOGY DURING A PANDEMIC

During the past 18 months, with dealerships often having to operate with closed doors, the automotive industry has relied on technology for day-to-day transactions, says the Autotrader Group.

With lockdowns affecting most of Australia at one point or another, it says dealerships and their partners have turned to using e-commerce to ensure they can remain open either in-store, online or even a mix of the two.

These disruptions across the industry will result in billions lost, says Autotrader. Yet companies that reimagine their operations will perform best in this new normal.

Valley Motor Auctions' general manager, Rohan Coles, says he's taken digital practices on board and has been able to weather the storm as a result.

DRIVING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

A recent article by McKinsey and Company shows that focusing on digital channels is one way that leaders can gain an advantage, as they navigate the crisis.

When Australia went into lockdown, and customers were forced to transact in different ways, Coles implemented digital solutions for Valley Motor Auctions to recreate the visual inspection experience for prospective customers stuck at home.

By increasing the number of photos per vehicle listing and focusing on better quality images, consumers can really get a good idea about the vehicle, especially those looking from interstate.

Coles also linked Facebook Messenger to the company's webpage to facilitate live chats with potential customers, helping them to make immediate contact with the sales team. Video calls are also being used

so that sales staff can show people around a car.

"We wanted to make it easier for customers to get all the information they needed, without coming into the dealership," Coles says. "But also, make sure we were set up to accept interstate business."

These solutions resulted in an increase in website traffic compared to previous years, as Valley Motor Auctions made it easier for buyers to buy cars online.

CHANGING STRATEGIES

Last year, Autotrader Group conducted a "Connect with the New Digital Car Buyer" research survey which found that 60% of vehicle buyers say it's important to have an online showroom.

A further 83% of buyers are interested in virtual test drives and perhaps most tellingly, 85% are interested in their local showroom featuring holographic vehicles.

Though that may not be feasible for every dealership, it's important to look for new ways to facilitate transactions and demonstrate the value of a vehicle especially in uncertain times.

With buyers cautious about coming into the dealership, Valley Motor Auctions says it has had to rethink its methods and consider broader market opportunities interstate.

One hurdle is that without a physical inspection of the vehicle, the customer and salesperson can spend longer discussing the price.

To limit this, Valley Motor has leveraged the Kelley Blue Book Price Advisor as found on Autotrader.com.au. It provides a third-party valuation on the vehicle, along with an independent inspection result.

By doing this, Coles says customers and dealers don't have to focus on the hard sell and customers are now



RICHARD DICELLO
AUTOTRADER GROUP DEALER SALES DIRECTOR

even more confident in the product they're buying, whether it's in-person, over the phone or by video.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

With the threat of lockdown remaining across Australia, dealers need to be ready to change strategies and pivot at any moment.

Coles says dealers have been potentially stuck in their ways when it comes to selling vehicles, but the COVID-19 pandemic has forced the industry to be more innovative.

"One of the biggest learnings, is that while the physical doors may be shut, there's still plenty of opportunity to transact," Autotrader Group says.

"By implementing digital strategies and looking at interstate opportunities, car dealers can continue to keep staff busy and finances flowing.

"With further waves of digital innovation arriving in the coming years, it's critical that automotive dealers begin to consider and implement these opportunities now or risk being left behind.

"Our strong network of dealers has emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic better than ever, proving this pandemic was the catalyst in an evolution and transformation of our industry's digital offering," it adds.

For more information on Autotrader's Connect with the New Digital Car Buyer research or to download the full report, visit: www.autotrader.com.au/auto-research

THE RISE AND RISE OF AUSTRALIAN USED-VEHICLE PRICES

Used-vehicle prices across Australia continued to rise throughout the second quarter of 2021.

Monthly growth rates have slowed, but price levels have remained well above expectations because of a lack of vehicles on the market.

The Datium Insights-Moody's Analytics Used Vehicle Price Index, a hedonically derived index that controls for the mix of vehicles being sold, shows a used vehicle is 34% more expensive than at this time last year and 10% more expensive than at the start of 2021.

Used-vehicle price rises over the last 13 months can be split into two distinct periods.

During the first period, prices jumped back from the pandemic-induced losses of April 2020. During this period, monthly growth rates averaged over 5% for the next six months.

The sharp growth in 2020 happened as people shifted away from public transport and ride shares and gravitated toward private vehicle ownership. The shift in preference took place because of perceived risks posed by COVID-19.

The second boost in price growth, after a slowing trend toward the end of 2020, is supply related.

Used and new vehicles used to be somewhat separate markets, but they're not right now.

New-vehicle supply is down worldwide and Australia is no exception. A shortage of electronic semi-conductor chips has decreased the number of vehicles shipped into the country, driving up the price of any vehicle people are willing to let go of.

This second rise appears to have slowed in June, but supply issues continue to put upward pressure on both new- and used-vehicle prices.

The supply constraint was further worsened by the record rate of new-vehicle sales in Australia in April.

Its seasonally adjusted annualised rate reached an all-time high in April of 1.3 million units.

May also performed better than expected, and early returns on June look promising.

Vehicle demand has remained strong as a result of the rapid economic recovery Australia achieved coming out of the pandemic.

This recovery is evident in the booming labour market. The number of people employed across the country was higher than pre-pandemic levels in a

little more than 12 months.

Additionally, labour force participation as a percent of adults neared all-time highs in May.

In the second quarter, strong labour market prospects helped confidence hit levels not reached in years.

However, localised outbreaks of COVID-19 variants and subsequent lockdowns have cooled consumer outlooks more recently.

In spite of used-vehicle prices continuing to rise, month-over-month growth rates reached their lowest level of the year in June.

The slowdown has been especially evident in larger vehicles. Trucks/utes/SUVs are down 1% in the past quarter, compared with a 3% gain for passenger cars.

The reason for the price divergence is two-pronged.

First, fuel prices have risen, making larger vehicles comparably more expensive to drive.

Second, ute prices had risen so fast in the second half of 2020 that they were approaching 100% of MSRP for some makes and models. This price ceiling put a cap on the gain that could be realised in the segment.

A good example of this is the Toyota Hilux. One of the most popular vehicles in Australia, the Hilux has remained in high demand throughout the recovery.

At the same time, the supply of new vehicles remained low because of factory shutdowns in different parts of the world.

A black 2019 Toyota Hilux, with 30,000km driven, reached an expected price of 89% of MSRP in January.

In January 2020, a 2018 Toyota Hilux, also with 30,000km driven, an almost perfectly comparable vehicle, was projected to be 80% of MSRP, according to the Moody's Analytics AutoCycle residual value forecasting solution.

That was a difference of almost \$4000 for practically the same vehicle.

The Moody's Analytics AutoCycle residual value forecast for the same 2019 Toyota Hilux shows that a return to normal depreciation patterns has already started.

The end of used vehicles as an appreciating asset in spite of usage is upon us.

It took a confluence of unpredictable circumstances—a highly transmissible virus, a surge in demand for consumer



BY MICHAEL BRISSON

electronics, a fire at a major auto chip producer, and a rapid recovery in world-wide new-vehicle sales—to flip the market on its head.

It won't take that much for the market to return to normal.

It's expected that the worst of the semi-conductor shortage is behind us going into the second half of 2021.

This is evidenced by a rise in US vehicle production after steadily falling throughout the year. Still, a surge in available chips, and thus new vehicles, isn't expected.

Rather, a slow and steadily increasing stream of semi-conductors will begin to catch up with demand from manufacturers.

Prices will remain elevated for the rest of 2021, compared with previous years, as the new-vehicle market looks to stabilise.

Still, there will be downward movement in the price levels as measured by the Datium Insights-Moody's Analytics Price Index.

However, the decrease won't be as steep or dramatic as the rise over the past year, keeping prices well above pre-pandemic levels. Risks to this forecast are weighted to the downside.

If there's a significant outbreak of the Delta variant of the coronavirus, countrywide mandated lockdowns could again cripple economic activity.

Job losses and recession would depress demand and cause used vehicles to lose value sharply.

Nevertheless, the most likely path forward is a smooth and steady decline in prices over the short to medium term as the supply of vehicles returns and the market reaches equilibrium.



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RISING STARS TROPHY HEADING TO NEW ZEALAND

The 2021 Capricorn Rising Stars trophy is heading to the South Island township of Rangiora in North Canterbury, New Zealand. CWR Motorsport Rangiora employee **Ben Brown** is the 2021 Capricorn Rising Stars apprentice of year.

The Capricorn Group says the Rising Stars initiative recognises and rewards Australasia's top-performing apprentices so they may be retained in the industry long-term.

Brown beat more than 600 automotive apprentices from Australia and New Zealand who were nominated by their employers for the award.

"It's clear the future is in safe hands with so many outstanding apprentices being nominated by Capricorn members," says Capricorn Automotive chief executive **Brad Gannon**.

"We took on Ben our apprentice in August 2020," says CWR Motorsport's **Mel Ward**. "To say the least, it's the best thing we've done."

"Ben has a fantastic work ethic, he's polite and great with the customers. He's passionate about not only his mechanic side of the job, but also has a lot of ideas and vision to help us to grow our business."



BEN BROWN

"We wouldn't be where we are today without him."

Brown says CWR's **Chris Ward** is well known in the motorsport field, and is regarded as an honest, professional, and skilful automotive engineer.

"This has afforded me learning opportunities I didn't know existed, developing skills I had only dreamt of."

As the 2021 Capricorn Rising Star, Brown will receive \$5000 from Castrol. The CWR Motorsport team will also benefit from enrolment in the Workshop Whisperer's Service Advisor Pro online programme.

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LOCKDOWN JUST ONE OF MANY ISSUES SAY VICTORIAN CAR DEALERS

Victorian car dealers say the July snap lockdown is just one of many issues their businesses are enduring.

Warrnambool-based Norton Motor Group dealer principal Marcus Norton says though business has been "quite good" the supply of new vehicles continues to be an issue that he believes will continue into early 2022.

"We've only just locked down so not sure as to how this latest one will go. We're hoping it is only for the five days," Norton said in mid-July.

"Our service department remains open for service and maintenance in a COVID-safe manner but our sales department is closed. We do have a skeleton staff working the phones for customer service."

Fairway Motor Traders' general manager **Christopher (Chris) Christofi** says things have been frustrating to say the least.

"It seems as though as soon as we start to build a little momentum we're put in another snap lockdown here in Victoria."

"A lot of our business has moved to a contactless process even out of lockdown, but it seems now that the biggest effect is confidence both from the dealers we sell to and the end consumer buying the cars. Prices

of secondhand cars also seem to be correcting themselves," he says.

"We've recently put a larger focus into our online car buying service purchasing from private customers which has started to pick up momentum and keep us busy in and out of the lockdowns.

"All in all we're getting by and just trying to do what we can within the environment we're put in," Christofi adds.

The dealer principal of Volvo Cars Brighton, Doncaster, and South Yarra **Sue Alford**, says the three sites are open for click and collect sales and service.

"However the market has dropped off considerably since June 30 which is a concern and now we have the lockdown to contend with as well, it doesn't look good for the remainder of the month."

Volvo Cars Australia corporate and public relations director **Greg Bosnich** says though head office staff will be working from home until at least July 30, the dealerships continue to interact with customers.

"To date the dealerships continue to interact with the customers and we're not showing any signs of a decline.

"The Melbourne dealer network demonstrated great resilience during the last lockdown and I'm sure they



MARCUS NORTON



CHRIS CHRISTOFI



SUE ALFORD



VOLVO XC40 RECHARGE

have taken a number of learnings, including contactless sales and deliveries," he says.

"To date we continue on the trajectory toward the number (10,000 sales for 2021). Being a long lead time market we planned for, ordered and have been provided with the vehicles (to date) enabling us to deliver against our plans.

"Our Volvo XC40 Recharge pure electric is an imminent arrival and will be on sale in the next number of weeks. Our MY22 vehicles are also due to arrive around the same time with the V60 Cross Country also amongst them.

"With the plans mentioned we feel confident that we can continue the trend as the fastest growing luxury car brand in Australia," Bosnich adds.



CUPRA AUSTRALIA HEAD OF SALES ANOOSH SAFFARI

CUPRA AUSTRALIA HEAD OF NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
DANE HARVEY

CUPRA AUSTRALIA HEAD OF PRODUCT JEFF SHAFER

CUPRA ANNOUNCES MANAGEMENT APPOINTMENTS

Cupra Australia has made three appointments to its senior leadership team from within the Volkswagen Group network.

The Spanish Cupra brand will launch officially in Australia in the middle of 2022.

The range will include the Leon hatchback, the Ateca SUV, and the Formentor crossover SUV, with a range of performance and plug-in hybrid powertrains.

Adopting an agency model that embraces online sales, the brand will work with key dealer partners from the existing Volkswagen Group network.

It will launch with a range of Cupra Garage brand spaces in major metro areas.

Cupra Australia has appointed **Jeff Shafer** as head of product. He joins from the VW Passenger Vehicles brand

where he led the brand's product marketing team for the past five years.

Shafer has held senior positions with Kia and at Toyota's global headquarters in Japan.

Anooosh Saffari has been appointed Cupra's head of sales, coming from Skoda Australia where he was responsible for the Victorian, South Australian and Tasmanian sales regions.

No stranger to industry start-ups, Saffari has extensive retail experience, having set up several award-winning dealership groups in the luxury category.

Dane Harvey becomes Cupra Australia's head of network development, coming from nine years working within the Volkswagen Group. Most recently he worked with VW's eastern region dealer network.

Harvey has also held sales positions with Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles

brands; his previous experience in architecture will prove invaluable as Cupra expands its national footprint.

Cupra Australia's newly appointed brand director Ben Wilks says he is thrilled with the new appointments.

"Our brand roll-out plans are already in full swing, and it's great to welcome Jeff, Anooosh and Dane to the growing Cupra tribe."

"Their experience, knowledge and passion for the brand will be vital to our success...and I look forward to working with all of them to bring this exciting brand to life in Australia."

Shafer, Saffari and Harvey start work with Cupra in coming weeks. Other key positions will be announced shortly.

Cupra brand and product communications will be run by **Kurt McGuinness**, in his expanded role as VGA's PR and group EV manager.

SEMI-CONDUCTOR SHORTAGE EXPECTED TO OUTLAST PANDEMIC

The global semiconductor shortage will have far-reaching and long-lasting effects that are likely to have a greater impact on the automotive industry than the COVID-19 pandemic, software provider VNC Automotive says.

"In conversations with clients and suppliers, it's become clear that the effects of the semiconductor shortage will long outlast the pandemic and will potentially have a far more serious impact on sales and future development," VNC Automotive founder and chief executive **Tom Blackie** says.

"Some of our suppliers are seeing prices for chips that are more than 30 times higher than before, and at that level, their use is no longer sustainable."

Blackie says United Kingdom-based VNC Automotive is even seeing vehicle buyers and fleet operators having to consider purchasing models that aren't on their preferred lists because that's all that's available.

"At a time when the industry is asking people to consider making the switch to EVs, supply restrictions are leaving them frustrated."

Disruptions in the supply chain

caused by fires and natural disasters at critical production plants have been compounded by an increase in demand for electronic devices and the car industry's faster-than-anticipated sales rebound after enforced factory shutdowns, VNC Automotive says.

"With OEMs feeling the pinch, some are taking evasive action."

On its most recent earnings call, Tesla chief executive **Elon Musk** covered the issue of substituting alternative chips into production vehicles – having to write the new firmware in a 'matter of weeks', and the 'intense effort' this approach required.

"Obviously, this is an approach that many manufacturers will not be able to take," Blackie says.

"Suppliers and OEMs may now be forced to simplify their designs to use fewer complex components that are still available and we're concerned this will lead to a reduction in functionality at a time when consumer expectations have never been higher.

"It's also possible that systems hurriedly-adapted to use a simpler component set may quickly be left behind as future generations of mobile



TOM BLACKIE

phones cease to support the older platforms they may be built on."

To circumvent the situation some companies, such as Bosch, are looking at establishing their own manufacturing plants in order to create a guaranteed chain of supply.

But this is not without its own implications, particularly with regard to increased costs and the possible negative knock-on effect for previously planned investment, says VNC Automotive which is considering ways it can improve the situation for its customers by replicating much of the processing normally performed in silicon with rapidly deployed software instead.



ISUZU AUSTRALIA SIGNS WITH AUTONEXUS

Isuzu Australia has selected AutoNexus as a new national supply chain partner for the preparation of the N Series small to medium trucks.

The agreement is effective nationally across all AutoNexus sites, encompassing processing, storage and transport.

AutoNexus has also announced a significant expansion of its parts warehouse in Greystanes, New South Wales. It will increase the site's footprint by 8000 square metres to a total of 21,000.

The Greystanes expansion caters directly for growth of customer business, with increased storage capacity, dedicated receiving and despatch docks.

The company is also investing in a new purpose-built AutoNexus fulfilment facility, at a new location in Pinnacle Road, Altona North, Victoria.

"We're delighted to be partnering with Isuzu Australia while also investing in the future, in our own facilities," says AutoNexus managing director **Darren Bowler**.

"We're looking forward to working closely with Isuzu Australia and we'll be working to streamline supply chain

efficiencies and get more Isuzu trucks from wharves out to dealerships, assisting with meeting the market demand.

"The Greystanes expansion is a clear demonstration of confidence in AutoNexus' warehousing operations.

"These developments represent both customer confidence and our vision for the future as we align our business to cater for growth and opportunities."

The Altona North facility covers 13.6 hectares and has hail mesh storage for just under 6000 vehicles.

It will accommodate vehicle processing and storage for AutoNexus' OEM partners, as well as central reconditioning for used cars, pre-delivery and detailing, along with an all-new fleet conversions facility.

A 12-month build of a 5000 square metre vehicle preparation building starts later this year, along with fit-out of 1000 square metres of office space, all designed for growing operations and aligning to fulfilling the company's model of the future.

The site has room for expansion to support AutoNexus' growing fleet conversion business, retail business



DARREN BOWLER

and vehicle reconditioning.

AutoNexus plans to move to the new site by mid-2022.

The latest development follows last year's announcement that KTM Group had signed a multi-year deal with AutoNexus to supply warehousing and distribution of all parts, accessories, merchandise and apparel.

In 2019, AutoNexus was awarded a multi-year agreement with Suzuki Australia, managing Suzuki's vehicle processing, movements, storage, parts and fitment needs.

EDWARDS IS JLR'S NEW MARKETING DIRECTOR

Shannon Edwards is replacing **Kevin Nicholls** as Jaguar Land Rover Australia's marketing director.

She reports directly to JLR managing director **Mark Cameron** and is responsible for all local product marketing, customer experience, media and communications activity on all brands.

The role includes go-to-market strategy, current and future product planning, marketing communications, customer relationship management, brand and digital experience, data strategy, insights, and supporting growth.

Previously, Edwards worked in senior marketing leadership roles at global luxury and consumer goods companies including LVMH, Estée Lauder, and L'Oréal where she strengthened luxury brand-building, driving brand acceleration and leading digital transformation in Australia.

"As an experienced leader in bringing premium global brands to the Australian market, Shannon is an exciting appointment to the Jaguar Land Rover business," says Cameron.

"Brand acceleration, customer-centricity and digital transformation have been hallmarks of her career,



SHANNON EDWARDS

making her ideally placed to help realise our global reimagine strategy in Australia."

PRODUCT MANAGER

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- Researching and analysing future trends, new product opportunities and associated impacts on your product portfolio
- Developing and submitting strategic recommendations regarding new market & product opportunities in line with changes in vehicle fleet and market conditions.
- Monitoring and reporting on sales and financial performance of products to ensure a competitive product offer, whilst maximising profitability
- Working closely with Supply Chain team and overseas suppliers to ensure ongoing management of your product portfolio
- Managing the new product introduction process in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to ensure effective introduction of new products

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- Working closely with the Automotive Brand Manager to ensure availability of supporting marketing collateral in line with stakeholder requirements and latest trends
- Ensuring all supporting assets relative to your product portfolio and categories are maintained to ensure they are accurate, up to date in line with market requirements
- Assist with the on-going maintenance of CYB's application database and to identify car parc trends and their associated impact on the product portfolio.
- Providing strategic commercial input regarding future marketing plans and strategy.
- Participating in conferences, training sessions, trade shows and industry events to support products and categories.
- Providing ongoing training and support to national sales team

REQUIREMENTS

- At least two years' experience in a similar role
- Proven experience regarding research, development and introduction of new products
- Ability to effectively manage multiple products and categories
- Strong research and analytical skills
- Ability to effectively manage deadlines and multiple projects
- Experience with developing and launching new products to market from initial concept through to market launch
- Intermediate to Advanced Excel skills

An understanding of battery products and or the recreational (Marine/Deep Cycle/4x4) market would be advantageous but not essential

TO APPLY

We welcome your interest in joining our business at this exciting time. Please email your Resume with a covering letter to careers@cyb.com.au. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

PODIUM DRIVING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS TEXTING REVOLUTION

Local business communication and payments platform, Podium, is continuing its international expansion by officially launching in Australia from August 5.

The platform serves more than 90,000 local businesses in the United States, Canada, and Australia.

Podium says its Australian customer base almost quadrupled to more than 3000 local businesses since the start of the pandemic.

Through its SMS-based platform, Podium helps local businesses receive more reviews, collect payments, send SMS campaigns, and centralise their communications – all on the channels their customers prefer. Podium's centralised platform aggregates communications from channels such as Google, Facebook, Instagram and TripAdvisor.

The Australian Podium team is being led by country manager **Dave Scheine**, who has more than 15 years of experience launching international teams and operations at companies such as Google, Yelp, and Vend.

Podium currently has 65 employees in Australia and says it plans to significantly expand headcount to almost double that over the coming 12 months.

"We've already had an incredible response from local Australian businesses, and I'm humbled to lead the launch of a platform that holds so much potential for them," Scheine says. These businesses – the glue that holds communities together – have faced a lot recently, and now more than ever need Podium to communicate with customers on the platforms they prefer. So many of us live and work via our smartphones today, which

presents significant opportunities for local businesses.

"SMS text messages have a 98% open rate and three in four consumers would prefer to interact with a business via text. What this demonstrates is that mobile communications is more than a 'nice to have' today, it's essential.

Consumers also rely heavily on online reviews to discover businesses, so it's not an exaggeration to say that businesses who rely solely on foot traffic and physical location are in danger of being left behind.

When running a business today, it's so important to not only meet, but exceed customer expectations. COVID has created new consumer expectations, but also new opportunities to win customers online. Through Podium, we're helping Australian businesses create the online presence they need and deserve," he says.

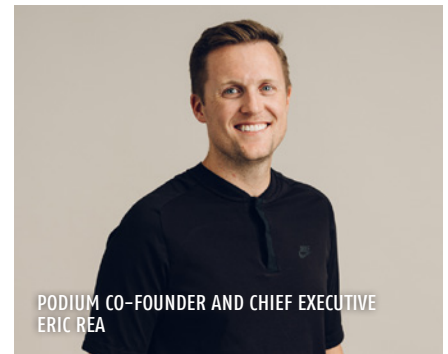
The Podium platform includes reviews, payments, webchat, feedback, team chat, inbox, video chat and campaigns is used by more than 3000 local businesses. Since March 2020, when the first lockdown began, Australian businesses have sent nearly six million messages and received nearly 200,000 reviews through Podium.

To grow its market share, Podium's focus is on both payments and communications, providing local businesses with the platform not available through current market incumbents.

To do so, Podium says it will focus on product innovation, by both perfecting the current solutions and expanding the platform with new tools and operational areas to deliver a comprehensive operating system



PODIUM AUSTRALIA COUNTRY MANAGER
DAVE SCHEINE



PODIUM CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ERIC REA

for businesses to run their front office with Podium.

Podium says it will also focus on developing partnerships and alliances in key verticals, as well as diversifying into new sectors.

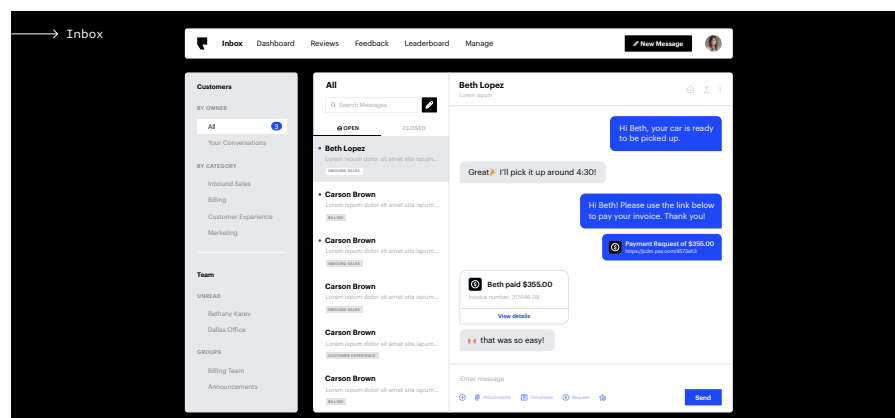
"From the US, Australia has always felt like a significant market for Podium," Co-founder and chief executive **Eric Rea** says.

"Local Australian businesses have been reaching out to Podium proactively since 2016, so establishing a presence in such a vibrant small business market has always felt like an important step for us."

"I started the business following a phone call from my father, who had plenty of happy customers at his tyre shop, but only a handful of unhappy ones were leaving reviews. So we built a product that made getting more reviews as easy as sending a text.

As we set out to solve the same problem for local businesses everywhere, we realised that messaging with customers wasn't just the better way to get reviews – it's the better way to do business. We've since built a multi-product platform that's modernising the way local businesses work."

"Like in the US, Australia is renowned for the strength of its small business community. People like my father who are looking for more convenient ways to interact with their customers and run rewarding, successful businesses. Our mission to bring those capabilities to local businesses here in Australia," he says.





JOWETT OPENING FOURTH BMW DEALERSHIP

Jowett Motor Group (JMG) is strengthening its relationship with BMW Australia with the future opening of Glenelg BMW in South Australia.

It already owns and operates Waverley BMW, South Yarra BMW and Berwick BMW in Victoria.

Adding the Glenelg BMW dealership in September will mean BMW Australia will have 47 dealer locations nationwide.

Glenelg BMW will begin trading on September 1, 2021 and be located temporarily at 141 Brighton Road, Glenelg South – a coastal suburb 11km from the Adelaide CBD – while a new permanent facility is constructed at the same address.

The all-new dealership facility is set to open in late 2022.

The establishment of Glenelg BMW also means BMW and Mini will have a second presence in the South Australian capital, joining Adelaide BMW that was established in 1990 and is located on the CBD's western fringe.

Adelaide BMW is owned and operated by Eagers Automotive Group, which is planning a major investment in the business. It will establish a separate location with 12 additional service

bays that will broaden its aftersales capability.

There will also be a new dedicated BMW Premium Certified pre-owned outlet with more than 50 vehicles on display.

The expansion of the BMW and Mini Australia dealer networks comes at a time of robust growth for BMW in Australia.

In the first six months of 2021, new BMW and Mini registrations were up 14.7% compared with the same period last year, and multiple model lines recorded double digit growth.

BMW Australia chief executive **Wolfgang Buechel** says the opening of Glenelg BMW by Jowett Motor Group and commitment to upgrade Adelaide BMW by Eagers Automotive Group underline the brand's close partnership with its dealers while enabling it to service customers on both sides of the city.

"Our dealers represent the backbone of our business and their intention to invest in brand-new facilities and develop existing sites is a very positive action that confirms their confidence in our brands and where we're headed," Buechel says.

"However, this association goes well beyond a business partnership and



how many vehicles we sell. It's also about building our brand through all-important premium customer solutions.

"We are working closely with our dealer partners on this strategy at a time when the automotive industry is going through some of its biggest changes.

"The new and upgraded facilities will grow and expand our presence in Adelaide so we are in an even better position to accommodate the needs of our customers, which is at the heart of everything we do," he adds.



TOYOTA MARKS 200,000TH HYBRID SALE IN AUSTRALIA

Toyota Motor Corporation Australia (TMCA) says it has now sold more than 200,000 hybrid models to Australian customers.

To the end of June 2021, more than 210,817 Toyota hybrids have been sold in this country comprising of the Camry, RAV4, Corolla and Prius.

It took until mid-2018 for TMCA to pass 100,000 hybrid deliveries, almost 17 years after the original Prius was launched in 2001.

TMCA says the **Camry** has proven Australia's most popular hybrid with 75,998 sales, followed by the **RAV4** (48,632), **Corolla** (40,143) and **Prius** (20,778).

So far this year, TMCA says it is on track to eclipse its annual sales record of 54,335 hybrid electric vehicles, achieved last year.

To the end of June, TMCA has sold 34,036 hybrids – a total that accounts for more than 85% of all electrified models sold in Australia.

The total represents 28.6% of Toyota's overall sales in 2021.

Leading the way in 2021 is the **RAV4** with 14,821 hybrid sales, or 72.8% of total **RAV4** demand.

The **RAV4** Hybrid made history in August 2020 when 4405 units were sold, making it the first hybrid to top Australia's monthly national sales charts.

Buyers of the **Corolla** hatch and sedan have also favoured hybrids with 7906 cars sold in 2021, representing 57.2% of the model's total volume.

The hybrid nameplate is even more popular among **Camry** sedan buyers at 79.5% (4979) and **Yaris Cross** at 61.4% (2588).

TMCA sales, marketing and franchise operations vice president **Sean Hanley** say the growing popularity of hybrid vehicles supported the company's commitment to expanding its range.

"We see Toyota hybrid vehicles as an ideal powertrain choice for consumers looking to save money at the fuel pump while reducing their environmental impact.

"With the arrival of the new Kluger hybrid SUV last month, we look forward

to the next chapter of Toyota's hybrid journey in Australia," Hanley says.

TOYOTA HYBRID SALES IN AUSTRALIA (TO JUNE 30, 2021)	
CAMRY	75,998
RAV4	48,632
COROLLA	40,143
PRIUS	20,778
PRIUS C	9,758
C-HR	5,079
PRIUS V	5,255
YARIS CROSS	3,445
KLUGER	1,118
YARIS	611
TOTAL	210,817



GENESIS MOTORS AUSTRALIA EXPANDING DEALERSHIPS

As it prepares to receive three all-new luxury electric vehicles in 2022, Genesis Australia is expanding its network across New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

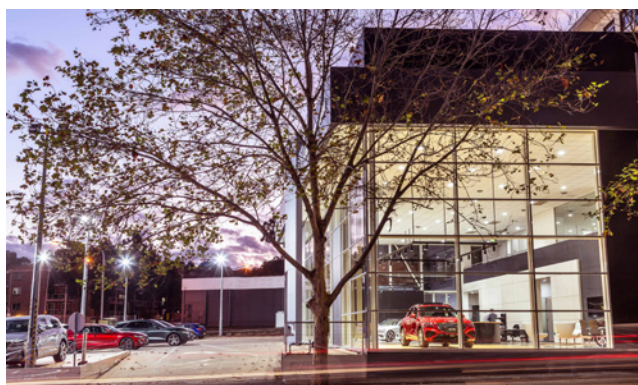
It has opened a second flagship studio in the Emporium Melbourne in the heart of the city's CBD. The showroom joins the existing studio in Sydney's Pitt Street Mall.

In metropolitan Sydney, Genesis says the Parramatta Test Drive Centre has been so successful since it opened last year, that it has had to move to a larger and more prominent site at 87 Church Street.

In Queensland, Genesis is opening two metro Test Drive Centres, in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast, later this year. They'll be followed by a halo Brisbane Studio in 2022.

Genesis says the network gives customers the opportunity to interact with the brand in the way that best suits their lifestyle, whether that's online, through the Genesis-to-You concierge service, in flagship CBD Studios, or at a metro Test Drive Centre.

The brand says Genesis Test Drive



Centres offer a place for customers to experience the range of Genesis vehicles. The centres are also adjacent to luxury competitors' showrooms.

Built on one level, the Melbourne Studio evokes the Korean aesthetic of the "Beauty of White Space" as visitor attention is drawn to an 18-metre floor to ceiling LED backdrop which envelopes the main display area, Genesis says.

The brand says the minimalist design is complemented with floor to ceiling dark wood panelling and burnished concrete interior finishes, providing a "canvas" to highlight the Genesis vehicles on the floor.

A display of light, movement and graphic art reflects on to the curves and lines of the latest Genesis sedans and SUVs, which include the GV80 large SUV

and the G70 and G80 luxury sedans.

Genesis's fourth model, the all-new GV70 mid-size SUV, is also set to launch this month, and is on display at both Melbourne and Sydney studios.

"The Melbourne Studio showcases the latest Genesis luxury models in an artistic environment, whilst providing an exceptional customer experience, which

is at the core of the Genesis Brand's philosophy," says Genesis' Australian chief executive **Jun Heo**.

"Genesis is focused on sustainable sales growth. We are building momentum locally with an expanding retail presence and exciting new models are on the horizon.

"With the imminent introduction of our second SUV, GV70, and electric vehicles arriving next year, we expect to see a gradual increase in sales in the second half of 2021 and beyond," he adds.

Next year, Genesis will shift its focus towards the introduction of an electric range, with three pure-electric vehicles confirmed for Australia in the first half of 2022.

VW CREATES NEW SUPPLY UPDATE WEBPAGE

Volkswagen Australia (VGA) is opening a new page on its website to keep customers informed about their preferred vehicles sit in the supply chain.

The page is located at <https://www.volkswagen.com.au/en/vehicle-delivery-delays.html>.

It augments the online stock locator and ordering capability introduced in 2020.

VGA managing director **Michael Bartsch** says desired production levels of certain models are a "perennial factor in the importing of European vehicles, especially those that are in great demand by markets in closer proximity to the factories".

"To place the current semi-conductor issue in context, (VW) experienced longer delays on certain models due to the mass re-testing required by the adoption of WLTP fuel consumption testing in Europe."

"For instance, the full Passat and Arteon ranges are only this year returning to local showrooms after prolonged WLTP related absences.

"Nevertheless, the shortage of this key component is being felt in the



supply in some ranges. While the supply disposition changes rapidly, even daily, Volkswagen is resolved to provide customers with the latest information possible," he adds.

Volkswagen has secure supply of the Polo, T-Cross, T-Roc and Tiguan Allspace. Soon there will have ample supply of both Arteon sedan versions, but little availability of the two new Shooting Brakes (station wagons), until 2020.

Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles' primary issue relates to the Amarok ute, with numbers reduced by

logistical delays. Large numbers of Amaroks will become available shortly.

The T6.1 van range is selling rapidly and further supply is being sought.

Global demand for the Crafter van, coupled to the semi-conductor issue, means that the Crafter 35 variants won't return in numbers until 2022. Crafter 50 variants can be delivered this year.

The new Caddy range is on sale this month.

POLESTAR AUSTRALIA PREPARED FOR NOVEMBER LAUNCH

The Swedish electric performance brand Polestar has announced three appointments to its local management team ahead of the brand's Australian launch in November.

Polestar Automotive Australia will be led by managing director, **Samantha Johnson**.

She was previously the Director of Business Control, Financial Services & Digital Transformation at Volvo Car Australia. During her career Johnson held numerous positions both in Australia and abroad, including almost 10 years as Director of Finance & Retail Operations at Harley Davidson.

Jeremy Goh has been appointed head of commercial, Paul Jowett has been appointed head of business development and **Jonathan Williams** has been appointed head of marketing by Polestar Automotive Australia.

"I am delighted to announce the Australian management team for

Polestar, which brings the right mix of automotive know-how and a progressive, start-up mindset to the brand," Johnson says.

"The team will be instrumental in overseeing the launch of Polestar and the all-electric Polestar 2 to Australian audiences from November 2021, while playing a central role in achieving our ambitious growth plans for 2022."

Goh has almost two decades of automotive industry experience. He joins Polestar from Nissan Australia where he was the lead for residual value management and certified pre-owned vehicles at Nissan, and general manager, national sales and dealer network development for Infiniti.

Prior to joining Nissan, Goh held various roles within DaimlerChrysler / Fiat Chrysler Automobiles for 13 years.

Jowett joins Polestar from Huawei where he was director of marketing for the retail team in the consumer electronics division. His role will



encompass Polestar's operator network, retail, charging solutions, financial services, digital commerce and pricing.

Williams joins Polestar from tech start-up KLOOK, the most funded travel booking platform in history, where he held the role of ANZ marketing director.

The appointments come as Polestar continues its global expansion in 2021 from 10 to 18 operational markets, including Australia and four additional markets in the Asia Pacific region.



PRAGA CARS APPOINTS MELBOURNE-BASED DEALER

Czech brand, Praga Cars, has appointed Melbourne-based Praga Racing ANZ as its first official dealer for Australia and New Zealand, selling the R1 mini-LMP style racing car.

Euro Motorsport (EMS) owner and principal Nik Manukyan and technology consultancy owner and racing driver **Rick Campbell** are partners in the Praga Racing ANZ dealership and will hold exclusive rights to represent Praga Cars and the R1 in Australasia.

At EMS Manukyan has provided engineering expertise to the owners of high-performance European supercars for more than 15 years.

Campbell, as CEO and owner of technology consulting firms operating in Europe, the US and Asia Pacific, has indulged his passion as a racing driver throughout Australia, the Middle East, US and Europe.

Praga Racing ANZ joins Praga Racing Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg), and Praga Racing West (California) as the Czech brand's first three dealers.

"We're pleased to have agreed terms with **Rick and Nik** and look forward to helping them grow the Praga brand in the region," says Praga Cars head of commercial operations **Mark Harrison**.

"The R1 is a cost-effective and easy to run mini-LMP style carbon racer that is now really starting to take off in the UK and I expect the same to happen in Australia



(LEFT TO RIGHT) RICK CAMPBELL, NIK MANUKYAN AND EMS OPERATIONS MANAGER GEORGE SUCHOMEL

and New Zealand in the coming years given the historically close motor racing links between our countries," he says.

Praga Racing ANZ will receive the first two R1s in the next few months, with a view to participating in a national race series in Australia in early 2022 and offering an end-to-end proposition for the purchase, servicing and support of the R1.

"I'm really pleased that Praga Racing ANZ has joined this initial group of Praga Racing partners," says Praga Cars owner **Tomas Kasperek**.

"Their background clearly shows excellent client relations in high-performance motoring and significant racing experience, so they are well placed to present the R1 and Praga brand to the standards we expect."

"We are already building them two R1s, so we are anticipating strong growth in the region once they get racing in 2022."

Kasperek says Praga Cars is talking to other potential international R1 dealers in Africa, Asia, Europe, and North

America, and is targeting agreements with three in 2021.

The first stage of its global network has been managed jointly between the company's manufacturing and legal teams in the Czech Republic and Praga Cars' global commercial headquarters in the UK.

Established in 1907 Praga brand is headquartered in Prague and designs and

manufacture cars, motorcycles and aircraft.

The Praga R1 secured more than 30 wins and podium places across the UK, USA and Europe in 2019, and won the 2020 Britcar Endurance Championship with seven wins from nine races.

The R1 provides a motor racing platform for an amateur or professional driver looking to compete nationally or internationally, the company says.

Its composite monocoque ensures high safety standards. Designed with simplicity of operation in mind, it can be run with a small crew, while "offering race-winning performance in an affordable package".

Alongside the R1 racing car, Praga's IPK Division produces racing karts that won a World Championship in 2020. Praga Aviation is developing the Alfa multi-purpose STOL aircraft, and Praga has also completed a successful 2021 Dakar Rally campaign, finishing fifth in the truck category.

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BURSON RECOGNISES ITS FIRST BRANCH MANAGER

As part of its 50th year of operation in 2021, Burson Auto Parts has recognised one employee who contributed more than 32 years of service to the company, and has the distinction of being its very first branch manager.

Former operations general manager **Terry Penney** first met with Burson co-founder **Ron Burgoine** in 1972, while working as a mechanic in a Melbourne service station. **Andrew Schram** was Penney's apprentice and would go on to forge a more than 40-year career with Burson Auto Parts.

Burgoine started doing business with the service station bringing carpet mats that he and partner **Garry Johnson** had sourced using off cuts from the Ford factory which were then overlocked together by a team of machinists.

Johnson and Burgoine expanded the range of parts and accessories that Penney sold on consignment. Penney says he looked forward to Burgoine's visits as he would bring fish and chips every Friday with the new stock deliveries.

Burgoine told Penney that he had the "gift of the gab" offering him a job in 1975 as a cash van driver with the now four-year-old Burson Auto Parts company.

Three years of being one of the top-selling cash van drivers followed. Penney would head to the company's warehouse in Heidelberg to replenish his stock and it was during one of these visits that Johnson made him an offer that would shape the rest of his career.

"Garry approached me and said that they were looking at opening their first store, in Braybrook (Melbourne). He wanted me to manage it and not knowing a lot about store management, I realised that I needed some help," Penney says.

"I called Andrew Schram and told him we were opening up a store and I needed him on board. When he said: 'I don't know anything about that' I replied with 'Neither do I, but we are doing it,'" Penney says.

As the first Burson Auto Parts store manager and second in charge, Penney and Schram dived into their roles head-first. This is where Schram started the role that would occupy the rest of his entire professional career, selecting the store's stock to have exactly what the customers needed.

They also actioned something from that first Burson Auto Parts store that forever changed the trade – on-demand delivery of parts.



TERRY PENNEY (THIRD ACROSS) WITH LONG SERVING BURSON AUTO PARTS STORE MANAGERS LEO CONTESSA, DAVID JEFFREY AND LES GROOM WEARING THEIR FAVOURITE AFL TEAM GUERNEYS.

"The trade loved having the parts as soon as they needed them and as we all know, this service is now a staple of the automotive parts business in Australia," Penney says.

Penney managed the inaugural Burson Auto Parts store for two years before the start of the company's expansion with the opening of the company's second store in City Road, South Melbourne. He oversaw this store for three years before making the move to a new store closer to his home in Essendon, which as a Bombers fan suited him fine. After another successful four years there, Johnson offered Penney another career opportunity.

"Garry asked me to become a Store Supervisor overseeing the performance of ten stores," Penney says.

"I put together a store set-up team and I would jump into the car with them and drive to each new store location and have it set up within a couple of days ready for business, no matter where they were along the Eastern Seaboard or in regional areas.

"We continued the store expansion program for several years and I moved into the Heidelberg head office to work alongside Garry to plan new store locations. Andrew Schram had also moved into the head office by this time, firmly focussed on locating, establishing, and securing relationships with quality product suppliers.

"Business was going well, and we had managed to develop a strong rapport with the trade. It was at this time that Garry and Ron split, which was sad as I was very close friends with Ron, it was because of his belief in my potential that I became a part of the company.

"From that point my relationship with Garry became much stronger. His professional and personal guidance helped me so much in the years that followed. I never made it to secondary school, I had worked full time from the age of 14. Garry taught me so much and



AN EARLY CAREER IMAGE OF TERRY PENNEY.

we remained side by side for the rest of my career," he says.

Penney became the company's head of sales and took care of the company's delivery vehicle fleets. He was also involved in human resources for what had become a 70 store Burson Auto Parts network.

"For my entire career it was Garry, Andrew and myself running everything. We knew the time was coming where the reigns needed to be handed over for Burson to take its next leap forward. Darryl Abotomey and his Bapcor team has certainly done that and continue to do this," Penney says.

"I retired in 2007 before Garry sold the business, as I promised I would at 60 years of age – and that was definitely the right thing. Andrew and I had gone from being mechanics in a service station to becoming company directors of one of nation's top trade parts suppliers during our careers," he says.

Another source of pride for Penney is that his son, Aaron, has followed in his father's footsteps. Aaron Penney is one of Burson Auto Parts' National Key Accounts Managers, having joined the team in 2020.

CAPRICORN REPORT: AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY OUTLOOK POSITIVE

In spite of the global pandemic's ongoing financial impact on some Australian and New Zealand businesses, Capricorn Co-operative's second state-of-the-nation report reveals a positive outlook for the automotive industry.

The Co-operative commissioned research firm TKP to poll 1551 members in Australia and 524 in New Zealand in April, to gain insight into what's important to its members and the state of the industry, in the second year of COVID-19.

It found business traffic had increased and profits were up because of social distancing and people shying away from using public transport and ride sharing options in larger cities.

"Generally, the results of the survey were very optimistic despite the ongoing impact the pandemic is having on other businesses sectors across the world," says Capricorn Group chief executive **David Fraser**.

"More than half the members surveyed said COVID 19 had had minimal impact on their business as border closures meant more people were using their vehicles domestically."

The survey revealed that on average, profits were up by around \$100K per business, in part because of increased reliance on cars and a car park that had grown by several hundred thousand vehicles.

"When we compared the results to last year's report, members were still feeling confident about the future of both their business and the industry, which is excellent news in such uncertain times," Fraser says.

"Our members still really love what they do, which is making customers happy and the fun of problem solving and fixing things, two of the biggest positives of working in the industry."

"However, the survey really drove home some important key messages about work-life balance and business owners taking time off for holidays and family."

The survey found 53% of Capricorn members were concerned about a skills shortage and 54% said it was difficult to find time to take a break or a holiday.

"It's clear that our members work hard and achieving a healthy work-life balance is still a major issue for them,



DAVID FRASER

but that's only going to get worse if we don't start training future generations now," Fraser continues.

"What's become apparent is there's a big shortage of qualified technicians coming into the industry and we need to focus on the importance of building the pipeline of talent for tomorrow.

"If you've ever considered taking an apprentice on, now is the time to invest in the future of our industry and take advantage of the many government grants available to help your business grow."

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY BRAKE PADS FOR EV-HYBRID VEHICLES

Bendix is launching a range of brake pads to meet the growing demand for EV and Hybrid vehicles in Australia.

The new EV-Hybrid were specifically designed in Ballarat by the Bendix research and development department and are made from organic materials for minimal environmental impact.

The manufacturer says the new EV-Hybrid pads ensure a low environmental impact while ensuring low dust and noise levels.

Bendix says this new development ensures low particle emissions when braking resulting in cleaner wheels and longer disc brake rotor life.

It says pads have been specifically

formulated for electric and hybrid vehicles, for quiet braking and low noise, with excellent vehicle range availability to be announced before years end.

The Bendix EV-Hybrid brake pads are made from copper-free organic brake friction materials and are certified to the Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA) 'N' rating.

This rating confirms the Bendix EV-Hybrid brake pads contain less than 0.5 percent of copper by weight and permits Bendix to use the AASA LeafMark 'N' icon.

"The AASA LeafMark represents one of the highest global environmental standards for brake friction manufacturers and the Bendix EV



Hybrid material has been tested and accredited by an independent, third-party lab and certified to meet this high standard. Bendix has decided to go down this path to further advance its credentials as an environmentally industry conscious company," Bendix product manager **Ian Campbell** says.

RPM CONTINUES TO GROW THROUGH ACQUISITION

A SX listed RPM Automotive Group (ASX:RPM) continues its growth through acquisition strategy as it purchases another two complementary businesses and also opens a new distribution centre in Far North Queensland (FNQ).

RPM Automotive Group says the strategy is consistent with its recent acquisitions Elite Tyre Group, Super Tyre Mart and East Coast Tyre Wholesalers.

The group has acquired Carline Automotive – Cairns, Carline Automotive and Revolution Racegear – Townsville and leased a new warehouse.

The businesses were integrated into RPM's performance and accessories division, on August 1 2021, while the FNQ warehouse expands RPM's distribution footprint.

RPM chief executive **Clive Finkelstein** says providing a seamless customer experience serviced by our specialist staff across all our integrated brands is key to the success of RPM Automotive Group.

"The recent acquisitions of Carline Automotive – Cairns and Carline Automotive and Revolution Racegear – Townsville are examples of our next expansion phase, purchasing some of our franchisees and members as part of our forward integration plan," Finkelstein says.

"While opening the RPM Autoparts Townsville distribution centre enable us to improve our store supply capability in Far North Queensland. Our new warehousing facility is fully equipped to support our vertical integration model and house the breadth of products we offer.

"The acquisitions are part of our strategy outlined in our prospectus to acquire several Carline automotive outlets in the medium term and provides an opportunity to add further value to the businesses through revenue synergies from cross-selling products, and cost synergies from the scale benefits of a larger RPM Group.

"We continue to evaluate further bolt-on and strategic acquisitions in line with RPM's focussed growth strategy," he says.

Opened in 1990 as a Carline Automotive Store, Carline Cairns is one of the oldest as well as one of the largest Auto repair centres in FNQ says RPM. It says the store manager brings 17 years of experience with the business, while the vendor will continue to be involved as



RPM AUTOPARTS TEAM MEMBERS WITH CHIEF EXECUTIVE CLIVE FINKELSTEIN (FAR RIGHT)

landlord of the business' operations.

The Townsville store opened in 2015, and immediately became a member of the Revolution Racegear Franchise Group, and subsequently joined the Carline Group in 2019 and is well-known and respected as a performance tuning centre and motorsport outlet says RPM.

"From a motorsport perspective, as the host of two rounds of the Supercars Championship, Townsville is an important motorsport hub in North Queensland that will continue to grow upon completion of the new purpose-built motorsport facility at Woodstock later this year," Finkelstein says.

The RPM Autoparts Townsville distribution centre services all customers north of Rockhampton. The business distributes a wide range of RPM's tyre categories and brands; however, the focus initially will be on commercial, industrial and 4x4 passenger tyres, with significant opportunities to increase the group's passenger tyre and off road tyre turnover.

It also distributes RPM's Performance and Accessories Division's products. With a high concentration of RPM Autoparts customers, and Carline Automotive Stores in the broader region, this new venture will enable

RPM to more effectively provide logistics support to its business network across the region while also significantly reducing logistics costs.

According to RPM Automotive Group the combined retail businesses are forecast to generate \$3.5 million in revenue and \$525k in EBITDA in FY22. The two businesses will contribute around 15% to the Repairs & Roadside Division in FY22.

It says the RPM Autoparts Townsville distribution centre is expected to generate \$3.75 million in turnover and more than \$300k in EBITDA in its first 12 months of trading (expected opening date October 1, 2021).

The total purchase price of is \$500k, with consideration comprising of \$125k cash and \$375k in RPM shares (valued at RPM's 60-day weighted average price from signing of the sale and purchase agreement). The cash payments will be funded from RPM's existing cash reserves.

The sale and purchase agreements contain standard conditions precedent for completion, and RPM says it anticipates completing the acquisitions on or around September 1, 2021.



LDV TARGETS COURIER MARKET WITH G10+ VAN

In the first half of 2021, LDV delivered 7184 vehicles to June 30, a 127% increase on the 3163 vehicles it delivered in the first half of 2020.

The G10 van has seen 1517 units sold to the end of June, a 161.6% growth in 2021, proving that online shopping continues to have a knock-on demand in the courier business, says the distributor.

LDV says is set to grow further with the arrival of the new G10+ van, which brings additional refinements to the mid-sized model.

The G10+ uses the same 118kW 2.0-litre turbodiesel engine found in LDV's T60 Trailrider Ute and offers combined fuel economy of 8.2 litres/100km.

Both the new diesel model and existing petrol model get a new eight-speed ZF automatic with paddle shifters.

"For just \$1500 more than the standard G10, the new G10+ demonstrates our understanding of the courier business," says LDV Automotive general manager Dinesh Chinnappa.

"A more powerful and efficient diesel engine combined with a modern transmission makes a tough day of pick-ups and drop-off that bit easier. The new G10+ is quieter, more refined..."

Inside, the dashboard and ergonomics have been updated with a new rotary gear selector, new material finishes, and improved NVH levels making the van more relaxing to drive.

The G10+ is built for the courier



business, says LDV. Its 5.2m³ cargo area has a payload of 1093kg, and access is easy with two sliding side doors as standard.

A top-hinged tailgate provides protection from the weather when loading. There is also the option of rear barn doors on diesel models.

"The G10+ has multiple load tie-down points on the floor and the wheelarches, and there is tough floor covering throughout to protect both the vehicle and your cargo," says

Chinnappa.

"And to make sure you're never left in the dark, there are four lights in the load area along with an integrated step on both sides."

All new LDVs come with a factory-backed three year/ 100,000km (whichever occurs first) new vehicle warranty, and roadside assistance which provides 24-hour/seven-day support for the vehicle during the warranty period.

G10+ PRICING	DRIVEAWAY	DRIVEAWAY ABN
Van - Petrol AT - Lift Door	\$34,726	\$32,989
Van - Diesel MT - Lift Door	\$34,200	\$32,489
Van - Diesel MT - Barn Door	\$34,800	\$33,059
Van - Diesel AT - Lift Door	\$36,305	\$34,489
Van - Diesel AT - Barn Door	\$36,906	\$35,060

ISUZU MU-X FINE-TUNED FOR AUSTRALIA

Isuzu Ute says Australia is the largest market for the MU-X SUV outside Thailand, so the all-new model has been developed with significant feedback from local customers.

The new MU-X is available now at Isuzu Ute dealerships and will be sold in three variants, the LS-M, LS-U and LS-T in both 4x4 and 4x2.

The flagship MU-X LS-T 4x4 is launching with an introductory drive-away price of \$63,990.

Isuzu Ute Australia (IUA) says each model is equipped with new levels of premium features and finishes, the latest on-board technology including Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

The MU-X is powered by Isuzu's new 4JJ3-TCX, 3.0-litre turbodiesel engine producing 140kW and 450Nm and matched with a six-speed automatic gearbox.

"I'm proud to say that the Australian-spec MU-X was designed with the feedback from Australian motorists," IUA managing director **Hiroyasu Sato** says.. With the significant importance of Aussie customers we've been able to specify our MU-X to better suit their exact and unique requirements," says IUA managing director Hiroyasu Sato.

IUA says nearly 50% of Isuzu owners choose an MU-X to tow caravans, boats and trailers, making range, efficiency and towing capacity key factors.

Compared to the outgoing MU-X, this new model gains stiffer and stronger rear suspension, and the front axle benefits from Isuzu's independent double wishbone suspension design.

That translates to increased braked towing capacity of 3.5-tonnes, and greater payload.

Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) is now 2800kg, Gross Combination Mass (GCM) is 5900kg, and front and rear axle loads rise by 100kg and 50kg respectively.

Isuzu Ute has expanded the accessory catalogue with a selection of towing-focused accessories. They include a genuine towbar kit, with either a seven-pin or 12-pin plug, and a pair of ClearView extendable towing mirrors.

The mirrors power-fold and have integrated Blind-Spot Monitoring alert lights and LED indicators.

The MU-X also gets an Electronic Brake Controller and available for the first time is a genuine Weight Distribution Hitch (WDH).

The fuel tank capacity is 23% larger at 80-litres, and combined-cycle fuel consumption figures are 7.8 to 8.3



litres/100km.

Optimal visibility for touring is achieved with Bi-LED headlights with LED daytime running lights. The headlights have auto-levelling and automatic high beam control.

LS-U and LS-T models add LED front foglights.

In the cabin, all models feature front row and second and third row roof-mounted air-conditioning vents (with dual-zone air-conditioning control in LS-U and LS-T variants) and for cooler months, the LS-T has variably controlled heated front seats.

Isuzu says MU-X 4x4 models get a new, stronger and more-efficient drivetrain, making shifting into 2WD-High Range, 4WD-High Range and 4WD-Low Range easier using the 4x4 Terrain Command dial.

All 4x4 models have an electromagnetic locking rear differential and a new off-road electronic driver aid, Rough Terrain Mode which maximises drivability in slippery and rough conditions.

Coupled with improved approach, departure and ramp-over angle because of the shorter front overhang, Isuzu engineers have increased the MU-X's wading depth to up to 800mm.

The MU-Xs Intelligent Driver Assistance System (IDAS) offers a comprehensive suite of safety and convenience features. Standard on all variants, IDAS combines active and passive safety and driver assistance technology into one package.

At the heart of IDAS is a Hitachi 3D stereo camera, a binocular camera system that can precisely detect and measure distance, size, speed, and depth of vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists and other obstacles in front of the MU-X.

Mounted high on the windscreen to increase the camera's range, field-of-view and depth perception, the 3D camera system enables the MU-X to detect more subjects with a lower risk of miss-detection and take the necessary countermeasures.

All Isuzu Ute genuine and approved accessories have been engineered and calibrated to work in harmony with Isuzu's IDAS.

That allows seamless integration and a provision to mount an UHF antenna and additional driving lights.

Some of the IDAS's active safety features include Adaptive Cruise Control with engine stop and go, Autonomous Emergency Braking, Blind Spot Monitoring, Lane Departure Prevention, Trailer Sway Control, and Mis-acceleration Mitigation.

The MU-X also has eight airbags including knee and centre airbags.

All models are backed by IUA's Service Plus 6-7-7 ownership care package which includes a six-year/150,000km warranty, up to seven years' roadside assistance when serviced through Isuzu Ute dealers, and seven years' capped price servicing.

PRICING - RRP FROM AUGUST 2, 2021

Model	Drivetrain	Transmission	RRP (before ORC)
LS-M	4x2	AT	\$47,900
LS-U		AT	\$53,900
LS-T		AT	\$59,900
LS-M	4x4	AT	\$53,900
LS-U		AT	\$59,900
LS-T		AT	\$65,900



MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE CROSS PHEV HERE IN AUGUST

Mitsubishi Australia says three variants of its new Eclipse Cross SUV plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) will arrive in dealerships nationally from August 2021.

The three all-wheel-drive variants are: the ES priced from \$46,490, the Aspire priced from \$49,990, and the Exceed priced from \$53,990.

Mitsubishi says the Eclipse Cross PHEV can travel more than 55km on a single battery charge, enabling drivers to use EV Mode for most of their weekly drive with zero tailpipe emissions.

The PHEV joins the recently updated petrol-engined Eclipse Cross range which got revisions including a 140mm longer body with enlarged luggage capacity, additional safety and convenience features, and a revised tailgate giving improved rearward visibility.

The Eclipse Cross PHEV adds further intelligent driving features through three modes to reduce exhaust emissions and noise and enhance driving comfort says Mitsubishi.

The powertrain uses the latest version of the technology from the Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV combining a 2.4-litre petrol four-cylinder Atkinson Cycle MIVEC internal combustion engine with two electric drive motors and the Super-All Wheel Control traction system.

The powertrain gives drivers with the ability to drive solely on electric power around town. At higher speeds or on longer drives, it will switch seamlessly to Series or Parallel Hybrid modes to boost range while minimising fuel



consumption.

When running in less demanding conditions, the petrol engine can recharge the battery and power the vehicle, simultaneously.

The drive battery is a 13.8kWh unit powering front and rear electric drive motors, providing all-electric range of 55km, more than adequate for the daily commute or school runs for most Australians living in towns and cities.

It's here that the zero tailpipe emissions can play the most effective role in reducing urban pollution, cutting emissions by as much as 84% for average weekly distances, as well as reducing traffic noise says Mitsubishi.

When the destination is further afield, the hybrid modes use the petrol engine to assist the battery or drive the vehicle directly.

In all driving modes, the PHEV powertrain delivers instant response, smooth acceleration, and a silent

departure from standstill, Mitsubishi says.

"The arrival of the Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross PHEV completes the renewal of the range in Australia," says Mitsubishi Australia chief executive Shaun Westcott.

"It brings a proven powertrain that will meet the real world needs of Australian SUV buyers looking to reduce their environmental impact."

"The Eclipse Cross has been successful in attracting customers to the Mitsubishi brand over the past four years.

"With the new look, enhanced technological specifications and the new plug-in hybrid option, we have a vehicle that will be even more appealing to urban couples or families who want a car that fulfils a number of diverse needs."

The Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross PHEV goes on sale from mid-August.



TOYOTA HILUX

HILUX LEADS STRONG JULY NEW VEHICLE MARKET

The Toyota Hilux bested the Ford Ranger, Toyota Corolla, and Isuzu D-Max to become Australia's best-selling new vehicle in July 2021.

But there's also been a significant increase in the sales of new battery electric vehicles (BEV) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) in New South Wales and Victoria following the introduction of state government incentives.

The Hilux recorded 4610 sales in July, followed by the Ranger on 4064 sales, the Corolla with 2535 sales and the Isuzu D-Max with 2427 sales.

Toyota was the July market leader selling 17,643 vehicles. Mazda led the rest with 8919 vehicles sold. Ford (5569), Mitsubishi (5302) and Kia (5202) followed.

Demand for new vehicles in Australia continued to grow during July with an increase of 16.1% on the same month last year, against a background of local COVID-19 restrictions and continuing supply chain challenges.

In total, 84,161 vehicles were sold across Australia compared with 72,505 during the corresponding month last year.

Queensland, Victoria, Western Australia and the Northern Territory all recorded growth greater than 20% compared with 2020, while sales declined in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries chief executive **Tony Weber** says in spite of the impacts of lockdowns on major retail locations, the market remained strong.

"The growth of 16.1% shows the

underlying strength, confidence and resilience in the market in spite of the challenges being presented due to lockdowns and ongoing delivery issues caused by micro-processor shortages and shipping delays," Weber says.

"The Light Commercial segment increased by 40.9% on July last year while SUV sales are up by 15%. We're also seeing the trend of restocking in the rental segment, with growth of 231.4% reflecting the increasing demand for local tourism and travel.

"Also significant this month is the strong demand for battery electric vehicles and Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles in Victoria and NSW where the state governments have introduced a road user charge offset by consumer grants and continuing infrastructure investment."

In Victoria, BEV sales were up 191.1% and PHEV up 161.3% compared with July 2020. In NSW, BEV sales increased by 260% and PHEV by 84.9%.

The July 2021 market of 84,161 new vehicle sales is an increase of 11,656 vehicle sales or 16.1% on July 2020 (72,505).

July 2021 and July 2020 both had 27 selling days which resulted in an increase of 431.7 vehicle sales per day.

The passenger vehicle market is down by 537 sales (-3%) over the same month last year; the SUV market is up by 5467 sales (15%); the Light Commercial Market is up by 6096 (40.9%), and the Heavy Commercial Vehicle market is up by 630 sales (21.7%) versus July 2020.

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 17,643



2. MAZDA 8919



3. FORD 5569



4. MITSUBISHI 5302



5. KIA 5202

4X4 UTES



1. Toyota Hilux
3790



2. Ford Ranger
3683



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
1795



4. Mitsubishi Triton
1290



5. Toyota Landcruiser
984



6. Nissan Navara
983



7. Mazda BT-50
977



8. GWM Ute
762



9. LDV T60
647



10. Volkswagen Amarok
380

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
1786



2. Mazda CX-30
1126



3. Subaru XV
895



4. Mitsubishi ASX
883



5. Volkswagen T-Roc
688



6. Hyundai Kona
643



7. GWM Haval Jolion
515



8. Nissan Qashqai
477



9. Kia Seltos
353



10. Suzuki Vitara
319

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. HYUNDAI 5062



7. VOLKSWAGEN 3840



8. MG 3313



9. NISSAN 2691



10. SUBARU 2376

EV SALES ROCKET

July has seen a massive swing to EVs in new vehicle sales figures released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI).

Much of that is attributed to strong demand for EVs and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) in Victoria and New South Wales where state governments have introduced incentives; and continuing charging infrastructure investment, FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says.

"In Victoria, EV sales were up 191.1% and PHEV sales up 161.3% compared with July 2020.

"In NSW, EV sales increased by 260% and PHEVs by 84.9%."

Weber says the overall market remains strong in spite of the impact of lockdowns on major retail locations.

VFACTS figures for July show new electric passenger sales were up 113.3% (from 75 in July 2020 to 160 last month) and 107.8% year-to-date (from 490 to 1018).

PHEV sales in that category were up 61.9% (from 21 to 34) and 20.2% year-to-date (YTD), going from 198 to 238.

The EV figures reflect mainly the surge in Tesla Model 3 sales in Australia, although other EV brands are having success.

Hydrogen-powered new vehicle sales increased by two in the monthly comparisons and went from zero to nine in YTD figures.

Interestingly, hybrid sales fell 16.6% in the passenger vehicle category (from 2307 to 1923), although YTD comparisons show a 13.1% rise (from 14,143 to 15,994), perhaps reflecting the move to EVs.

Diesel and petrol vehicle sales were generally down, apart from in the popular SUV sector, with light commercial diesel sales recording an increase.

Electrics were up in the SUV category, recording huge rises in both monthly and YTD comparisons (475.1%; 63 to 351, and 314%; 406 to 1681 respectively).

PHEVs surged in the SUV sector from 111 to 291 (up 162.2%) and from 689 to 1527 (121.8%) in July and YTD comparisons respectively.

In the same SUV category, hydrogen-fuelled vehicle sales increased from zero to five in July and from zero to 25 YTD, probably reflecting the number



of demonstration and trial H2 vehicles introduced (mainly Hyundai Nexoses).

Hybrids dropped in the SUV sector by 25.9% (4358 to 3229) in July but recorded a 63.9% rise YTD from 15,754 to 25,816.

Light commercial electrics increased by

four in July and went from 13 to 33 YTD.

The Northern Territory has released its EV strategy, Western Australia having launched its one earlier this year, while Queensland and Tasmania are also encouraging EV uptake.

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES					JUNE 2021			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
	2021	2020	2021	2020	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger Private	161	90	858	415	71	443	78.9%	106.7%
SUV Private	354	86	1,330	343	268	987	311.6%	287.8%
Light Commercial Non-Private	11	0	29	13	11	16	-	123.1%
Sub Total	365	86	1,359	356	279	1,003	324.4%	281.7%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	2,020	2,337	14,071	11,836	-317	2,235	-13.6%	18.9%
SUV Private	3,822	1,905	22,587	11,396	1,917	11,191	100.6%	98.2%
Sub Total	5,842	4,242	36,658	23,232	1,600	13,426	37.7%	57.8%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	46	46	204	177	0	27	0.0%	15.3%
SUV Private	272	162	1,236	578	110	658	67.9%	113.8%
Sub Total	318	208	1,440	755	110	685	52.9%	90.7%
TOTAL	6,525	4,536	39,457	23,588	1,989	15,869	43.8%	67.3%